



INTRODUCTION

Megan Davis

Indigenous Australia has experienced significant changes since the abolition of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission and the implementation of new arrangements in our communities. The lack of national leadership and a formal leadership structure has created an environment of uncertainty and instability in Indigenous communities and frequently allowed the Federal and State Governments to remain unaccountable for their decisions. This vacuum has been filled to a certain degree by Indigenous academics such as Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor Mick Dodson and Dr Chris Sarra, and it is with great pride that I write this Introduction as the new Director of the Indigenous Law Centre (ILC), the centre that has produced the *Australian Indigenous Law Reporter (AILR)* for the past decade.

With the ILC's reinvigorated agenda for research into the issues that affect Indigenous Australians today, volume 10.3 of the *AILR* fittingly contains key commentaries that deal with two of the major issues facing Indigenous communities: native title and shared responsibility agreements. Furthermore, this edition includes the final triumphal statement of Indigenous peoples at the Human Rights Council's adoption of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. When it is passed by the General Assembly, this statement will provide an important benchmark by which Indigenous peoples can judge the actions of the Australian states and, in particular, the Federal Government. It is my hope that, consistent with the ILC's goals, the *AILR* will continue its contribution as the leading Indigenous law journal in Australia through its coverage of both Australian and international developments.

Megan Davis has recently been appointed Senior Lecturer at UNSW and Director of the Indigenous Law Centre. Her appointment will commence in December 2006.

