



NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR GERALDTON HOUSING CORPORATION

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Mr Anthony Beven, today announced the end of the special administration at the Murchison Region Aboriginal Corporation (MRAC).

MRAC owns and manages 121 residential properties in Geraldton, Carnarvon, Meekatharra, Mullewa and Mount Magnet in Western Australia. Its main objective is to provide affordable housing to Aboriginal people.

The Registrar placed MRAC under special administration on 6 March 2015 as a result of poor financial management practices at the corporation, particularly large unauthorised loans to senior staff for personal purposes.

The special administrators imposed tighter financial controls and introduced new financial policies and procedures, including a prohibition on loans to staff. The corporation is now in a strong financial position.

The special administrators also appointed a new executive officer to manage MRAC's day-to-day operations and a new board of directors. The corporation's rule book was also reviewed and updated with a key change being the ability to appoint independent non-member directors to the board. A local accountant and a real estate agent have been appointed as the independent directors, bringing many years of financial and property management experience to the board.

In March 2015 Cyclone Olwyn damaged a number of homes owned by MRAC in the Carnarvon region. The special administrators commenced repairs and maintenance to the damaged properties and updated the corporation's insurance cover.

'A great deal has been achieved at MRAC in a short time,' said Mr Beven. 'This not-for-profit corporation which provides an important service is now in good shape for the long term.'

On 3 July 2015, following an application by the Registrar, the Federal Court in Western Australia made interim orders to freeze the assets of two former MRAC senior officers, Mr Ashley Taylor and Mr Abul Shahid and to restrict their travel overseas. The Registrar is alleging that the two men made unapproved loans to themselves for their own personal benefit.

Background

For further information please see the Registrar's media releases of 6 March 2015 (ORICMR1415-25) and 3 July 2015 (ORIC MR1516-01) at www.oric.gov.au.

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