

to mediation. (NTN, 4 Apr, p4)

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Native Title announced an inquiry into the Larrakia claim. Chair of the Committee, Senator Abetz, said 'the Committee needs to acquaint itself with major claims such as that lodged by the Larrakia people in order to make informed decisions about the operation of the Native Title Act.' (Press release, 14 Apr) At the Committee hearing in Darwin the NT Government claimed that compensation for native title claims in the NT could exceed 'tens of millions'. This figure was based on suggestions there could be up to 20 regional agreements in the NT. The joint Larrakia Northern Land Council submission rejected a 'Larrakia tax' to fund such a regional agreement but have agreed taxation was an option. Larrakia cited frustration with government negotiations as the reason for lodging the native title claim. (NTN, 18 Apr, p4)

Chief Minister Shane Stone suggested that under the proposed Federal Government 10 point plan the Larrakia claim would be hard pressed to succeed in either gaining native title or compensation. (NTN, 30 Apr, p2) However the NT government estimates the Larrakia claim would cost \$3.44 billion in compensation, a figure based on the compensation awarded in the Crescent Head case. (NTN, 26 May, p14)

Go back to [Contents](#)

Croker Island [NNTT Ref#DC94/6]

A ten day hearing of the Federal Court began on Croker Island that will determine what native title rights exist to the seas surrounding Croker, Grant, McLuer, Oxley, Valencia, New Year and Darch islands. A spokesman for the Northern Land Council said the traditional owners wanted to share the sea resources with the fishing industry and wanted to negotiate a joint management agreement. (WA, 22 Apr, p8)* The claim will be contested by both Commonwealth and Territory Governments and the Northern Territory Fishing Industry Council. (Aus, 23 Apr, p2) The hearing is expected to set a precedent for some 85 other sea claims which have been lodged. (SMH, 23 Apr, p6)*

Go back to [Contents](#)

South Australia

Nukunu [NNTT Ref#SC96/5]

An offshore claim has been lodged in Spencer Gulf 40 km south of Port Pirie by the Nukunu people and includes Spencer Gulf waters, claimable below the high water mark, if continual fishing usage could be established. The SA Fishing Industry Council has stated that 150 of the State's 960 professional fisherman are working in areas currently under claim and the industry would negotiate on a case by case basis rather than under compensation arrangements as suggested by the claimants. (Adv, 28 Apr).

Go back to [Contents](#)

REGIONAL AGREEMENTS

Wendy Craik of the National Farmers Federation said land councils and

representative bodies had allowed past agreements between Aboriginal people and land owners to fall through. NT Cattlemen's Association president David Bayly, said regional agreements don't work. (WA, 24 Apr, p30)*

Recently elected Cook Shire Council Mayor, Graham Elmes, has used a casting vote to withdraw Shire support for the Cape York Heads of Agreement. He said ratepayers were not properly represented by the agreement and the Council supported all avenues open for upgrading of leases. David Kempton of the Cattlemen's Union said the decision was unfortunate as no one was in danger of losing land under the agreement; David Byrne of Cape York Land Council said the Cook Shire includes only 700 voters of 12,000 people in Cape York. (CM 13 May, p4) The future of the agreement was placed further in doubt after Queensland graziers at the Longreach meeting opposed to the agreement won a concession from Mr Howard to reconsider the use of \$40 million allocated in last year's budget to facilitate the agreement. (Aus, 20 May, p2) The Cattlemen's Union and conservationists disagreed with Mr Howard's plan to reconsider his commitment to the agreement as most Cape York cattlemen still supported the agreement. (Aus, 21 May, p2)

Federal Environment Minister, Senator Robert Hill and Queensland Planning and Local Government Minister, Mrs Di McCauley welcomed the release of the Cape York Land Use Report jointly commissioned by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments. The report completes stage 2 of the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy. (Press release, 27 May) Senator Nick Minchin met with members of the Cattlemen's Union of Australia. He reiterated the Government's support for voluntary agreements and noted the Government's commitment of \$40 million in the 1997-98 Budget allocation to ensure protection of the Cape York environment. (Press release 28 May) Cattlemen's Union spokesperson John Purcell said the Cape York Heads of Agreement was alive and well and signatories to the agreement had reaffirmed their commitment in writing. (CM, 29 May, p6)

Broome Shire and the Rubibi Land Heritage and Development Council received reconciliation awards for their joint resolution of native title claims. (WA 28 May, p4)

Go back to [Contents](#)

MINING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

National

Jon Altman, Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU, analysed the implications of the Wik judgment and the proposed amendments to the Native Title Act for resource developers. He encourages developers to work within the framework of the Act and not be drawn into negotiating directly with native title parties. (Fin R, 1 Apr, p 15)

Managing Director of North Ltd, Mr Campbell Anderson, says unresolved issues surrounding the Native Title Act threaten the viability of mining. Legislation should clarify who is entitled to make a claim under the