

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)	LRQ = Land Rights Queensland
Age = The Age	Mer = Hobart Mercury
Aus = Australian	NNTT = National Native Title Tribunal
CM = Courier Mail (QLD)	NTA = <i>Native Title Act 1993</i>
CP = Cairns Post	NTN = Native Title News (State editions)
CT = Canberra Times	SC = Sunshine Coast Daily
DT = Daily Telegraph	SMH = Sydney Morning Herald
FinR = Financial Review	TelM = Telegraph Mirror (NSW)
HS = Herald Sun (VIC)	WA = West Australian
KM = Kalgoorlie Miner	WAus = Weekend Australian
IM = Illawarra Mercury	
LE = Launceston Examiner	

NEWS FROM THE NATIVE TITLE RESEARCH UNIT

The NTRU has undergone a recruitment process. We are happy to report that Dr Lisa Strelein has been reappointed as a Visiting Research Fellow for the next three years. Ms Ros Percival has been reappointed as the Administrative Assistant. We welcome new staff members to the Native Title Research Unit, Ms Jessica Weir as Research Assistant, Dr George Boeck as Publications Officer and Mr David Leigh as Native Title Research and Access Officer. Kado Muir is acting in the position of Deputy Director of Research as well as maintaining his role in the NTRU.

We hope that the new year will be a fruitful and productive one.

The Native Title Research Unit would like to acknowledge the appointment of Commissioner Geoff Clark as the first elected Chair and Commissioner Ray Robinson as the first elected Deputy Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. The Institute also acknowledges the valuable contribution of Commissioner Clark as a member of the NTRU Advisory Committee during his previous term as ATSIC Commissioner with portfolio responsibility for native title. We wish the Chair, Deputy Chair and the Commissioners every success in their coming term.

Current Issues

This is my last contribution to the Newsletter for 1999, making it a moment to look forward.

The recent signing of a funding agreement between the Institute and ATSIC will ensure the Native Title Research Unit will continue for the next three years.

We have now finalised the recruitment of staff to fill positions open since mid-1999. We look forward to a New Year with a full compliment of staff to make the Unit's activities vigorous rather than hectic.

We expect to publish several volumes in 2000 and to return to monthly Issues Papers. We look forward to investigating some emerging native title issues in biodiversity and the environment. The practical issues presented by the Native Title Act and the legal framework will continue to be a focus as will governance and native title.

The Yorta Yorta and Miriuwung Gajerong decisions should be handed down soon, giving further legal clarification on native title. However I do wonder if the obsession with precedent is misplaced given that native title is unique to the particular cultural and historical circumstances of each claimant group and is always different. I expect as well that many of you working in native title will be making submissions on the CERD decision to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Native Title and the Land Fund. There will be a short submission period with the report due in April 2000, so I encourage you to keep a close eye on the dates.

Finally, I would like to begin the New Year with some thoughts on the connection between native title and water. Water, as a resource is a topical issue at the moment and a central feature in many current native title claims. I come from the desert where people are mindful that water is the difference between life and death, giving it a central role in social, cultural and spiritual life. The same can be said of water right across Australia. Its ownership, use and regulation can be a tense issue that deserves to be approached with sensitivity and respect. I am discussing with colleagues a possible research project or series of Issues Papers on the topic.

Kado Muir
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