



MITAKOODI CELEBRATES HOME OWNERSHIP FOR FORMER TENANTS

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Mr Anthony Beven, has congratulated five members of the Mitakoodi Aboriginal Corporation for becoming home owners for the first time.

At a ceremony attended by the Registrar yesterday in Cloncurry, Queensland, the Mitakoodi Aboriginal Corporation celebrated the transfer of homes to five of its long-term tenants. The former tenants bought their homes from Mitakoodi with the assistance of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) under their Indigenous Home Ownership program.

Mitakoodi is based in Cloncurry and owned 69 residential properties in the town. It provides affordable rental accommodation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is one of the oldest Aboriginal corporations in Australia.

The Registrar placed the corporation under special administration from 16 September 2013 until 25 June 2014 and appointed Mr Glen Walker as the special administrator (see ORICMR1314-07 at www.oric.gov.au).

After consultation with the members Mr Walker offered all tenants of Mitakoodi the opportunity to buy the home they rented. Mr Walker also negotiated with IBA to provide assistance under their Indigenous Home Ownership program so that eligible tenants could finance the purchase of their first home.

The five home buyers have been renting their properties from Mitakoodi for between six and 16 years. One of the buyers is also a direct descendant of one of the founders of Mitakoodi.

The members and directors of Mitakoodi were also joined at the celebrations by the state member for Mount Isa, Mr Robbie Katter and Mr Leo Bator, who is the chief operating officer of IBA.

In a presentation to the new home owners Mr Bator congratulated the new home owners and noted that they now join 16,000 other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that have been assisted by IBA to purchase a home.

During the ceremony Ms Donna Turner, director of Mitakoodi, thanked the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for supporting the corporation's home ownership program. The department has ensured that the proceeds from the sale of the properties will be held in trust to fund further repairs and upgrades to Mitakoodi's remaining 65 residential properties. Ms Turner also thanked the directors, members and staff of Mitakoodi for their ongoing support.

In the sale of the properties Mitakoodi received free legal assistance from Minter Ellison Lawyers in Brisbane under the Registrar's pro bono legal program, LawHelp. Ashurst Australia in Brisbane also provided free legal services to the buyers. The Registrar thanked both Minter Ellison and Ashurst Australia for donating their significant expertise and time.

Mr Beven said that the opportunity to own your home is something that most Australians strive for. 'This is a proud day for Mitakoodi and the five new home owners. It is also a wonderful example of government, the private sector, a not-for-profit corporation and the community coming together to help improve the lives of Aboriginal people.'

Mitakoodi is now consulting with its members and tenants to develop a plan for further repairs and upgrades to its other properties.

Media contact:

Christa de Jager, (02) 6146 4737

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