



National
Native Title
Council

*spirit
of
Change*

Media Statement

21 October 2014

The NNTC Commemorates the Passing of Mr Gough Whitlam

The National Native Title Council (NNTC) today pays tribute to Mr Gough Whitlam, a strong advocate for Indigenous people and a true leader for Australia. Mr Whitlam brought equity to the administration of Aboriginal Affairs and set an agenda that culminated in the Native Title Act in 1993.

“Gough Whitlam did many things for this country. He introduced free university education and introduced universal health care, and importantly, he established a distinct and separate portfolio area and appointed the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in 1973,” said Brian Wyatt, CEO of the National Native Title Council.

“But for Traditional Owners he will always be remembered for the handing back of traditional lands to the Gurindji people at wave hill in the Northern Territory.

“We will always remember the act of Gough Whitlam pouring sand into Mr Vincent Lingiari’s hand on 16 August 1975,” said Mr Wyatt. “In this one act he highlighted the strength of our people in the fight for land rights in this country, I believe it was a turning point in the history of Australia.

“He was instrumental in bringing land rights to Indigenous peoples not only in the Northern Territory but across Australia. Mr Whitlam will be remembered by Traditional Owners for his courage and leadership in land rights and justice,” said Mr Wyatt.

“On behalf of all members of the National Native Title Council I would like to pass on our deepest sympathy and condolences to Mr Whitlam’s family”.

The NNTC is the peak body for native title representative bodies and service providers.

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