

List of abbreviations

Note: Where an item also appears in other newspapers, etc, an asterisk () will be used. People are invited to contact the Native Title Research Unit at AIATSIS if they want the additional references. The NTRU will try to provide people with copies of recent newspaper articles upon request.*

Ad = Advertiser (SA)
Age = The Age
Aus = Australian
CM = Courier Mail (QLD)
CP = Cairns Post
CT = Canberra Times
DT = Daily Telegraph
FinR = Financial Review
HS = Herald Sun (VIC)
KM = Kalgoorlie Miner
IM = Illawarra Mercury

LE = Launceston Examiner
Mer = Hobart Mercury
NNTT = National Native Title Tribunal
NTA = *Native Title Act 1993*
NTN = Northern Territory News
QNT = Queensland Native Title News
SC = Sunshine Coast Daily
SMH = Sydney Morning Herald
TelM = Telegraph Mirror (NSW)
WA = West Australian
WAus = Weekend Australian

NEWS FROM THE NATIVE TITLE RESEARCH UNIT

Staff News

In this issue we again bid farewell to one of our staff members, Native Title Subject Specialist, Rebecca Hall. Over the last three years Rebecca has developed the access position into an immensely valuable service for native title holders, Representative Bodies and other native title researchers. I am sure Rebecca will be missed by her clients as she will be by us.

In the interim, as we go through a recruitment process, George Boeck is maintaining the service and looks forward to hearing from people and assisting them with access to the Institute's collections. You can reach George on the same number 02 6246 1103 or on email <ntss@aiatsis.gov.au>. Rebecca's personal email will be monitored for a short time but please take this opportunity to update your contact list.

'Conceptualising Native Title'

AAS Annual Conference, UNSW Sydney, 11 July 1999

In July, the Native Title Research Unit was involved with the Australian Anthropological Society's Annual Conference at UNSW. Together with the Indigenous Law Centre, we convened a session to examine the changing notion of native title. The session expanded to cover three 90 minute sessions over the first day of the Conference and was attended by up to 70 participants.

The session was prompted by an earlier proposal by Noel Pearson calling for discussion on this issue. Michael Dodson who is associated with both institutions took the initiative together with Professor Garth Nettheim from UNSW and Lisa Strelein from the Institute.

The session was deliberately structured to promote discussion about the concept of native title and to elicit some of the key issues that the group considered important in the development of native title to date. The session began with an introduction by Lisa Strelein, outlining some of the concerns about the development of the concept of native title and some of the suggestions that had been raised by commentators for a re-examination of native title.

Papers were presented by Mick Dodson, Jocelyn Grace and Peter Sutton. Unfortunately Noel Pearson was overseas at the time of the Conference and could not attend. Mick Dodson impressed the importance of maintaining the distinction between common law native title and the Indigenous rights and laws that are recognised in native title to avoid native title being constrained by Western legal notions. The tendency within the law to do so has made native title an ever more elusive concept. Jocelyn Grace, from the Goldfield Land Council pursued the issues of groups identification and the requirements of the registration test, particularly where the requirements of the registrar are at odds with the realities of Indigenous peoples' social organisations and their conception of native title. Peter Sutton pointed to the perils of setting up a false dichotomy between the inside and outside worlds of the native title group as is suggested by a possessory understanding of native title in particular when considering the differentiated rights of groups over the same land.

An open forum followed which provided participants with an opportunity to comment on the papers and raise other issues of concern, particularly to anthropologists. The registration test and the problems of group definition were a focus of concern as was the need for anthropologists to share their ideas with each other as well as the legal community to ensure a different perspective is taken into account in the development of native title.

CURRENT ISSUES

The Native Title Research Unit is supporting the Australian Linguistic Society's workshop entitled Linguistic Issues in Native Title Claims, on 2 October 1999 at the University of Western Australia. The workshop will be held as part of the 1999 Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society but is open to non-members.