

Indigenous Water Futures Forum presents a new opportunity

24th August 2009

The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) presented the Northern Land and Water Taskforce some of the recommendations on future water development in a meeting held in Darwin late last week.

The recommendations are an outcome from the North Australian Indigenous Experts Water Futures Forum that was held at Mary River Park, 5-6th August, where 80 Indigenous experts from northern Australia convened to discuss their water interests and issues.

Joe Morrison, CEO of NAILSMA, presented the Taskforce an Executive Summary last week. 'The Forum provided a watershed opportunity for Indigenous people in northern Australia to clearly articulate their opinions for economic development, potential impacts of development and the importance of securing appropriate governance and institutional arrangements to deal with development in northern Australia', he said.

'The meeting presented Indigenous delegates an opportunity to voice their aspirations regarding government water policy and management of water resources in northern Australia', says Mr Morrison.

"Importantly, a statement from the Mary River meeting was presented to the Taskforce that clearly articulates Indigenous peoples inherent rights and obligations as first peoples to the management of their lands and waters".

An interim Working Group was established at the Forum and is looking to engage at all levels to facilitate a broader dialogue with Indigenous groups across the north of Australia.

With the appropriate support, the Working Group will establish a set of guiding principles for governments that articulate the interests of Indigenous peoples across the north. The Working Group will engage other interest groups to develop partnerships that promote understanding, recognition and a common goal in water use and management.

Download the Forum Executive Summary:

http://www.nailsma.org.au/forum/northern_water_futures_forum.html.

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For more information about the Water Futures Forum, visit the NAILSMA Forum web site

http://www.nailsma.org.au/forum/northern_water_futures_forum.html.

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NAILSMA is an alliance of the Kimberley Land Council, Northern Land Council, Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Cooperation and Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation.

For more information about NAILSMA, visit the NAILSMA website:

<http://www.nailsma.org.au>.