



FORMER NATIVE TITLE DIRECTOR CONVICTED

On 17 May 2017, Mr Trevor John Close, a former director of Githabul Nation Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, was convicted in the Downing Centre Local Court in Sydney of three charges of dishonestly misusing his position to gain a personal advantage.

The charges were brought by the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Anthony Beven, in June 2016 under section 265-25(3)(a) of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*. Mr Close pleaded guilty to the charges in February 2017.

In 2013, Mr Close used the proceeds of sale of a property owned by the Githabul Nation to make three rental payments totalling \$7,279.25 on his private home in Sydney.

Magistrate Horan convicted and discharged Mr Close upon his own recognisance upon giving security of \$500.00, to be of good behaviour for 12 months. Mr Close was also ordered to repay \$7,279.25 to the Githabul Nation.

On 29 November 2007 the Federal Court made a consent determination recognising the Githabul people's native title rights and interests over 1120 square kilometres of national parks and state forests around Kyogle in northern New South Wales. Githabul Nation was also recognised by the court as the body to represent and hold the native title interests of the Githabul people. As part of the consent determination a number of freehold properties were also transferred to Githabul Nation.

'Native title corporations and their directors are in a very special position of trust in relation to traditional owners—past, current and future', said Anthony Beven. 'It is not acceptable for a director to use native title funds or property for their own personal benefit.'

'Directors of corporations, especially those looking after native title, must uphold the highest of standards and always act in the best interests of the corporation and its members,' Mr Beven said.

The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions prosecuted the matter.

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