

NSW AGRICULTURAL CORPORATION UNDER SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Anthony Beven, has today placed the Walhallow Murri Enterprise Aboriginal Corporation under special administration. The appointment was made after an examination of the corporation's books found serious governance issues.

The corporation's office is based at Carooka, 69 kilometres south-west of Tamworth. It holds the leasehold title over a 519.6-hectare (1200 acres) property known as Coburn. The property was acquired by the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) in June 1996 and the title was transferred to the corporation in 1999.

The Registrar has appointed Mr Peter Saunders from the Maclean-based firm, Kennedy Saunders, as the special administrator.

In February this year the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations completed an examination of the corporation's books under section 453-1 of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act). The examination raised serious concerns about the standard of corporate governance at the corporation and its financial management. It found that assets of the corporation (water rights) had been sold off by a director without the approval of the members.

'My office examines corporations from time to time to ensure they are run properly and to provide help if needed. In this case, concerns were raised with my office about the management of the Coburn property. The special administrator will look into the sale of the water rights to try and find out what happened to the money,' Mr Beven said.

'The special administrator will also work closely with the members of the corporation to establish good corporate governance practices and stronger financial management policies and procedures.'

Background

Special administration is a unique power under the CATSI Act which helps corporations to fix their problems. The aim of the process is to restore a corporation to good health and once this is achieved to return control to members as soon as possible. For more information please see ORIC's fact sheet, *Special administrations: what members and directors should know*, available at www.oric.gov.au.

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