



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

Media release

NAAJA looks to the future with new governance

The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) has announced new governance arrangements that will set it up for the challenges of the future. These include a new constitution and board appointments.

NAAJA is a community controlled charity with offices across the Northern Territory. It provides high quality, culturally appropriate legal advice, representation and justice related services to Aboriginal people throughout the Northern Territory. For over 52 years NAAJA has played a leading role in policy and law reform in areas affecting Aboriginal peoples' legal rights and access to justice.

On a monthly basis, NAAJA legally represents Aboriginal people in approximately 9,000 criminal matters and 1,900 civil matters, including major coronial inquiries. No Aboriginal person in the Northern Territory is without legal representation in criminal matters. NAAJA also provides a custody notification service that undertakes welfare checks for over 1,000 Aboriginal people each month when they are taken into custody, and delivers programs to assist people leaving prison.

At its annual general meeting (AGM) in late November 2024, the members of NAAJA approved a new constitution that opens membership up to all Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and reduces the number of directors from 16 to a maximum of eight. For the first time, NAAJA will have three independent specialist directors to join five community directors. At the AGM, four community directors were elected. A call for expressions of interest for the independent specialist director positions has been placed on SEEK and appointments will be considered at the next directors' meeting, along with the election of a new chairperson.

The incoming directors will together undertake a tailored governance course in March 2025.

NAAJA's 2023/24 audited financial statements were also presented and approved at the AGM. The audit was unqualified and has now been lodged with NAAJA's regulator, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). All reporting to the ACNC and NAAJA's funding bodies is up-to-date and current. NAAJA has also appointed a new chief financial officer, who will commence in the role on 16 December 2024, to lead its financial management and reporting, and the introduction of a new accounting system.

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'This is a new chapter for NAAJA. After a period of instability in the last 12 months, the recent governance and management changes will enable NAAJA to move forward', said a spokesperson for NAAJA. 'More than ever the Northern Territory requires a strong NAAJA, and these changes will ensure NAAJA is best placed to represent the interests of Aboriginal people.'

The appointment of the independent directors and chairperson will be announced on the NAAJA website in December 2024 or January 2025.

Media contact

Comments in this media release other than direct quotes can be attributed to a NAAJA spokesperson.

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