



ADNYAMATHANHA PEOPLE’S CORPORATION IN NEED OF OVERHAUL

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Selwyn Button, has today placed Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association (Aboriginal Corporation) RNTBC (ATLA) under special administration.

In 2009, the Federal Court determined that the Adnyamathanha people have rights and interests in 41,000 square kilometres of land in and around the Flinders Ranges, including Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park, Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park and the Angepena pastoral lease. They were granted non-exclusive rights including access for ceremonial or cultural activities, hunting and camping.

ATLA was established as the peak body for all matters relating to land, culture, heritage, language and native title for Adnyamathanha people, to deal with particular areas of concern such as the national parks, Indigenous land use agreements and mining negotiations.

The corporation has 850 members and various business interests. It jointly manages Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park and Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park with National Parks South Australia. Its wholly-owned subsidiary Cramond Pty Ltd owns the Wilpena Pound Resort, the only accommodation within Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park. Since ATLA purchased the resort in 2012, it has employed 150 Adnyamathanha people. Cramond also holds a 12.62% ownership interest in Ikara Wilpena Enterprises Pty Ltd, which operates the Wilpena Pound Resort via a trust.

An examination of the corporation’s books in November 2019 revealed a range of governance issues, including a lack of records in relation to meetings, memberships, directorships and spending.

In announcing the special administration, Mr Button suggested that ATLA’s issues are systemic. ‘ATLA represents and serves the Adnyamathanha people in all matters relating to land, culture, heritage, language and native title. In its current form, ATLA’s problems are chronic and severe. It has no office, no staff, poor record-keeping and a board of up to 30 directors, which makes it difficult to make decisions.’ Acknowledging the fraught timing of the appointment he added, ‘The Adnyamathanha people cannot afford to wait for the COVID-19 crisis to abate. The special administrators are confident they can consult the members effectively through the use of available technology.’

The Registrar has appointed Mr Bevan Mailman and Mr Brian Bero from Jaramer Legal as joint special administrators until 30 June 2020.

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