

**Discussion
paper
response -
Submission
No 39**

INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: Nambucca Shire Council

Date received: 3/08/2016

Enquiries to: Mr Michael Coulter
Our Ref: SF770

3 August 2016

The Hon Greg Pearce MLC
Chair
Inquiry into Economic Development in Aboriginal Communities
Standing Committee on State Development
Legislative Council
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Dear Mr Pearce

DISCUSSION PAPER—INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Thank you for advising Council of the release of the Discussion Paper and the invitation to make a submission by the closing date of Friday 5 August 2016.

The Elected Council considered the Discussion Paper at its meeting on 28 July 2016.

The Council does not provide comment on all aspects of the discussion paper which includes matters of which the Council has little knowledge of or experience in. However, the report does deal with building the capacity of Aboriginal Organisations (Chapter 5) and issues pertaining to land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (Chapter 6), both of which Council has some knowledge of.

In relation to the commentary in Chapter 5, Council agrees with the question (9) that there should be targeted investment to enhance capacity building and development for Aboriginal organisations with this being directed to Aboriginal organisations which have demonstrated good governance, strong service delivery, value for money and better outcomes for their community. In this way the development of good organisational role models should enable the success which has been achieved by individual Aboriginal role models, for example, the arts, politics and business.

There was considerable evidence provided to the Inquiry that mentoring programs were necessary to build enterprise capacity and success. Council endorses this evidence which was a theme of its first submission.

In Chapter 6 of the Discussion Paper there is some concerning evidence as to the delays and backlogs in assessing land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.

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Council remains concerned about these delays and their effect on economic development opportunities for our local Aboriginal community. In this regard, Council endorses the remarks made by Associate Professor Janet Hunt from the Australian National University that since land is a key asset for development, the reported backlog is a significant barrier to Aboriginal peoples' ability to undertake economic development. And importantly, it is in within the control of the NSW Government to expedite these claims.

Similarly, Council is concerned with the apparent trend towards claims being granted with limited, as opposed to freehold, title. Council endorses the view of the NSW Land Council that the transfer of limited title will impact negatively on the capacity of Local Aboriginal Land Councils to utilise the land for economic opportunity and development.

Nambucca Shire Council is not in a position to be able to determine what the NSW Government needs to do to address the backlog of land claims. Nor should it be Council's role. It is NSW Government legislation that is not being implemented, and it is the NSW Government that needs to address it.

Council would be pleased if you could consider these comments in your further deliberations.

Yours sincerely

Michael Coulter
GENERAL MANAGER

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