



**Central Land Council opening statement  
to the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee,  
Friday 17 February 2023  
by CEO, Mr Les Turner**

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Good morning Senators.

I regret that we cannot be with you in person today as we are preparing for a Special meeting of the full Council, as well as our Executive Committee, in Tennant Creek next week.

I wish to acknowledge the tragic loss of the Central Land Council's Chair, Kunmanara Hoosan, late last year. Mr Hoosan contributed greatly to his community – Aputula - and the region. His wisdom and leadership offered compassion to all with a focus on vulnerable people, and his governance and advice strengthened several Aboriginal-focused organisations including the Central Land Council. He is dearly missed, and we continue to think of him and his family.

The CLC have liaised with the Minister, who has called a meeting of the 90 member Council next week, where the Council will elect the CLC Chair for the remainder of the Council term.

Through its statutory functions under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act and as a native title representative body (NTRB) under the Native Title Act, the CLC ensures Aboriginal land ownership and interests are represented and protected, including the protection of sacred sites. Fundamental to this is the CLC's function to ensure the prior informed consent of traditional owners in relation to land use proposals.



# CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

The CLC has a strong record of effectively delivering on its statutory functions and maintaining robust corporate governance for over 45 years. The latter includes unmodified (unqualified) audits of financial statements, and compliant corporate plans and annual reports. In addition to external performance audits, the CLC has also commissioned internal audit services to assist our continuous improvement.

I wish to thank the committee for recommending the Senate Procedure Office training to the CLC. We have since participated in this training and will continue to engage with this service.

Finally, we welcome the recent announcements of Commonwealth Government funding for Central Australia for community safety and cohesion, job creation, remote health services, FASD prevention and support, investing in families, and on-country learning. It is positive to see the commitment to coordinating services across all levels of Government. It is equally pertinent that the implementation of programs targeting Aboriginal people aligns with the Closing the Gap priority reforms, including *formal partnerships and shared decision-making* to achieve Aboriginal community-led outcomes, and *building the community controlled sector*. Through listening to our communities and investing to build local capacity, together we can deliver a more vibrant future for Aboriginal people and for Central Australia.