



FORMER BICKERTON ISLAND EXECUTIVES DISQUALIFIED

The Federal Court in Brisbane has today made orders disqualifying Mr Paul Pini and Ms Katrina Lucas from managing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

The proceedings were commenced by the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Mr Anthony Beven, in May 2014 and followed an investigation into the affairs of Lagulalya Aboriginal Corporation (Lagulalya). The Registrar alleged that Mr Pini and Ms Lucas had mismanaged the corporation resulting in the corporation being unable to pay its debts.

Justice Dowsett made declarations that Mr Pini and Ms Lucas had contravened the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* while officers of Lagulalya. He ordered that Mr Pini be disqualified from managing corporations for a period of three years and Ms Lucas for a period of two years.

Mr Pini was the former general manager and Ms Lucas the former business manager of Lagulalya. The corporation is located in the remote Aboriginal community of Milyakburra on Bickerton Island in eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory and owns the only store on the island.

In handing down his decision Justice Dowsett said, ‘The corporation provides an important service to remote Indigenous people. Mr Pini and Ms Lucas failed to discharge their duties in a responsible way or act in a manner that a reasonable person would have acted in their circumstances. There was no fraud in this case but Mr Pini and Ms Lucas should have been aware of their shortcomings.’

Mr Beven said that this was an important decision as the directors relied heavily on Mr Pini and Ms Lucas to manage their corporation and its businesses.

‘Too often I see people take on well-paid roles in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are beyond their capabilities. This can lead to essential services being placed at risk,’ Mr Beven said.

‘The standards expected of someone working in senior management in a remote corporation are the same, if not higher, than someone working in a corporation in a capital city or large metropolitan centre. If a person does not have the necessary skills and experience to do their job they should not take on the job.’

Mr Pini and Ms Lucas cooperated fully with the Registrar during his investigation and consented to the declarations and disqualification orders being made against them. No fine or compensation order was therefore sought against Mr Pini and Ms Lucas.

Background

For more information on this matter please see the Registrar’s media release of 23 May 2014 (ORIC MR1314-31).

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