



**North Australian
Indigenous Land &
Sea Management
Alliance**

Media Release

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NAILSMA awarded \$5.5million for Indigenous water initiatives

The National Water Commission is injecting more than \$5.5 million into two projects in northern Australia to foster Indigenous engagement in water resource management.

The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) has been awarded two grants from the Commission totalling \$5.54 million to support its initiatives: the Indigenous Water Policy Group and the Indigenous Community Water Facilitator Network.

NAILSMA promotes strategic community-driven approaches to water management in northern Australia and is a partner agency of the Tropical Savannas CRC which is hosted by Charles Darwin University (CDU).


The Executive Officer of NAILSMA, Joe Morrison, said the low awareness of the Federal Government's plans for water reform among the Indigenous population, particularly in rural and remote areas of northern Australia, could impede the implementation of the National Water Initiative, its efficiency of allocations and the equitable distribution of benefits flowing from future arrangements.

"Engagement with Indigenous people at the policy and regional planning levels requires urgent collaborative attention in order for Indigenous aspirations to be met," Mr Morrison said.

The Vice-Chancellor of CDU, Professor Helen Garnett, welcomed the funding which recognised the need to engage Indigenous people in managing water resources in the north of the country.

"As a nation, Australia has few more pressing issues than the crisis in water supplies. I am particularly pleased to see the research components in these grants which will enhance understanding of Indigenous interests in water resources," Professor Garnett said.

The Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, recently announced that the Government would contribute \$755,000 in continued funding from the Raising National Water Standard Programme for the Indigenous Water Policy Group which was set up in 2006 with seed funding from Land & Water Australia.



The group aims to increase the awareness of Indigenous people about the Government's plans for water reform under the National Water Initiative, and, engage in research focusing on the rights, interests and responsibilities of Indigenous people to water at the policy level.

Minister Turnbull also announced that \$4.787 million would support a community-based network to involve Indigenous Australians in the research and management of tropical rivers and water use.

The Indigenous Community Water Facilitator Network advances Indigenous engagement in research and management across northern Australia at the community level, ensuring that Indigenous interests are incorporated in water planning, management and policy processes.

“The funding provided by the National Water Commission gives a significant foundation for engaging at the community level so that Indigenous knowledge and cultural values are protected, and, for economic, social and cultural benefits to be properly considered,” Mr Morrison said.

Under the Raising National Water Standards Programme, the National Water Commission is investing in high priority activities to improve Australia's national capacity to measure, monitor and manage its water resources.

For more information about NAILSMA and the initiatives, the Indigenous Water Policy Group and the Indigenous Community Water Facilitator Network, visit the website: www.nailsma.org.au

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