

Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House, George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Llyle Kawangka

As a Wik and Wik Waya person, and a member of the NAK Board, I thank the Committee for reviewing the Bill presented to Parliament by Minister Anthony Lynham on 16th February 2016.

Our community of Aurukun is rated in the poorest 5% of communities Australia-wide. We are the 2nd most disadvantaged Level Area, and 92% of our local residents are on welfare (ABS, 2011). Employment opportunities are scarce, and with the 40 year history of RA315 deposit sitting warehoused by multinationals - we've been waiting around for nothing. Our NAK Board and Wik Elders believe it's time we take matters into our own hands, and develop our own mine - on our own land - to create jobs and wealth and ensure Wik lands and waters are properly protected.


Our remoteness and distance from markets eliminates most opportunities to develop small enterprises – we have tried fishing, cattle, and tourism, but costs of getting produce to market make it economically unviable and unsustainable. It is not surprising that when a remote community of some 1,200 people sit with no opportunity and no hope that we end up with social dysfunction, substance abuse, domestic violence, incarceration, and civil disobedience.

My Wik People have seen the 'crumbs' being handed down to them in the form of royalty type payments from our neighbouring mine RioTinto Alcan (Weipa), and we have decided that we no longer want this "*sit down money*". I cannot speak on behalf of all the Wik People, but our representative body Ngan Aak-Kunch Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (**NAK**) and Elders of the community decided that after Chalco walked away in 2010 that we would join with an experienced company to develop a mine on our own land. We believe we are suited to do this – being the People that know our land and waters. Together with an experienced team, such as ABD (Aurukun Bauxite Development Pty Ltd), we could then participate in the real economy.

The principles of Native Title enshrined in Commonwealth Law provide for there being two keys in gaining mining approvals. The first key is held by the Government who is responsible for issuing the Mining Licences under the Mineral Resources Act. The second key, granting native title consents under the Native Title Act, is held by the Native Title Holders represented by NAK. At every stage of the process, successive State Governments have contrived to deny the Wik and Wik Waya Native Title Holders of their valuable rights under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (Qld). Rights that are available to them as Native Title Holders, Aboriginal Freeholders and as Queenslanders.

Our community rarely reaches the news for anything other than bad news. We are better than that. Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney came to Aurukun on 5th September 2012 and promised to support the efforts of the Aurukun Shire Council and Native Title Holders in our efforts to get off welfare and become owners in our own mining company. He promised us time to help us get organised and promised us that he would support our efforts. But look now at what has happened. It has been a string of back-flips and tricks to deny us of natural justice. Well, we are Wik people, and my generation will continue to fight for our rights for our children to have the same rights as all other Australian children.

Regards



LLYLE KAWANGKA.
24 February 2016.