

THE NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE COUNCIL OPENS UP MEMBERSHIP TO PBCs



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GLEN KELLY, CEO, OF THE National Native Title Council (NNTC) delivered the Brian Wyatt Memorial Lecture, at the National Native Title Conference, 1 June 2016, Darwin. Mr Kelly paid respect to the late Mr Wyatt and his family, and provided the conference delegates a warm and humorous account of Mr Wyatt's achievements in native title and land rights, 'whose life's work opened doors for us all.'

The highlight of the lecture for many was the announcement that the NNTC will be opening up their membership to include Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), as well as existing Native Title Representative Body and Service Provider (NTRB/NTSP) members. Since June, the NNTC has been exploring models of membership and governance to best include PBC and Traditional Owner

Corporation (TOC) members and will amend its constitution early in the new year.

The lecture also captured recent developments, reforms and strategic direction of the NNTC. Highlighting the NNTC's aim to develop the native title sector in an inclusive and united way, the NNTC has developed three main pillars as part of their agenda:

1. Protecting country and culture
2. Empowerment of traditional owners through economic development
3. Creating a better native title system.

The first pillar was a reference to protecting native title rights through best practice in cultural heritage, land management, and furthering free, prior and informed consent.

Mr Kelly explained that the second 'is the empowerment of the traditional owners and PBCs and TOCs through economic development.' For example, the NNTC has developed a vehicle in collaboration with the Minerals Council of Australia to improve holding benefits from native title agreements and better support for Indigenous businesses via a model similar to the Communities Development Corporation, which also includes the commercial use of native title rights where possible.

The third pillar involves NNTC support for improved resources, legislative amendments to the *Native Title Act* (Cth), red tape reduction, increased funding to PBCs and security for NTRB/SPs.

Further information about the NNTC can be found at <http://nntc.com.au/>.