



**Cape York Land Council**

## **Media Release**

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#### **WILD RIVERS LEGISLATION MUST BE STOPPED**

TODAY- Cape York Land Council Chairman Michael Ross told a meeting of Cape York Pastoralists and Indigenous Community representatives at Musgrave Station in Cape York Peninsula that the Wild Rivers Legislation must be "stopped dead in its tracks" because "it condemns indigenous people to ongoing poverty and welfare dependency".

Mr Ross said: "In its current form, the Wild Rivers legislation is a disaster for the future of Indigenous Communities – it will kill off any chances for economic development in Cape York".

Mr Ross told the meeting that he was prepared to stand side by side with Pastoralists and affected landholders across Cape York and the Gulf Region on a "unity ticket" to fight any proposal that puts a "roadblock" in the way of indigenous people building a strong and sustainable local economy.

"The message I bring to the Cape York Pastoralists today is simple", Mr Ross said, "We will continue to stand by the principles of the historic Cape York Heads of Agreement – because this agreement protects the rights of all of us – without damaging our shared goals of economic development".

The Cape York Heads of Agreement sets out a "careful and sensible balance" of the indigenous, pastoral and conservation interests, whilst respecting the role and interests of government. Mr Ross told the meeting that Cape York Land Council will urge Premier Peter Beattie to re-visit this legislation to ensure that the overbearing weight of a few wilderness lobbyists does not kill off "our best chance to reach self sufficiency and put an end to the horror of welfare".

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