

Native Title Conference 2004

The Native Title Research Unit of AIATSIS and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (SA) Native Title Unit convened the fifth annual national Native Title Conference in Adelaide at the Stamford Grand Hotel, Glenelg on Thursday and Friday the 3^d and 4th of June. The conference theme was *Building Relationships: It's the people that matter, it's the people that make it work*.

Main plenary sessions included the Mabo lecture, introduced by Mrs Bonita Mabo and this year delivered by Professor John Borrows who is a member of the Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation in Ontario, Canada. Other keynote speakers included Professor Erica-Irene Daes, the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples and the Attorney-General Philip Ruddock.

Pre-conference workshops, for native title representative body (NTRB) delegates only, were held on Wednesday the 2nd June. NTRB staff and executives participated in legal and research strategic thinking, knowledge and skills-based workshops.

An Indigenous Youth Forum and Indigenous Talking Circles were convened by representatives from native title groups, community elders and native title practitioners to share experiences.

The conference was opened with a Greeting Ceremony hosted by Kurna Elders and the Kurna Native Title Committee followed by a performance from the Paitya Dance Group. The conference closed with a formal dinner on Friday night and Caroll Karpany's band Nukunya and local Indigenous guest artists provided the evening's live entertainment.

This year four hundred and fifty six delegates registered. Forty three speakers presented papers, convened workshops and reported on projects and emerging issues in native title. The conference was strongly supported by

staff and council of the native title representative bodies, native title claimants and holders, their legal counsel, native title practitioners such as anthropologists, government institutions and departments, politicians, Federal Court judges and academics.

The major sponsor of the conference and pre-conference workshops was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS).

AIATSIS Seminars

In the first half of 2004, a series of seminars on the topic of *Regionalism, Indigenous Governance and Decision Making* was convened by Dr Stuart Bradfield of the NTRU as part of the Institute's ongoing series of seminars.

The seminar series explored the way understandings of 'regionalisation' impact upon Indigenous peoples and influence the way they govern themselves and make decisions. It investigated the way different groups sought to increase control over their own lives and their regions, the barriers to this control, and possibilities for increasing control in the future.

The seminar series looked at both the theory and practice of diverse themes surrounding 'regionalism' by looking at a number of case studies of Indigenous regional organisation, as well as including papers which investigated the idea of the 'regional', and what it means for Indigenous peoples and organisations.

A number of options for web based or other publication are currently being explored. The publication will include some or all of the following papers given in the seminar series:

Living traditions: the resurgence of Indigenous law,

Professor John Borrows, International Indigenous Visiting Fellow, AIATSIS, and Professor and Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice, University of Victoria, Canada;

Native title – achievement, despite the odds,
Mr Brian Wyatt, CEO, Goldfields Land and Sea Council;

Regionalism and Indigenous governance: challenges for policy makers,

Senator Kerry O'Brien, Shadow Minister for Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs;

Mid-passage towards self-determination: a regional and community perspective,

Mr Sam Jeffries, Chairman, Murdi Paaki Regional Council;

Prospects for regionalism in Indigenous community governance,

Dr Will Sanders, Fellow, CAEPR;

Societies, communities, groups and individuals in native title claims and determinations,

Mr Robert Blowes, Barrister at Law;

Traditional owners and 'community-country' Anangu: distinctions and dilemmas,

Dr Sarah Holcombe, Post-Doctoral Fellow, CAEPR;

Native Title in the deserts of WA - Progress, proof, policy, PBCs, and the Future,

Mr Bill Lawrie, Manager, Native Title Unit, Ngaanyatjarra Land Council;

Leadership and authority in the Harvard studies and Australian Aboriginal communities,

Dr Patrick Sullivan, A/g Deputy Director of Research, AIATSIS.

If you or your organisation may also be interested in contributing to a collection on Regionalism and Indigenous Governance please contact Stuart Bradfield on (02) 6261 4223, or stuart.bradfield@aiatsis.gov.au

FEATURES

Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP)

IFaMP web site

The web site for the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP) was launched at the Native Title Conference 2004 by the AIATSIS Principle, Mr. Steve Larkin. It is available at: www.aiatsis.gov.au/ifamp and provides comprehensive research materials on Indigenous facilitation and mediation. Please contact us with comments or additional materials to add to the site.

Native Title Representative Body Workshops for 2004

Four workshops sponsored by the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) with representatives from Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs) were held in May and June 2004.

The workshops were aimed at assisting NTRBs to reflect upon decision-making and conflict management processes and at identifying training needs.

Workshops were held at:

- Bundaberg (Gurang Land Council Aboriginal Corporation/Central Queensland Land Council Aboriginal Corporation) 10-11 May 2004;
- Cairns (North Queensland Land Council/Torres Strait Regional Authority) 13-14 May 2004;
- Perth (Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation) 24-25 May 2004; and
- Adelaide (NTRB CEOs Workshop) 1 June 2004, prior to the Native Title Conference in Adelaide. Findings and issues from the previous four workshops were presented to the CEOs who provided advice about future directions for the Project.

Individual workshop reports have been forwarded to each NTRB for comment. A final summary report with analysis of the issues and future directions is in preparation.

Recommendations from the CEO Workshop included the following:

1. As a result of Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) workshops a number of training areas and priorities were identified.