



www.alc.org.au

media release

NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

28 January 2010

NSWALC Congratulates Chief Justice French

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council has congratulated High Court Chief Justice Robert French on his appointment as a Companion of the Order of Australia.

NSWALC Chairperson, Bev Manton, says the award is thoroughly deserved and will be acknowledged by Aboriginal people across the country.

“Justice French has been accorded the nation’s highest civil honour for his services to the law and the judiciary,” Ms Manton said.

“Much of that service has benefited Aboriginal people, both as founding Chairman of the West Australian Aboriginal Legal Service, and for five years as the President of the National Native Title Tribunal.

“Justice French expressed the hope yesterday that recognition through his award of his past roles with the Aboriginal Legal Service and as inaugural president of the NNTT would encourage Australians to think about their Indigenous compatriots.

“He also expressed the view that his Australia Day award may also be seen as recognition of the importance of our people to Australia’s history and identity.

“I would hope this is the case.

“I also note, and welcome, his comment yesterday that it will be a great day for Australia when an Indigenous lawyer is appointed to the High Court bench.

“On behalf of my fellow Councillors I’d like to publicly congratulate Chief Justice French on his award.

“I hope it also serves to remind our people of the importance of having eminent Australians, such as Chief Justice French, working in the wider community to seek to ensure our Aboriginal history is shared and understood and our unique identity as the first Australians continues to be acknowledged through land rights and native title rights.”

Media contact: Roy Tatten 0419 777 492