



Your way forward for Native Title

MESSAGE STICK

2026

Vol 1





NQLC acknowledges the
Traditional Owners of our
representative region.

We recognise their
continuous relationships
to the lands and waters,
and pay our respects to
Elders past, present and
emerging.



North Queensland Land Council
invites you to our

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The North Queensland Land Council
invites you to a special evening honoring
50 years in native title

DRESS CODE: Cocktail Formal

Please join us for an evening of cocktails, gourmet dining and live entertainment as we celebrate our journey and look toward the future.

Purchase your ticket
here!



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

To begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout NQLC's representative footprint and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. I pay my respects to all Apical Ancestors, Elders past, present, and emerging.

Update from the Board Following the AGM

Following our recent Annual General Meeting (AGM), I would like to provide members with an update on several important developments for the North Queensland Land Council (NQLC). While the AGM proceeded as scheduled, several ward vacancies remained. In accordance with our rule book, expressions of interest were issued with a 21-day notice period to allow eligible members to nominate.

I am pleased to share that this process has now concluded, and all board vacancies have been successfully filled. This was a key priority for the Board, as it strengthens our governance and ensures we have full representation across the NQLC footprint.

I would like to welcome our newly appointed Directors:

Ward	Director
Townsville Ward	Angelina Akee
Charters Towers/ Hughenden Ward	Patricia Dallachy
Mt Garnet Ward	Joshua Henry
Tully/ Ingham Ward	Jacob Cassady
Palm Island Ward	Emmakita Geia

Community Consultations Across the Footprint

Looking ahead, one of the board's major areas of focus is community consultation. We continue to hear feedback from members about concerns affecting native title rights and interests, and the board agrees that it's essential to hear directly from communities about these matters. Directors have been discussing how best to undertake consultations within their respective wards, and we are currently formalising an approach that will allow meaningful engagement with members on the ground.

These consultations will play an important role in helping the board understand where key issues sit across the region and will guide our priorities and direction moving forward. Once plans are finalised, we will share further details with members about when and where consultations will take place. As always, we are committed to keeping members informed and will continue to provide updates through future newsletters and communications.

Executive Leadership Update

I would also like to formally acknowledge our current executive leadership. Shaquille Chong has been appointed as Interim Chief Executive Officer. This is a temporary appointment, with a clear focus on managing NQLC's day-to-day operations and overseeing the recruitment process for a permanent CEO. The board has met with NIAA to formally advise them of this appointment and to confirm that leading the CEO recruitment process forms a key part of the interim role. Members can expect to see advertisements for the permanent CEO position released soon.

Sarah Addo
NQLC Chairperson



OPERATIONS UPDATE

It is an honor to step into this role and contribute to the vital work of the NQLC. Since starting, I've been incredibly inspired by the dedication and pride of our staff, Board, and community. While we are in a period of transition, our focus remains on stability and momentum. It is very much "business as usual" here; our teams are moving full steam ahead to deliver the strong outcomes and professional support our members and regions count on.

Thank you to our staff for your unwavering commitment. I look forward to everything we will achieve together in the coming months.

Meet the Interim CEO

I'm thrilled to be stepping into this new chapter! As a proud Wakaman and Muluridji Woman, my journey has taken me from the halls of the Department of Defence in Canberra, where I served as an internal auditor for our Army, Navy, and Air Force to the front lines of fraud investigation alongside the AFP and ATO.

Since moving to Far North Queensland, I've had the privilege of supporting PBCs and Land Trusts in native title law and, most recently, representing the Queensland Police Service as a Prosecutor in Cairns and Mareeba.

After serving as the Interim CEO of NQLC, I'm excited to announce my next move: joining the Queensland Human Rights Commission's legal team. I look forward to championing the Human Rights Act and helping shape a fairer, more inclusive Queensland.

Townsville Office

WEATHER CHALLENGE
Earlier this year, the Townsville office closed temporarily due to severe weather damage.

CONTINUITY IN MOTION
While staff work remotely, our support for team and clients continues uninterrupted.

EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS
Actively exploring options for a new office space that supports our future.

OUR NEW HOME: PROGRESS & KEY FEATURES
Currently progressing a promising location with improved facilities and a large boardroom for meetings and authorizations.

A major priority lately has been supporting our Townsville team following the weather damage to our office earlier this year. While the team has been doing a fantastic job working remotely, we are currently securing a new, improved space!

The promising new location features better facilities, including a large boardroom perfect for meetings and authorisation processes. I look forward to sharing the official "move-in" details with you soon.

CEO Recruitment Update

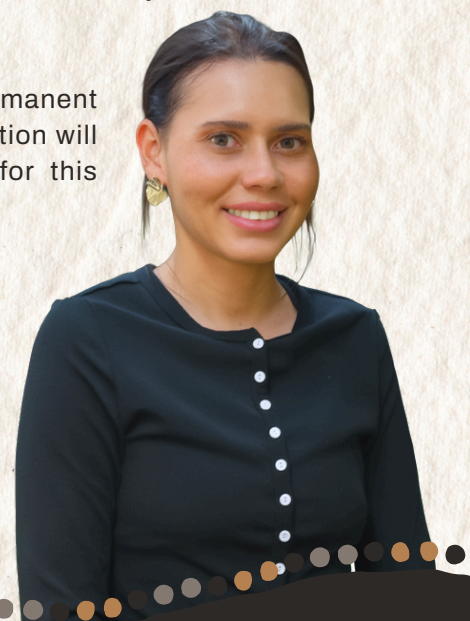
I have also been working closely with the Board to progress the recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive Officer. This is an important step for the organisation, and the position will be advertised very soon. I encourage anyone interested to keep an eye out for this opportunity to contribute to the future direction of NQLC.

Welcoming New Board

Finally, I would like to warmly welcome our newly endorsed Directors to the Board. It's great to see new faces stepping into these leadership roles, bringing fresh perspectives and energy. I look forward to working alongside them, as well as our returning Directors, as we continue to guide the organisation forward.

Shaquille Chong

Interim Chief Executive Officer



EDST UPDATE

Julia (Jules) Taylor is the Senior Legal Officer – Manager of NQLC’s Engagement and Development Support Team (**EDST**) that encompasses the PBC Support Unit and the Future Acts Mining and Exploration (**FAME**) Unit.



EDST has hit the ground running for 2026 with meetings starting as early as the week of the 12th January 2026. Most PBCs had returned to the office that week and EDST is working with them for critical work and planning for 2026.

Below are updates for the PBC Support Unit and Future Act Mining and Exploration (**FAME**) Unit that make up the Engagement and Development Support Team.

Jules Taylor

**Engagement and
Development Support
Team Manager**

PBCSU UPDATE

David Jesudason is the PBC Support Unit Senior Legal Officer – Coordinator and leads our PBC Support Unit team in providing services to Prescribed Bodies Corporate (**PBCs**).

The PBC Support Unit offers corporate support to the 33 Registered Native Title Body Corporates (**RNTBCs**) within the NQLC RNTB area. PBCSU is also assisting 3 native title claim groups to develop policies and establish their corporations to be the RNTBC upon a successful determination of their claim.

David will be taking a well-deserved break from 20 March to 4 August 2026 and during that time, Jules Taylor will be the lead in providing support to PBCs. All PBCs have been contacted with Jules’ details and are also asked to also copy pbcsupport@nqlc.com.au during this period.

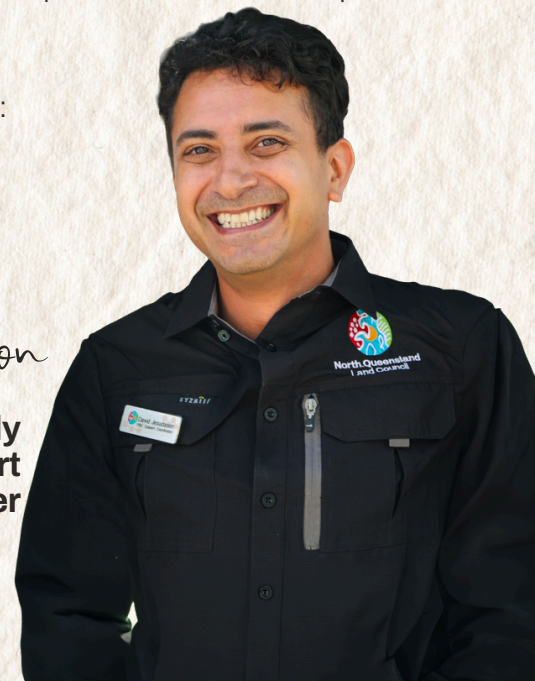
For PBCs, emails will be sent in early May for new applications for basic support funding from NIAA and we request a prompt turnaround. If there are any questions in relation to this process Joanne Chapman from the PBC Support Unit will be happy to assist.

PBCSU will continue to provide ongoing support to PBCs with regards to:

- (a) updating and replacing rulebooks;
- (b) policy and governance assistance;
- (c) internal dispute resolution;
- (d) rulebook and CATSI Act compliance;
- (e) strategic and community planning;
- (f) establishing trusts and subsidiary corporations; and
- (g) grant applications.

David Jesudason

**Prescribed Body
Corporate Support
Unit Manager**



FAME UNIT UPDATE

John Cecchi is the Senior Legal Officer – Coordinator who leads our Future Acts Mining and Exploration (FAME) Unit providing services to Prescribed Bodies Corporate (**PBCs**) and Claim Groups for future acts and cultural heritage matters.

Native Title Act Future Act Review

The report from the Australian Law Reform Commission is due to be released at the end of March 2026 and EDST is working with other NTRBs and the National Native Title Council (**NNTC**) to be able to prepare timely responses once that has been received. Review meetings are scheduled with the NNTC in early May 2026 and we will keep PBCs and Claim Groups updated.

Future Act Notifications

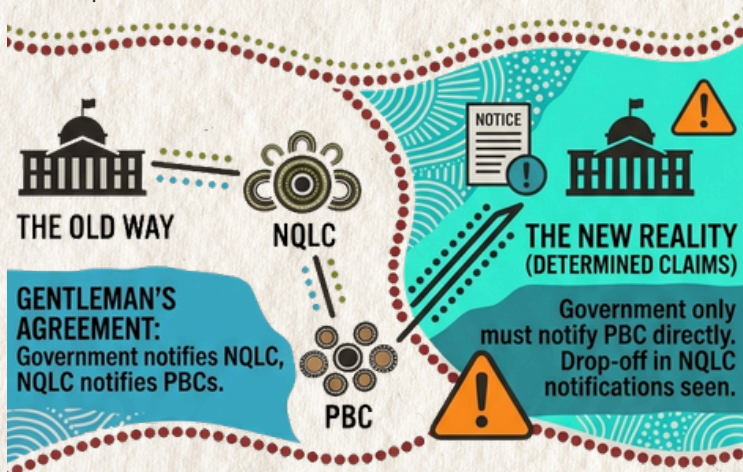
Once a claim is determined there is no obligation for a Government agency to notify NQLC for a future act notification and these go directly to PBCs. NQLC has had a 'gentleman's agreement' with most State and Federal agencies to also notify NQLC so we can provide advice to PBCs however we have seen a drop off on these notices. If your PBC is receiving a notice and you have not also heard from NQLC please contact fameunit@nqlc.com.au with the notice and we can then provide assistance.

Mining and Exploration in North Queensland

The start of 2026 has seen a flurry of notices issued under Section 29 of the Native Title Act under the right to negotiate or, for exploration, under the expedited procedure.

NQLC has seen an increase in critical and strategic minerals which was reported on in the last Message Stick and is also now working with one PBC for uranium exploration.

FAME Unit expects an ongoing increase in notifications and also ask PBCs if you are receiving notification under the Native Title Protection Conditions for exploration activity for these kinds of activities to reach out to the FAME Unit.



YOUR RESPONSIBILITY: TAKE ACTION



RECEIVE A
NOTICE



STOP & CHECK
Have you heard
from NQLC?



EMAIL NQLC

John Cecchi

Future Acts Mining
and Exploration
Coordinator





North Queensland Land Council

NTRB Aboriginal Corporation | ICN 1996

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