



Native title determination at Huckitta Station to be the strongest of its kind

The traditional owners of Huckitta Station will receive the strongest form of native title under the Native Title Act – exclusive possession.

On 22 May, the Amapete, Apwetyerlaneme, Atnweale, and Warrtharre native title holders of Huckitta Station will celebrate a native title consent determination.

Justice John Halley of the Federal Court will deliver the decision in the Plenty riverbed next to the Huckitta homestead, roughly 270 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs.

The native title holders purchased the Huckitta pastoral lease in 2010 with the assistance of the Aboriginals Benefit Account, and the Huckitta Aboriginal Corporation took over as the leaseholder.

Research on the native title claim began in 2011, and a native title determination application was filed in the Federal Court on 23 October 2020.

This makes it one of the longest-running claims in the CLC region.

Senior native title holder Kevin Bloomfield is glad the wait is finally over.

“After all our stories were written down and sacred sites, we was waiting a long time,”

“When that judge comes out and hands over that paper, I'm going to feel happy because we were waiting too long,” Kevin Bloomfield said.

The research for the claim included ‘exclusive possession’ native title, which also incorporates the right to take, access and use resources for any purpose—including commercial rights.

These rights will cover almost all the claim area of nearly 1700 square kilometres.

Central Land Council CEO Les Turner said native title rights differ from land rights.

“The determination allows native title holders to hunt, gather, conduct cultural activities and ceremonies in the area, as well as utilise resources from the land for an economic benefit.”

“What's special about this determination is that the traditional owners hold the pastoral lease, which allows the native title holders to control access onto the station, but unlike under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, they have no veto right over mining.”

Native title holders and court staff will celebrate the event by cutting a cake to mark the occasion.

The Huckitta Aboriginal Corporation will hold the native title rights and interests for the determination area.