



Central Land Council delegates met in Watarrka (Kings Canyon) National Park for their second council meeting of 2024.

WATER SECURITY UPDATE

Staff of the NT government's remote water team and its Office of Water Security talked about water planning and a proposed Aboriginal Water Advisory Council.

They updated the council on the *Territory Water Plan*. Members asked a lot of questions about the Safe Drinking Water Act the NT government promised for next year, especially about drinking water quality.

The public servants promised to share more information and to make current water laws stronger. Members asked them to check how much water is going to cattle and to keep sacred sites and soakages safe.

Members also quizzed them about a possible 'better bores for

the bush' project. The government would like such a program to work with Atitjere, Aputula (Finke), Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff), Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Titjikala and Yuendumu.

Council heard that the government wants to set up an Aboriginal Water Advisory Council. The government would like the Aboriginal members of such a council to advise the NT Minister for Environment and Water about water policy and laws affecting all Territorians before the minister makes decisions.

The public servants asked how to make such an advisory council work well, especially since they don't have enough money to pay for lots of members.



Graham Beasley from Alekarenge talked up at the council meeting.

NORTHERN TERRITORY TREATY RESTART

The council talked about the NT government's attempt to restart the treaty process the NT land councils had kicked off with the signing of the 2018 Barunga Agreement. That agreement ran out without achieving much progress towards a treaty. The restart is not about negotiating a treaty, but agreeing on a plan for working towards a treaty.

Among the parts of the plan are a treaty governance committee, working group and Aboriginal peoples' forum, and bringing back the government's office for treaty

making. Under the plan, the government would make a new law by August 2025, called the *Treaty and Truth Commission Act*.

The council endorsed the draft treaty agreement between the land councils and the government. The council said that achieving an NT treaty or treaties is still a high priority. It said the CLC will keep negotiating the agreement with the other three land councils and the government and empowered the CLC chair to sign such an agreement.



Peggy Granites attended as proxy for Yuendumu.



Michael Jones from Tennant Creek.



Joyce Jones represented the Utopia homelands.

NEW MONEY FOR HOMELANDS

Two years ago the council chose one member per CLC region for a new homelands reference group. The nine-member group prioritised homelands housing and infrastructure projects last year. This year the Australian and NT governments have allocated an additional \$120 million for three years across the NT. The CLC region will receive a total of \$45 million under the Homelands Housing and

Infrastructure Program. At its July meeting the council agreed on the reference group's principles for making decisions about project funding and also chose proxies for each of the nine reference group members. The government's HHIP team answered the delegates' questions and said the program means outstation residents can make choices about their homelands.

NORTHERN TERRITORY ABORIGINAL INVESTMENT CORPORATION UPDATE

The chief executive of the NTAIC, Elly Patira, updated the council on the corporation's grants.

She said there are three kinds of NTAIC grants: community quick response grants (open now), community impact and

innovation grants (open 1 October to 1 February) and business grants (open 1 September to 1 December). She said it's now easier to apply for smaller grants. For more info go to www.ntaic.org.au/index.php/ntaic-grant-program.



Elly Patira and Kevin Collins spoke about the Northern Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation (NTAIC).

CHOOSING CLC MEMBERS

The council wants to review how its members are chosen. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act calls this process the 'method of choice'.

The council wants to have all the information it needs for the review by its October meeting so

that members can decide before next year's council election if any changes are needed.

Staff will also update the executive committee and get feedback from executive members.

CLC TURNS 50

The Central Land Council will celebrate its 50th anniversary on 5 October 2024 at the Bungalow/Telegraph Station in Mparntwe.

The celebration will honour the CLC's achievements over the past half century, pay tribute to land rights heroes and heroines, and raise awareness about the CLC's history and current role. The event will feature discussions, traditional dance, music, kids activities, all under the theme 'Keep our fire burning'.



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Save the date to celebrate
5 October 2024



Geoffrey Matthews from Lajamanu celebrated his 70th birthday at the council meeting.

NTG CONTRACTORS DESTROY SACRED SITES

CLC delegates are angry about the destruction of sacred sites in Arlparra and on the Tanami Highway.

In Arlparra, an NT government contractor damaged a sacred tree protected by two CLC clearance certificates in 2021. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority is taking the Infrastructure Department to court, with the trial set for February 2025. Even though the department has apologised to and compensated the traditional owners it claims the tree was

not a sacred site and it is not responsible for its contractor.

This year, another of the department's contractors destroyed a bloodwood tree near Puyurru outstation that was also protected by a CLC certificate. The department has neither apologised nor agreed to pay compensation.

The council resolved to hold the department accountable and demanded it stop damaging sacred sites and challenging whether a sacred site is actually a sacred site.



Deputy Chief Minister Chansey Paech and senior public servants answered questions delegates had raised at their previous council meeting in Tennant Creek.

COUNCIL MEETINGS 2024

7–9 October, Ross River



The Council makes decisions in the best interests of Aboriginal people in our region and to keep the CLC strong. Its meeting rules support strong governance.

To read these rules and the council minutes at our Alice Springs office please contact our strategy and performance manager on 8951 6211 .