

NLC Opening Statement

Budget Estimates, 24 May 2023

I would like to say a few words about the passing the Northern Land Council's long-serving Chair, Yunupingu.

At the memorial service in Gunyangara last week, I had the privilege of speaking on behalf of our current Chair, Dr Samuel Bush-Blanasi. Unfortunately Dr Bush-Blanasi was unable to attend as he was receiving an honorary doctorate from Charles Darwin University.

Yunupingu led the Northern Land Council as Chair for almost a quarter of a century.

Half of our fifty-year existence as a Land Council.

Yunupingu was fearless as a fighter for the Land Council. He helped make us who we are today.

Yunupingu was also a true diplomat, a courageous leader, and a man of great vision.

His vision forms the basis of a strategy we hope will guide the Land Council for the next fifty years.

We call this vision 'activating land and sea rights'.

May I close by reading into Hansard the words of Dr Bush-Blanasi which I quoted at the Memorial Service.

The Northern Land Council owes Yunupingu a debt that can never be repaid. He was our Chair for almost a quarter of a century. In 2018 he came to a meeting of the four NT land councils on the 30th anniversary of the Barunga statement. He signed it in 1988 with the Chairs of the other three land councils. His history is our history. We will continue what he started and always honour his memory and historic achievements.

Thank you.