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## **QLD: Report author Pitt had 'vested interests'**

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By Patrick Caruana CAIRNS, Feb 24 AAP - The author of a report alleging the Cape York Land Council (CYLC) had undue influence over a group of land grant beneficiaries had "vested interests" in saying so, a Queensland court has been told.

The Hope Vale Aboriginal Council is challenging the decision to hand over 110,000 hectares of land - as well as \$6 million in associated mining royalties - to a congress representing 12 traditional owners. The court had previously heard a report compiled by former indigenous affairs minister Warren Pitt which said the CYLC - established by Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson - had "undue influence" over the congress.

The report said the CYLC had "less than honourable intentions" when it became involved in the process. But making submissions to a judicial review in the Queensland Supreme Court in Cairns on Friday, the congress' barrister Darryl Rangiah, SC, said Mr Pitt had a "vested interest" when writing the report.

Mr Rangiah told the court Mr Pitt had detailed how the royalties should be paid to Hope Vale Council, which would spend the money as advised by a steering committee. Mr Pitt had himself in mind for the chairman's role of the committee when writing those words, Mr Rangiah said.

Mr Rangiah said Natural Resources Minister Rachel Nolan was not obliged to consider the report when making her decision. The review on Friday also heard from state government barrister Mark Hinson, SC, who argued that the royalties should still flow to congress even if the ministerial decision was set aside. "The money was going to congress, regardless of whether or not it was the grantee," Mr Hinson said. Justice Jim Henry reserved his decision until a later date.

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