

16 December 2020



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08 7221 1690

Dear ATLA members

Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association RNTBC (ATLA) – End of Year Update from MPS Law – Open letter to ATLA members and available to stakeholders

As you know, governance and management for ATLA is a work in progress, with ATLA currently in Special Administration. This letter provides an open update on the work that ATLA's new legal adviser, MPS Law, has been doing during this transition.

Background

We believe the law should be fair and do good. We work with Aboriginal corporations because self-determination is a fundamental right. We are passionate about helping communities achieve their goals.

MPS Law was appointed by ATLA through the Special Administrator in October 2020, replacing Johnston Withers as the legal representative for ATLA. As the new legal advisor, MPS Law must act in the best interests of ATLA.

Our work is based on three important values of respect, excellence and simplicity. These values guide us in everything we do.

Work to date

Since October 2020, we have been working closely with the Special Administrator on several issues, including:

- The development of good practices to assist with ATLA managing cultural heritage, like standard cultural heritage survey procedures and making ATLA's standard heritage agreement even stronger;
- Progressing heritage agreements and responding to requests for heritage surveys, including managing stakeholder expectations;
- Helping ATLA respond to 'notifiable acts' including in relation to Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park and Nilpena Ediacara National Park;
- Advising on deeds of assignment where new companies are taking over exploration projects;
- Keeping ATLA up-to-date on relevant consultation processes under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*; and,
- The handover of ATLA's active files from Johnston Withers and the establishment of a secure document portal for transparent and easy access to key documents.

Next steps

We will continue to work with the Special Administrator and the Cultural Heritage and Native Title Committee to provide advice on issues that relate to native title and heritage matters.

Your journey to running your own show, on your own terms, will not be easy. We do not know how long this will take. We stand ready and willing to help ATLA get to where its members and native title holders want it to go. However, we are just advisors, and our job is to provide information on risks and benefits. Sometimes, this information is well received, but not always. We are not decision makers.

Importantly, native title decisions rest with you, the native title community. It is then for the ATLA board and ATLA's leaders to develop a strategy that manages risks and maximises opportunities, in the best interests of its members and native title holders.

Please contact Michael Pagsanjan on 08 7221 1690 if you have any queries. However, please be advised that the MPS Law office will be closed over Christmas to give our team a well-earned break to spend time with friends and family. The office will re-open on 4 January 2021.

We wish you a safe and festive holiday.

Yours sincerely



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