



New South Wales
Aboriginal Land Council



Intervention by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (Consultative Status with ECOSOC)

Speaker: Councillor Anne Dennis

Item 3: Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations

Thank you Madam Chair.

My name is Anne Dennis, I am a Councillor for the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and I am a proud Gamilaraay woman.

NSWALC welcomes the Expert Mechanism's study and supports its finding that conflict affecting Indigenous Peoples extends beyond armed violence and includes the ongoing impacts of dispossession, exclusion from decision-making and the denial of self-determination.

Accordingly, we recommend:

1. that States recognise structural and ongoing forms of conflict affecting Indigenous Peoples;
2. that legislative and administrative measures affecting Indigenous lands, territories and resources not proceed without the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples;
3. that States protect and strengthen mechanisms for Indigenous land restitution and refrain from measures that diminish Indigenous land rights; and
4. that the Expert Mechanism continue to examine the gap between States' international commitments and their domestic implementation of Indigenous rights.

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE.

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Madam Chair,

For Aboriginal peoples in Australia, the conflict of colonisation did not end in the past. It continues through unresolved land claims, the erosion of decision-making authority and the ongoing struggle to realise self-determination.

In New South Wales, the Crown Land Management Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2026 has been advanced without meaningful engagement with the Aboriginal Land Rights Network. The Bill raises serious concerns regarding one of Australia's most significant land restitution mechanisms. More than 43,000 Aboriginal land claims remain unresolved, some dating back more than forty years. Measures that may further frustrate those claims risk perpetuating, rather than resolving, historical injustice.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council has also paused its participation in Australia's national Close the Gap framework because commitments to partnership and shared decision-making are increasingly not being matched by practice.

The Expert Mechanism's report reminds us that lasting peace requires more than the absence of violence. It requires justice, restitution and the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in decisions that affect their futures.

Australia opposed the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. Although it later endorsed the Declaration, its standards have never been incorporated into domestic law and remain largely aspirational.

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The true measure of Australia's commitment to Indigenous rights will not be found in international statements, but in its willingness to implement those rights at home.

Thank you.

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