



NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

ABN 82 726 507 500

Ann Palmer
Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

13 April 2018

Dear Ms Palmer,

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee - Inquiry into the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bills 2018

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Inquiry into the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bills 2018.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council (**NSWALC**), as the peak Aboriginal organisation representing 120 Local Aboriginal Land Councils (**LALCs**) and with more than 23,000 members across NSW, has a primary objective to improve, foster and protect the interests of Aboriginal people in NSW and is committed to achieving social and economic independence for Aboriginal people.

NSWALC supports the Bill to establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land and Sea Future Fund (ATSILSFF) and the amendments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 to expand the remit of the ILC in relation to 'water related rights.'

Land and water rights are central to Aboriginal peoples and the Aboriginal Land Rights network and this is reflected in NSWALC's Strategic Plan for 2018-22 period. Land and water are intrinsic to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing and future development of Aboriginal peoples in NSW. NSWALC has identified specific goals to pursue our full land and water rights by maximising Aboriginal ownership, control and management of land and water and building enduring capability to protect Aboriginal interests in land and water.

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There is great potential for Aboriginal peoples to further economic development aspirations through water-related business activities, including fishing, wild harvesting, aquaculture and tourism. The development of models to support these aspirations must be in accordance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, in particular Articles 25 and 32, and in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people and their representative organisations.

However, as noted in NSWALC's submission to the ILC's on the 'National Indigenous Land Strategy' (NILS), NSWALC is concerned about the relatively low level of investment by the ILC in NSW to date. We are hopeful that the amendment to extend the functions of the ILC to rights in relation to water, will contribute to an increased commitment to invest in NSW.

We have enclosed our submission provided to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation discussion paper which provides further information and discussion on NSWALC's position on the expansion of the ILC's remit and the sustainability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Account. This may be of interest to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee in the context of the Inquiry into the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bills 2018.

Should you require further information regarding the content of this letter, please contact the Policy and Programs Unit

Yours sincerely,


Stephen Hynd
Executive Director
NSW Aboriginal Land Council