



Kimberley Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

June 03, 2017

25 years of native title – where to from here?

Kimberley Land Council Chief Executive Officer Nolan Hunter says the only way forward for land rights in Australia is a complete overhaul of the Native Title Act, with Aboriginal people at the centre of reshaping the legislation.

The comments come as the nation prepares to celebrate 25 years since the Mabo decision, which paved the way for native title in Australia.

“On Sunday, Australia will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Mabo decision – one of the most significant moments in history for Indigenous people in Australia,” Mr Hunter said.

“The Mabo decision was a watershed moment for First Nations people, presenting new opportunities and a new era for land rights in this country.

“In the 25 years since Mabo we have fought hard to secure native title for our people and we are proud to say that the Kimberley is now 80 per cent native title determined.

“While the anniversary is an important milestone, it is also a stark reminder of the challenges that still lie ahead when it comes to land rights in Australia.

“In the two decades since the Native Title Act came to be we have experienced many challenges.

“Native title is a long and arduous process, often taking up to 18 years to be resolved. Once a decision is reached there is often still a difficult and complicated road ahead.

“We want a better native title system and stronger rights for Traditional Owners. We want a system that recognises native title rights as being equal to other property rights in Australia.

“Our politicians must commit to working with Indigenous people to fix the failings of the Native Title Act.

“Allow Aboriginal people to prosper through native title. Don’t hold us back.”