

protection and other non-native title issues, and operates a land and sea management unit which works with traditional owners to look after country. However the bulk of the KLCs funding, and consequently the bulk of its work, is now in relation to native title, which has so far failed to deliver much to Kimberley people, despite the strength of their law and culture.

There was a general frustration at the Wuggubun meeting with the lack of progress in relation to the KLC's 25 native title claims. Despite coming to office in December 2001 with a commitment to settling native title claims, the Gallop government has signed off on only two consent determinations in the Kimberley since then, and only four state-wide. It is currently in court opposing the claims of the Rubibi claimants in Broome, and there are four other claims in litigation across the Kimberley. These include the Miriuwung Gajerrong (Ward) claim, which has run for almost ten years, been to the High Court and back to the Full Federal Court, cost more than \$10 million, and is yet to be fully resolved.

Other claims still in court include the Bardi Jawi claim over the Dampier peninsula north of Broome, which includes a significant claim to sea country, and the Wanjina Wunggurr Willinggin claim which covers a large portion of the Kimberley. A decision is due to be handed down on 8 December this year.

Aboriginal people make up half the population of the Kimberley. They have a proud history of asserting their rights to country, and of developing partnerships with industry. In calling for a regional framework to settle land, social and economic issues, Kimberley traditional owners are seeking an end to the divisive process of litigating native title claims, which puts enormous strain on communities and prevents them from focusing on issues such as economic development and the health of their communities. While the KLC will continue to pursue native title outcomes on behalf of Kimberley traditional owners, the meeting at Wuggubun confirmed the need for an integrated approach to resolving the issues that concern Aboriginal people in the Kimberley.

Mentoring Pilot Program for Junior Anthropologists in NTRBs

Background

The mentoring scheme grew from discussion amongst concerned anthropologists in the Australian Anthropological Society about the difficulties facing graduate anthropologists working in native title. The problems of recruiting suitably qualified anthropological staff for NTRBs was already known.

The National Native Title Tribunal and ATSI's Native Title and Land Rights Branch [capacity building initiative] are sponsoring the pilot mentoring program offering focused professional development and support to junior anthropologists.

Five mentee places were available in 2003-04 for the pilot program. The mentees have been matched with five senior anthropologists and because of their Australia-wide location contact between mentor/mentee is confined to telephone and e-mail. The pilot

runs for twelve months and will conclude in April 2004.

Find Out More about the program in 2004
It is anticipated that the 2004 National Native Title Conference in South Australia will have a workshop on mentoring at which those involved in the pilot project will reflect on their experiences.

The Project's objectives are:

- To explore the potential to mentor inexperienced junior staff anthropologists in identified NTRBs Australia-wide
- To boost the immediate performance of representative body employees and to assist ATSI to direct funds to obtain sustainable future benefit in this area.
- To test the relevance and suitability of a generic mentoring practice across all native title practitioners, and ideally to promote the efficacy of this approach to the

professional associations that service the disciplines providing expertise in native title.

- It is also anticipated that improved professional performance will assist the NNTT strategic objectives of outcomes through mediated native title determinations.

- Mentoring benefits to all those involved. Some advantages of being a mentee are:

1. support for setting and achieving goals,
2. increased confidence and self-esteem
3. personal growth and extended networks and support systems.

NATIVE TITLE IN THE NEWS

National

Aboriginal activist Noel Pearson gave a stinging critique of the High Court bench in an address during the Centenary Conference. He said that the majority of judges had severely prejudiced Aboriginal people by misinterpreting the definition of native title. Mr Pearson said that in recent native title decisions, the court had placed an horrendous onus of proof on native title claimants because of misinterpretation and misapplication of the common law. Mr Pearson received a prolonged ovation from the highly distinguished audience including chief justices of every Australian court. He further said the court's interpretation of native title had been completely contrary to the intention Parliament had when it passed native title legislation in 1993 and 1998. *Canberra Times*, pg 7. 11 October 2003.

New South Wales

Members of the Bogan River Wiradjuri group recently visited the Byron Bay Arakwal people to discuss issues such as caring for country and involvement in national park management. Wiradjuri spokesperson Ray Keed Jnr said the visit was seen as an exciting opportunity to meet with other Aboriginal people who are actively involved in working with the community and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Funded by the NPWS Celebrating Aboriginal Communities program, the visit included a meeting

Mentors benefit too, through increased self-awareness, different perspective on issues and by making a contribution. Organisations gain from improved employee commitment, attracting and retaining staff, and building organisational capacity.

Enquiries about the program can be directed to:

The Program Facilitator

Dr Julie Finlayson

0419 994 708

email Julie.Finlayson@anthropos.com.au

and a tour of Arakwal National Park, involving non-Aboriginal community representatives and NPWS staff. *Byron Shire Echo*, pg 14. 02 September 2003. Wiradjuri claim: NC02/3, N6020/01 & Arakwal claim: NC01/8, N6002/02.

The signing of an agreement that allows the Kamilaroi People to access land was recently celebrated in Coonabarabran. The Kamilaroi people now have access to land next to the town's showground while assuring the local pony club access to continue to hold cross-country horseriding events. The agreement arose through the negotiations over the Kamilaroi People's native title claim lodged nine years ago. Kamilaroi native title claimant Margaret Robinson said the agreement was an important step towards reconciliation in the community. *Northern Daily Leader*, pg 4. 10 September 2003. Kamilaroi claim: NC96/18, NG6036/98.

At The 2003 National Awards for Local Government, Bega Valley Shire Council received a commendation for its Memorandum of Understanding with local Aboriginal people. The area of commendation was 'Strengthening Indigenous Communities'. The Council submitted a nomination as a means of showcasing the positive outcomes achievable when local government seeks to work in partnership with Aboriginal people. The successful MOU was signed by the Council, the Shire's three Local Aboriginal