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LIBERATE AND EMPOWER ABORIGINAL  
PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES THROUGH  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

# media release

NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

18 January 2010

## UN Report Details a Grim Picture of Our Plight

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council has welcomed the release by the United Nations of its first report into the State of the World's Indigenous Peoples and has urged all concerned Australians to take the time to read and absorb the grim picture it presents.

The report should also be required reading for all politicians and policy makers charged with the responsibility of closing the life expectancy and opportunity gaps between Aboriginal people and their fellow Australians, NSWALC Chairperson, Bev Manton, said today.

Councillor Manton said the report made it clear that in a world confronted by multiple crises, Indigenous peoples remain committed to their struggles, and their cultures, while their traditional knowledge is an invaluable source of integrity.

It pointed out Indigenous peoples were the custodians of some of the most biologically diverse territories in the world and were responsible for a great deal of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity.

However, Indigenous peoples continued to suffer discrimination, dispossession, marginalisation, extreme poverty and conflict.

It showed, for instance, that Aboriginal people in Australia have the worst life expectancy rates of any Indigenous population in the world and detailed just how the world's 370 million Indigenous peoples suffered disproportionately from higher rates of poverty, health problems, crime and human rights abuses.

Ms Manton said the report stressed the fundamental importance of self determination, the principle of free, prior and informed consent, and of land rights to the continued survival of Indigenous peoples.

"The 240 page report reflects many of the issues raised by NSWALC and other peak Indigenous organisations at the UN," Ms Manton added.

"It re-emphasises that much work is still ahead of us to improve the health and well being of our communities and to do so in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Australia and around the world," she added.

“NSWALC and other peak Indigenous organisations will continue to work at the UN and with Federal and State Governments in Australia to this end.

“This report will be a useful tool in our ongoing struggle to get Governments to enter into meaningful partnerships with our people in this regard.”

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Media Inquiries: Roy Tatten 0419 777 492