



CLP government must govern for all Territorians

The Central Land Council is deeply concerned that NT Minister for Water Joshua Burgoyne has announced significant changes to the Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan without consulting with traditional owners.

CLC General Manager for Professional Services Dr Josie Douglas said, “There was no warning of the changes announced just before Christmas and no effort by the government to speak to traditional owners.

“With holidays looming and cultural activities in the region well underway, the Central Land Council is unable to seek the views of those most likely to be impacted by the changes, the traditional owners of the region.”

Native Title Holders for the Singleton station area were so anxious about the potential impact of large-scale water extraction on groundwater dependent ecosystems and sacred sites through the Singleton Water license that they asked the CLC to help them appeal the licence in court.

They are eagerly waiting for the NT Court of Appeal’s decision.

“In recent years, the Central Land Council has urged the government to consult Aboriginal people appropriately and regularly about water planning and decision making.

“Not just pay lip service to Australia’s first people who have had stewardship of the lands and waters of the Western Davenport region for millennia and whose future livelihoods, culture and sustainable living depends on water,” said Dr Douglas.

The CLC will continue to represent and defend the rights and interests of traditional owners across Central Australia and the Barkly to ensure their voices are heard and concerns are not bypassed.

The CLC will consult with traditional owners early in the New Year and will take guidance and direction on what messages they want to send to the government about the changes.

Dr Douglas said, “The challenge for the new CLP government is whether it will govern for some or govern for all. The proof will be in their willingness to consult and be held to account for their decision by all Territorians.”

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