



REGISTRAR ASSISTS PILBARA-BASED NATIVE TITLE CORPORATION

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Selwyn Button, has today placed the Yinhawangka Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC under special administration.

The corporation is based in Paraburdoo in Western Australia. It has over 300 members from three family clan groups. It's primary role is to be the registered native title body corporate (RNTBC) that manages native title rights and interests of the Yinhawangka people. Their country covers almost 12,000 square kilometres in the central Pilbara region.

One of the ways the corporation aims to transform income from native title agreements into immediate benefits and long-term economic sustainability for the Yinhawangka people is through business ventures. The corporation established a subsidiary—Yinhawangka Enterprises Ltd—with a commercially-minded and experienced board to pursue these opportunities.

An examination of the corporation's books was completed in February 2019 which revealed a range of governance and financial issues. The corporation has been given an opportunity to address the findings but hasn't provided adequate assurance they can fix the problems without external assistance.

Most of the corporation's income is derived from Rio Tinto mining royalties distributed through the Yinhawangka Trust. The trustee's confidence in the corporation's financial performance and accountability has waned, resulting in tightened conditions for releasing funds.

The examiner also confirmed internal disputes were significantly interfering with operations and distracting the board from performing their duties effectively. Likely a direct result of weak governance and lack of processes to deal with disputes.

'RNTBCs are responsible for protecting the rights and interests of native title holders, including future generations, to ensure they benefit from their lands and any compensation they receive,' Mr Button said.

The Registrar has appointed Mr Michael Shanahan and Mr Rob Brauer from McGrathNicol Corporate Advisory, as the joint special administrators until 16 August 2019.

Background

For more information about special administrations see the Registrar's fact sheet *Special administrations: what members and directors should know* available at oric.gov.au.

Media contact

Lisa Hugg (02) 6146 4738 or 0477 762 290
ORIC MR1819-14
16 May 2019