



NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE 2016

strong **culture**, strong **country**, strong **future**

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THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has been organising and hosting the annual National Native Title Conference since the first one in Townsville 2001. The conference this year was held in Darwin, 1-3 June and was co-convened with the Northern Land Council (NLC) and hosted by the Larrakia people.

A national meeting of Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) was held on Tuesday 31 May 2016, the day before the Conference. The meeting was attended by 60 participants from at least 28 PBCs from around Australia and the Torres Strait.

Following the meeting, a small group of PBC representatives held successful meetings with Minister for Indigenous Affairs Nigel Scullion and separately with Glen Kelly, CEO,

National Native Title Council to discuss the future of PBCs, focusing on resources and capacity building.

The conference, running from the 1-3 June 2016, was attended by a record number of 800 registered delegates from around Australia and the Torres Strait.

AIATSIS CEO Russell Taylor AM was pleased to see the large number of delegates this year and an increase in sponsorship which supports Indigenous delegates to attend the conference.

'At the heart of the conference is the community spirit, giving people from all over Australia an opportunity to discuss issues important to them and to just catch up in a culturally supportive environment,' said Mr Taylor.

Each year the conference attracts an expanding number of Indigenous organisations, native title holders and claimants, lawyers, academics and representatives from government agencies.

The conference program, of 151 speakers and 80 presentations over three days, highlighted being on country, practising and learning culture, community and recognition. It's an opportunity for delegates to network, connect, showcase and share.

'Our keynote speakers make thought-provoking presentations that require all of us to take stock, they speak frankly about our past and the impacts, they ask where are we heading and how can we, as First Nations people, ensure we have a voice,' said Mr Taylor.



Top: Professor Mick Dodson gives the welcoming speech at the National Native Title Conference 2016.

Above: National PBC meeting, PBC delegates.

Credit: Andrew Turner, AIATSIS.

During his keynote address, NLC CEO Joe Morrison, took the opportunity to highlight the positive work of Indigenous rangers managing and caring for country in the Territory. This was followed by a session dedicated to celebrating and acknowledging the 40th anniversary of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976* and the history of land rights in the NT.

Glen Kelly, CEO of the National Native Title Council (NNTC) delivered the Brian Wyatt Memorial Lecture. Mr Kelly paid respect to the late Mr Wyatt and his family, and provided the audience with a warm and humorous account of Mr Wyatt's achievements in native title and land rights, 'whose life's work opened doors for all of us.' Mr Kelly's lecture captured the recent developments, reforms and strategic direction of the NNTC including the recent move to invite PBCs into the NNTC membership.

Keynote speaker, Professor Gerald Taiaiake Alfred from University of Victoria in Canada spoke of restoring Indigenous presences on the land and water, reinvigorating language and traditional cultural practices.

Professor Alfred took time to participate in the Indigenous youth talking circle where delegates discussed their native title experiences, barriers experienced as Indigenous youth and how they might be overcome.

The conference dinner provided a well-deserved opportunity for delegates to relax and enjoy themselves after a busy week of presentations, workshops and networking. The conference dinner featured local entertainment acts from Constantina Bush, Shellie Morris and David Spry and The Moral High Ground.



The conference also recorded its highest online engagement with the **#nativetitle16 hashtag being used over 3000 times** and reaching over a million Twitter users.

Video and audio of the conference presentations will be available on our [conference page](#) soon.

Media enquiries: commsmedia@aiatsis.gov.au or 02 6246 1605



Top: Keynote speaker, Professor Gerald Taiaiake Alfred presenting Land Claims, Reconciliation, and the Resurgence of Indigenous Nationhood, on Day 2.

Right: Keynote speaker, Melissa George at the Mabo Lecture, Day 3.

Above: Kenbi dancers with Ned David at the Welcome Reception.

Credit: Andrew Turner, AIATSIS.



Top left: Upai Purri Torres Strait Islander Dancers performing on Day 3 at the National Native Title Conference 2016; Top right: Rachel Perkins chairing the seminar on Substantial Constitutional Reform and Indigenous Rights.
Middle left: Dr Belinda Burbidge and Anaisel G. Lopez de Garcia showcasing the NTRU Work Tracker; Middle right: the Mills Sisters performing at the Welcoming Reception.
Above: NSW delegates at the conference.
Credit: Andrew Turner, AIATSIS.