



**COUNCILLOR BEV MANTON**

CHAIRPERSON  
NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

SILVER ANNIVERSARY SPEECH

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, NSW

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**IT IS BOTH A PROFOUND HONOUR, AND A PRIVILEGE, FOR ME TO FORMALLY  
DECLARE OPEN THIS SYMBOLIC AND HISTORIC---TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY  
SECOND MEETING----OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL.**

**WORDS CANNOT PROPERLY CONVEY THE IMMENSE PRIDE IT GIVES ME IN DOING SO.**

**I THANK EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME...AND MAKING THE  
EFFORT...TO BE HERE WITH US TODAY TO COMMEMORATE AND TO CELEBRATE AN  
UNPRECEDENTED PART OF OUR SHARED HISTORY.**

**AS ALL OF YOU KNOW.....THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT WAS PROCLAIMED  
TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO TODAY.**

**IT IS FITTING THAT OUR COUNCIL.... AND OUR INVITED GUESTS, BOTH BLACK AND  
WHITE, COME TOGETHER TO PAY HOMAGE TO THOSE WHO INSPIRED IT AND FIRST  
BROUGHT IT TO LIFE IN THIS VERY CHAMBER.**

**BEFORE I GO ON.....I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO SHARE IN THE CUSTOM OF COUNCIL  
AND OBSERVE ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE TO HONOUR THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO  
HAVE COME BEFORE US IN THE STRUGGLE FOR OUR LAND RIGHTS.**

**(ONE MINUTE SILENCE)**

**LET ME NOW ACKNOWLEDGE THE CADIGAL, GURINGAI, DHARRUK AND EORA  
PEOPLES.**

**THEY ARE THE PEOPLES OF THE SYDNEY BASIN.....UPON WHOSE LAND THIS  
PARLIAMENT STANDS.**

**LET ME WELCOME ON BEHALF OF MY EIGHT FELLOW COUNCILLORS:**

- **OUR ABORIGINAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS, ALL OF WHOM HAVE PLAYED A  
SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE HARD WON GAINS OF THE PAST QUARTER  
CENTURY.**
- **OUR PARLIAMENTARY HOST, MS SONIA HORNERY, REPRESENTING THE  
MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, PAUL LYNCH, WHO HAS MADE TODAY'S  
COUNCIL IN THIS CHAMBER POSSIBLE.**
- **THE SHADOW MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, GREG APLIN, HIS  
PREDECESSOR, BRAD HAZZARD, MY LOCAL MEMBER, CRAIG BAUMANN AND  
THEIR FELLOW LIBERAL AND NATIONAL PARTY PARLIAMENTARIANS.**
- **AND OUR HARDWORKING AND COMMITTED STAFF.**

**I WANT TO BEGIN THE MAIN BODY OF MY ADDRESS TODAY BY PAYING A SPECIAL  
TRIBUTE TO ONE NON-ABORIGINAL MAN.**

**I HAD HOPED HE COULD BE WITH US TODAY.**

**A BOUT OF POOR HEALTH HAS ROBBED US OF HIS PRESENCE.**

**TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO FRANK WALKER--THE MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS IN THE WRAN GOVERNMENT—STOOD AT THIS DISPATCH BOX TO INTRODUCE THE FIRST EVER ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS BILL IN THIS PARLIAMENT.**

**IT IS WHAT THE USUAL OCCUPANTS OF THIS CHAMBER CALL A SECOND READING SPEECH.**

**MR WALKER BEGAN BY SAYING THIS:**

***THIS PROPOSED LEGISLATION TAKES THE FIRST STEP IN THIS STATE TOWARDS REDRESSING THE INJUSTICE AND NEGLECT OF REAL ABORIGINAL NEEDS SINCE CAPTAIN PHILIP STEPPED UPON THE SHORES OF PORT JACKSON IN 1788.***

***THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE A CLEAR, UNEQUIVOCAL DECISION THAT LAND RIGHTS FOR ABORIGINES IS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL INITIATIVE TO BE TAKEN FOR THE REGENERATION OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND DIGNITY.....***

***....AND AT THE SAME TIME LAYING THE BASIS FOR A SELF RELIANT AND MORE SECURE ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR OUR CONITENT'S ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS.***

**I HAVE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE IN THE PAST FEW DAYS TO RE-READ HIS ENTIRE SPEECH.**

**ONE THING BECOMES ABUNDANTLY CLEAR EACH TIME YOUR READ IT.**

**FRANK WALKER WAS A MAN...AND A MINISTER....WITH THE REFORMIST FIRE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN HIS BELLY.**

**ON BEHALF OF MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS....OUR STAFF.....AND OUR ABORIGINAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS THROUGHOUT THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK..... I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH HIM.....A FULL AND SPEEDY RECOVERY.**

**I'M SURE FRANK IS IN ALL OUR PRAYERS.**

**WE WILL BE INVITING HIM TO ONE OF OUR COUNCIL MEETINGS IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIEND, FELLOW FORMER MP, AND FIGHTER FOR LAND RIGHTS, COL MARKHAM WHO IS CURRENTLY IN KAKADU.**

**AT THIS POINT I ALSO WISH TO PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO ANOTHER NON-ABORIGINAL MAN.....WHO IS WITH US TODAY.**

**HIS NAME IS MAURIE KEANE.**

**MAURIE, AS MANY OF WILL KNOW, IS THE FORMER MEMBER FOR WORONORA IN THIS PARLIAMENT.**

**IN THIS CAPACITY.....MAURIE CHAIRED THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE FOR ABORIGINES.**

**IT WAS HIS COMMITTEE'S REPORT WHICH PROVIDED THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE LEGISLATION.**

**THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT WAS UNCOMPROMISING ON THE PRIORITY FOR LAND RIGHTS LEGISLATION.**

**MAURIE WENT ON TO BECOME A CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AT THE NEW SOUTH WALES LAND COUNCIL.**

**HE HAS BEEN A TIRELESS WORKER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR PEOPLE.**

**I CAN ASSURE YOU HE'S LOST NONE OF HIS FIRE.**

**IF YOU GET A CHANCE TO MEET HIM....SEIZE IT...AND HE WILL TELL YOU WHAT HE RECKONS SHOULD HAPPEN WITH LAND RIGHTS OVER THE NEXT 25 YEARS.**

**MAURIE.....IT IS A GREAT HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO HAVE YOU WITH US TODAY!**

**THE PROCLAMATION OF LAND RIGHTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES HAS BROUGHT US MANY BENEFITS AND...I THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY....PRESENTS US WITH MORE AND MORE CHALLENGES EACH AND EVERY DAY.**

**BEFORE I CANVASS THOSE... I JUST WANT TO REMIND EVERY ONE OF ONE IMMEDIATE EFFECT WHICH FLOWED FROM ITS PROCLAMATION.**

**IT REPEALED THE ABORIGINES ACT OF 1966.**

**MR WALKER RIGHTLY TOLD THE PARLIAMENT IT WAS AN ACT BORN OF PATERNALISM.**

**ITS REPEAL SAW THE END OF THE NOW DISCREDITED POLICY OF ASSIMILATION.**

**THE LAND RIGHTS BILL WAS ALSO INTRODUCED AND PROCLAIMED IN A BLAZE OF CONTROVERSY.....A FACT CONCEDED IN HIS SPEECH BY MR WALKER.**

HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE CRITICISM WHICH STILL RESONATES IN PARTS OF THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK TODAY.

IT WAS THOUGHT BY MANY THAT THE BILL DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH IN IMPLEMENTING LAND RIGHTS.....DID NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT COMPENSATION FOR OUR DISPOSSESSION....AND WAS INTRODUCED WITHOUT SUFFICIENT CONSULTATION.

AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS LEGISLATION WAS QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF THE REVOCATION ACT.

MANY WILL WELL REMEMBER THE PROTESTS OUTSIDE THIS BUILDING.

ITS FAIR TO SAY...25 YEARS ON...WE DID NOT GET ALL WE WANTED.

I'M SURE THE PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO ARE WITH US TODAY WILL AGREE WITH ME WHEN I SAY YOU NEVER DO IN POLITICS.

BUT WHEN YOU LOOK BACK OVER THE HARD WON GAINS OF THE PAST 25 YEARS WE GOT A LOT MORE THAN WE EVER HAD.

THIS HAS BEEN A MEMORABLE FORTNIGHT FOR ME.

BARELY TWO WEEKS AGO I CELEBRATED THE ANNIVERSARY OF MY FIRST FULL YEAR AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THIS COUNCIL.

**THE ELECTION WHICH BROUGHT THIS COUNCIL INTO OFFICE ENDED A PERIOD OF MORE THAN THREE YEARS IN WHICH THE ORGANISATION WAS CONTROLLED BY A STATE GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR, THE LATE MURRAY CHAPMAN.**

**I WAS HUMBLLED, HONOURED AND EXCITED TO BE ELECTED AS THE FIRST WOMAN CHAIRPERSON OF NSWALC BY A CLEAR MAJORITY OF MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS AT OUR FIRST BOARD MEETING IN SYDNEY ON MAY 30 LAST YEAR.**

**AS A WORIMI WOMAN I HAVE HAD AN ACTIVE LIFE LONG COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE.**

**I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH NSWALC SINCE ITS INCEPTION.**

**I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE KARUAH LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL SINCE ITS INCEPTION.**

**I WAS ITS CHAIRPERSON FOR SIX YEARS IN THE 1990'S, AND WORKED AS ITS CO-COORDINATOR FOR FOUR YEARS BEFORE BEING ELECTED AS COUNCILLOR FOR THE CENTRAL COAST REGION.**

**THE INDUCTION OF THE NEW GOVERNING COUNCIL HERALDED A NEW BEGINNING AND A NEW ERA FOR NSWALC AND THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK.**

**THIS COUNCIL IS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT WE HAVE COME TO OFFICE AT A CRUCIAL TIME IN THE HISTORY OF LAND RIGHTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.**

**WE ARE ALSO ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY WE HAVE TO OUR PEOPLE.**

**WE HAVE BEEN DETERMINED TO ENSURE WE DELIVER.**

**...AND AS I HAVE LOOKED BACK ON THE PAST YEAR I BELIEVE WE HAVE TAKEN NEW AND INNOVATIVE STEPS TO DO SO WHICH YOU WILL HEAR ABOUT IN SOME DETAIL FROM MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS.**

**THE ROAD TO THE ELECTION OF THIS COUNCIL WAS PAVED BY THE RECENT AND SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT.**

**THESE FLOWED FROM THE REVIEW OF THE LEGISLATION INITIATED BY FORMER MINISTER, DOCTOR ANDREW REFSHAUGE, WHO IS ALSO WITH US TODAY.**

**I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT THOSE AMENDMENTS RECEIVED FROM ALL PARTIES IN THIS PARLIAMENT.**

**IN PARTICULAR...THE PREPAREDNESS OF MR HAZZARD AND MR COHEN FROM THE GREENS.....TO LISTEN...AND TO ACT UPON...THE REAL AND LEGITIMATE CONCERNS OF MEMBERS OF THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK.**

**THEIR SUPPORT FOR KEY GOVERNMENT AMEDNMENTS WAS CRUCIAL TO A POSITIVE OUTCOME.**

**THE ACT HAS BEEN HEAVILY AMENDED OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS.**

WHAT HAS NOT CHANGED OVER THAT TIME IS THE UNSWERVING SUPPORT FROM ALL PARTIES IN THIS PARLIAMENT FOR THE UNDERLYING RIGHTS AND PRINCIPLES ENSHRINED IN THE LEGISLATION.

THIS IS NOT.... AND NEVER WILL BE..... LOST ON OUR PEOPLE.

IN ADDITION TO LEGISLATIVE CHANGE.....THE RECENT PERIOD OF ADMINISTRATION BROUGHT ENORMOUS.....AND BENEFICIAL CHANGE.....TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE REGIME AND SKILLS BASE AT NSWALC.

IT IS THE JOB OF THIS COUNCIL TO BUILD UPON THEM.

I WOULD REMIND EVERYONE THIS IS THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY SECOND MEETING OF THE NSWALC.

THE FIRST MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL WAS THE TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTH MEETING OF A NSWALC GOVERNING COUNCIL.

WE INHERITED A HISTORY RICH IN ACHIEVEMENT AND COMMITMENT.

THIS COUNCIL OWES A HUGE DEBT TO THE BUILDING BLOCKS PUT IN PLACE BY THE FORMER COUNCIL UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ITS THEN CHAIRPERSON, MR. LES TRINDALL, WHO...I AM PLEASED TO SAY.....IS WITH US TODAY.

COUNCIL ALSO OWES A HUGE DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO ALL OF THOSE WHO WORKED WITH THEM, AND BEFORE THEM, TO BUILD LAND RIGHTS IN NSW AS WE KNOW IT TODAY.

I KEPT A CLOSE AND WATCHFUL EYE ON DEVELOPMENTS AT NSWALC DURING THE YEARS OF ADMINISTRATION.

AGAIN, I WANT TO SINCERELY ACKNOWLEDGE THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO NSWALC'S OPERATIONS DURING THOSE TURBULENT YEARS BY MR. CHAPMAN, WILLIAM JOHNSTONE AND OUR CURRENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MR. GEOFF SCOTT.

THEIR LEADERSHIP AND SKILLS WERE PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN A NUMBER OF CRUCIAL AREAS.

THEY ENSURED THE VOICE OF THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK WAS HEARD IN THE CHANGES TO THE LEGISLATION.

THEY OVERSAW SOLID GROWTH IN THE VALUE OF OUR STATUTORY INVESTMENT FUND HAVING TAKEN THE POLITICAL DECISION NOT TO CHANGE THE INVESTMENT STRATEGY PUT IN PLACE BY THE COUNCIL LED BY MR TRINDALL.

**THEY ALSO ACHIEVED:**

- **FOUR SUCCESSIVE UNQUALIFIED AUDITS,**
- **THE BEDDING DOWN OF A NEW REGIONAL STRUCTURE DESIGNED TO RE-CONNECT NSWALC WITH THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK,**
- **THE WELCOME RETURN TO THE CORE BUSINESS OF LAND CLAIMS,**
- **INCREASES IN THE ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING FROM NSWALC TO LALCS.**
- **AND THE ELECTION AND INDUCTION OF THIS COUNCIL UNDER A NEW AND COMPLEX GOVERNANCE REGIME**

**A FINAL WORD ON MR CHAPMAN.**

**HIS APPOINTMENT.....IN MY VIEW..... AND THAT OF MANY OTHERS.....PROVED TO BE AN INSPIRED CHOICE.**

**HE DESERVES A SPECIAL PLACE...ALONGSIDE THE LIKES OF TOMBO WINTERS AND MANUL RITCHIE.....IN THE HISTORY OF OUR LAND RIGHTS.**

**MY HEART WENT OUT TO HIS WIFE SHONA, HIS CHILDREN AND MOTHER AND FATHER VICTOR AND RUTH WHEN I HEARD OF HIS PASSING.**

**MURRAY OFTEN STATED THE CLEAR INTENTION OF HIS ADMINISTRATION WAS TO ENSURE THE RETURN OF AN ELECTED COUNCIL.**

**HIS JOB....HE SAID.....WAS TO BE A CARETAKER FOR COUNCIL.**

**HE WORKED TO ENSURE WHEN COUNCIL DID RETURN IT WAS ABLE TO WORK WITH:**

- **BETTER GOVERNANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**
- **MORE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES,**
- **AND A FINANCIAL FOUNDATION THAT BETTER SUITED THE ORGANISATION AND THE LAND COUNCIL NETWORK AS IT CONTINUED TO SERVE OUR PEOPLE INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.**

**HE SUCCEEDED.**

**THE BUILDING BLOCKS PUT IN PLACE DURING THIS PERIOD, TOGETHER WITH THE WORK OF ALL FORMER NSWALC COUNCILLORS, HAS MEANT THIS COUNCIL HAS BEEN ABLE TO LOOK FOR NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO DO BUSINESS.**

**NSWALC IS NOW FIRMLY ENGAGED WITH AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS.**

**THERE IS NO QUESTION THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT HAS DELIVERED SIGNIFICANT AND VALUABLE ASSETS TO THE ALC NETWORK.**

**THE EXISTING.... AND FUTURE LAND BASE..... OF LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS HAS PROVIDED OUR PEOPLE WITH A DEGREE OF ECONOMIC INFLUENCE THAT TOO FEW OF US APPRECIATE FULLY.**

**HOWEVER THERE ARE STILL MANY PEOPLE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND ONE FUNDAMENTAL POINT.**

**LAND RIGHTS WAS NEVER INTRODUCED AS A PANACEA FOR ALL OF THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ILLS OF OUR PEOPLE.**

**IT IS NOT, AND WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE, A MAGIC BULLET.**

**IT WAS, AS MR WALKER RIGHTLY POINTED OUT AT THIS DISPATCH BOX 25 YEARS AGO, A CRUCIAL FIRST STEP TO REMEDY 200 YEARS OF DISPOSSESSION.**

**TWENTY FIVE YEARS ON WE ARE JUST BEGINNING TO DELIVER REAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT FROM THE LAND BASE ACCRUED OVER THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY.**

**IT HAS BEEN THIS COUNCIL'S GREAT PRIVILEGE TO JOIN IN A \$205 MILLION PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT, FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT TWENTY FIVE YEARS, TO FINALLY FIX THE THIRD WORLD WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES SUFFERED IN MORE THAN 60 OF OUR COMMUNITIES.**

**THAT IS A ROLLED GOLD INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD LIVING IN THOSE COMMUNITIES.**

**IT IS A ROLLED GOLD INVESTMENT IN OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY YEAR.**

**I CAN THINK OF NO WORTHIER PROJECT THIS COUNCIL COULD SUPPORT.**

**I CAN THINK OF NO WORTHIER WAY TO SPEND OUR MONEY.**

IT WILL BE THIS COUNCIL'S GREAT PRIVILEGE IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO TO ANNOUNCE THE FIRST 120 OR SO RECIPIENTS OF OUR \$30 MILLION DOLLAR EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND.

YOU WILL ALSO SHORTLY HEAR THAT WE ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A RANGE OF BUSINESS INITIATIVES WITH THE NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK TO BENEFIT OUR PEOPLE.

YOU WILL SHORTLY HEAR MUCH MORE ABOUT THESE INITIATIVES FROM MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS. I COMMEND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOU.

ALL OF THIS IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF OUR STATUTORY INVESTMENT FUND SINCE THE FLOW OF LAND TAX ON COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS STOPPED TEN YEARS AGO.

THERE WAS A LITTLE UNDER \$300 MILLION INVESTED WHEN THAT INCOME STREAM ENDED IN DECEMBER, 1998.

I'M PLEASED TO REPORT THE FUND NOW HOLDS MORE THAN \$650 MILLION WITH SUFFICIENT INTEREST BEING GENERATED TO MODESTLY SUSTAIN THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK.

BUT IT IS FAIR TO SAY WE HAVE STILL HAVE A LONG...LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE OUR PEOPLE CAN ENJOY THE SAME HEALTH AND WELL BEING AND THE SAME ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES AS THEIR FELLOW AUSTRALIANS.

WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN WITHIN OUR LIMITED MEANS TO ASSIST THEM BUT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO SHIRK THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.

**WE CONTINUE TO WORRY ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF COST SHIFTING TAKING PLACE FROM GOVERNMENT TO THE NETWORK.**

**THE LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE IS STILL NOT GEARED TO CARRY THE SYSTEM INTO THE NEXT PHASE OF LAND RIGHTS.**

**WE HAVE TAKEN GIANT STEPS IN THE GETTING OF LAND....THE SOLE FORM OF COMPENSATION NOW AVAILABLE TO US TO REDRESS OUR DISPOSSESSION.**

**BUT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF OUR LAND BASE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS IS OUR MAJOR CHALLENGE.**

**THE SYSTEM IS SIMPLY NOT GEARED TO HELP US OVERCOME THE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERLOAD AND LACK OF CAPACITY OF LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS.**

**THE NEW COUNCIL RECOGNISES IT WILL BE ONE OF OUR PRIMARY TASKS TO ENSURE THAT STRUCTURE IS PUT IN PLACE.**

**THE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS WHICH PAVED THE WAY FOR OUR ELECTION ALSO PROVIDED FOR NEW AND MUCH NEEDED LEVELS OF TRANSPARENCY AND PARTICIPATION IN THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE LAND COUNCIL NETWORK,**

**THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO IN THE AREAS OF GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURE AND REPRESENTATION.**

**THE MOST RECENT AMEDNMENTS HAVE DELIVERED MUCH NEEDED CHANGE AND CLARITY.**

**THE FIRST MAJOR IMPACT OF THESE CHANGES.....ON THE CURRENT AND FUTURE SHAPE AND SCOPE OF LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS....AT BOTH THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS....ARE NOW BEING FELT AROUND THE STATE.**

**THE NEW COUNCIL IS WORKING HARD, ALONGSIDE THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR AND THE NETWORK, TO ENSURE ALL LALCS ARE FULLY AWARE OF HOW, WHEN AND WHY, THOSE CHANGES IMPACT ON THEIR OPERATIONS.**

**NSWALC IS ALSO WORKING TO ENSURE OUR LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING WITHIN THE NETWORK ARE FULLY MET.**

**BUT I WOULD BE KIDDING EVERYONE IF I DID NOT REPORT THAT THIS IS A MAJOR MANAGEMENT TAX AND COST ON THE SYSTEM.**

**THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR LAND DEALINGS BY LOCAL LAND COUNCILS ARE INADEQUATE.**

**WE NEED AN IMPROVED FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING, SELLING AND DEVELOPING LAND COUNCIL LAND ASSETS, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.**

**THE TASKFORCE, APPOINTED BY DOCTOR REFSHAUGE, PROPOSED A MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF LAND DEALINGS.**

**THIS WILL RESULT IN A SECOND ROUND OF AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATION WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO STATE PARLIAMENT LATER THIS YEAR.**

**WE ARE ASSURED AN EXPOSURE DRAFT OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE.**

**WE ARE NOW PLANNING TO ENSURE CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE NETWORK ON THOSE PROPOSED CHANGES.**

**I WANT TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK OUR PRINCIPAL EXTERNAL LEGAL ADVISERS, LED BY ANDREW CHALK, FOR THEIR WORK ON THESE CHANGES AND THEIR ONGOING COMMITMENT OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES TO LAND RIGHTS.**

**BEFORE I FINISH I JUST WANT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO ONE OTHER NON-ABORIGINAL MAN.**

**OUR PARLIAMENT HOST, MINISTER LYNCH STOOD AT THIS DISPATCH BOX A FEW WEEKS AGO AND SAID THIS:**

***THE NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL IS, OF COURSE, THE LARGEST, MOST IMPORTANT AND MOST DEMOCRATIC ABORIGINAL BODY IN THIS COUNTRY.***

***UNDER THE NEWLY ELECTED BOARD AND CHAIRPERSON BEV MANTON IT HAS DEMONSTRATED A CAPACITY FOR INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS.***

***THAT INNOVATIVE APPROACH AND COMMITMENT BY THE NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL IN MY VIEW WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO***

**COMBATING INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE.**

**LET ME RETURN THE COMPLIMENT.**

**MINISTER LYNCH MADE IT CLEAR WHEN HE JOINED US FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL THAT HE WAS LOOKING TO DEVELOP A CONSTRUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH US TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR OUR PEOPLE.**

**HE AGREED OUR ELECTION WAS A NEW BEGINNING FOR ALL OF US AND WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BIGGEST CHANGES IN LAND RIGHTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES SINCE THE ACT WAS FIRST PROCLAIMED.**

**I BELIEVE THE RETURN OF AN ELECTED COUNCIL HAS BROUGHT A NEW SENSE OF PURPOSE AND DIRECTION TO THIS ORGANISATION.**

**I'M CONSCIOUS OF THE INHERENT CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN NSWALC'S ADVOCACY ROLE AND ITS COMPLIANCE ROLE UNDER THE ALRA.**

**I KNOW THIS CONTINUES TO CREATE TENSIONS WITHIN THE LAND RIGHTS NETWORK BUT I'M CONFIDENT WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO MANAGE THOSE TENSIONS.**

**WE NEED TO BUILD CAPACITY.**

**WE NEED TO BUILD UNITY.**

**COUNCIL IS WELL AWARE WE HAVE MUCH TO DO.**

**LET ME ASSURE YOU WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGE.**

**WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS WITH,  
AND ON BEHALF OF, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, THEIR ORGANISATIONS, THE STATE  
GOVERNMENT AND OTHER MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS.**

**WE WILL BE DOING SO TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL  
OUTCOMES FOR OUR PEOPLE, BOTH FOR THIS GENERATION AND THOSE TO COME.**

**MINISTER LYNCH HAS DEMONSTRATED HE IS PREPARED TO FIGHT TO FURTHER OUR  
RIGHTS IN THE FORUMS AVAILABLE TO HIM WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND THIS  
PARLIAMENT.**

**IN THOSE RECENT REMARKS TO THE PARLIAMENT HE ACKNOWLEDGED WE HAD NOT  
GONE BEYOND MR WALKER'S FIRST STEP IN RELATION TO WATER AND SEWERAGE.**

**WE KNOW HE SKILLFULLY USED OUR SUPPORT FOR HIS WATER AND SEWERAGE  
INITIATIVE TO SECURE A FUNDING COMMITMENT FROM GOVERNMENT FOR AT LEAST  
THE NEXT 25 YEARS.**

**HE HAS ALSO WORKED TO ENSURE WE AS A COUNCIL, AND OUR INVITED GUESTS,  
ARE ABLE TO COMMEMORATE AND CELEBRATE THIS OCCASION IN THE MOST  
APPROPRIATE WAY.....AND IN THE MOST APPROPRIATE PLACE.**

**THERE HAVE BEEN TWO BLACK PARLIAMENTS HELD IN THIS CHAMBER.**

**THIS IS THE FIRST TIME, HOWEVER, THAT NSWALC'S GOVERNING COUNCIL HAS ASSEMBLED IN THIS CHAMBER.**

**IT IS CLEAR MINISTER LYNCH HAS THE SOCIAL JUSTICE FIRE IN HIS BELLY.**

**ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL.....ON BEHALF OF OUR PEOPLE.....I THANK YOU MINISTER.**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS TO ADD ANOTHER LAYER TO THE RICH HISTORY OF LAND RIGHTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.**