

16 April 2008

SWALSC Welcomes Appeal Decision

The decision regarding the Appeal of the Single Noongar Claim will be handed down next Wednesday 23 April at the Federal Court in Perth. The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and the Noongar people have welcomed the announcement which will clarify the Court's original finding.

Mr Glen Kelly Chief Executive Officer of SWALSC said, "We have been waiting for this decision for a long time. The Court originally found that the Noongar people form a society and had maintained their connection to the Perth metropolitan area. We are confident that the original decision can be upheld".

In September 2006 the Federal Court ruled that native title did exist in the Perth metropolitan area on the Un-occupied Crown Land. The Noongar people had continued their traditional laws and customs since sovereignty in 1829.

Mr Kelly added, "Many Noongar Elders gave evidence about the Noongar society. The original ruling was a very proud day for the Noongar people. The Noongar community has been fighting for recognition of their native title for more than a decade now".

The State and Commonwealth Government immediately moved to appeal the decision, stating that a Noongar people had never existed.

Ted Hart, Chairperson of SWALSC said, "The States appeal was particularly nasty. The Single Noongar Claim already excludes all freehold land and virtually all leasehold land as well. This will mean that the vast majority of Perth will not be affected".

"There are so many misconceptions about native title, Native title does not remove any rights or land already owned by the community", Mr Hart added.

Mr Kelly, said, "Win or lose we are urging the State to come out and support the Noongar people. Resolving native title is not simply about land, it is an historic opportunity for the State and Commonwealth to turn a new page in history in relation to Noongar people. We have always wanted to sit down and negotiate with the State Government".

URGENT NOTICE

Federal Court to hand down decision in relation to the Appeal of the Single Noongar Claim.

Wednesday 23 April 16

Federal Court

1 Victoria Avenue Perth

(Time to be confirmed)

SWALSC will hold a Press Conference immediately following the decision. For all further enquiries please contact Paul Halfpenny on 0437 604 065.