



## THALANYJI PEOPLE'S CORPORATION IN RECOVERY

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Selwyn Button, has today announced the end of the special administration of the Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (BTAC) and its return to members' control.

BTAC manages the native title rights and interests of Thalanyji people in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. The corporation was placed under special administration on 13 January 2020 following an examination its books which revealed the corporation was failing to be accountable to members. At that time it was yet to lodge audited financial statements to the Registrar for the year ended 30 June 2019 and had not held its 2018 or 2019 AGM.

'Members have a right to know the financial and operational circumstances of the corporation and its controlled entities. When reports are not presented to members, and when they are denied their once-yearly opportunity to ask questions, members are understandably dissatisfied,' said Mr Button.

During the special administration financial accounts for 2018–19 were consolidated and audited, revealing a serious shortfall in the bottom line as well as serious shortcomings in record keeping. The financial report identified that the BTAC consolidated group incurred an operating loss of \$11.4 million; BTAC itself lost \$6.4 million. The audit resulted in a disclaimer of opinion, meaning the auditor lacked sufficient evidence to provide an opinion.

The special administrator worked to inject much-needed cash, managing a muster of 2000 head of cattle and the sale of a pastoral station, and gaining approval from common law holders to accept a proposal for a compensation payment from the state government for its compulsory acquisition of land seven years ago.

'As members now know, BTAC's financial position and performance have declined significantly. It will take time to recover, and there will be challenges ahead, but it's now better positioned and on the right course,' Mr Button said. 'The lesson here is that healthy corporations ensure they are transparent with their members.'

The Registrar's office will monitor the corporation for the next 12 months.

### Background

See the Registrar's previous media releases: [Special administrator to assist a large native title corporation](#), 13 January 2020—MR1920-09; [Reform of Thalanyji people's corporation ongoing](#), 17 July 2020—MR2021-04.

### Media contact

Lisa Hugg, 0477 762 290  
ORIC MR2021-10  
16 October 2020