

Semester 1 of 2005, with Seminars each Monday in the AIATSIS Mabo Room from 12.30pm to 2pm. The Series, entitled *Native Title, Decision-making and Conflict Management* will conclude on 23 May.

A wide variety of speakers from around Australia will explore the policy and practices of managing native title claims, disputes and competing interests in land matters. Check www.aiatsis.gov.au/rsrch/seminars.htm for the full program. Speakers include:

07 March	Ms Kurt Noble
14 March	Ms Kerrie Tim
22 March (Tuesday)	Mr James Weiner and Mr John Burton
04 April	Ms Rosalind Webb
11 April	Mr Tony Lee
18 April	Ms Michelle Cochrane and Ms Allison Halliday
26 April (Tuesday)	Ms Toni Bauman
02 May	Ms Valerie Cooms and Prof. Mick Dodson
09 May	Ms Rhiân Williams
16 May	Mr Morgan Brigg and Mr Pat McIntyre

WHATS NEW

Publications

The NNTT Native Title Hotspots #13 was complete during January and is available on the NNTT website. It is a quarterly publication which incorporates summaries of recent cases in the development of native title law, native title determinations and other related decisions. It is available at: http://www.nntt.gov.au/metacard/files/HotSpots/Hot_Spots_Number_13.pdf

Reports

The National Native Title Tribunal has received a report from Dr David Martin of Anthropos Consulting Services, titled: A Pilot mentoring project for junior NTRB anthropologists. One of the goals of the report was to contribute to the capacity of NTRB's to perform their functions by improving their anthropological expertise in their service. A

23 May

Dr Patrick Sullivan

The Series commenced on 28 February with a presentation by Mr Parry Agius, the Executive Officer of the Native Title Unit of the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Incorporated (ALRM) in South Australia.

Parry is a Narungga man whose people are the traditional owners of the land and waters in and around the Yorke Peninsula district. Parry discussed the Central West Mediation Strategy (CWMS), and the innovative mediations that took place at Spear Creek in Port Augusta in 2003. These addressed the need to resolve multiple overlapping native title claims and related disputes that arose. The Spear Creek Project, managed by ALRM as the Native Title Representative Body in the region, involved 400 Aboriginal participants from Western Australia and South Australia, and culminated in a six-day comprehensive program.

You can receive weekly reminders and information on AIATSIS seminars by subscribing to our email list:

researchseminars@aiatsis.gov.au.

full version of the report can be accessed by the following link:

<http://www.anthropos.com.au/Publications/Anthropologists%20mentoring%20pilot%20-%20final%20report.pdf>

The Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources have released a draft report on the Principles for Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders. Part of the report addresses cultural characteristics of communities and stakeholders, including identifying and understanding community issues, acknowledging and respecting the diversity of communities and respecting the culture and heritage of local communities, including Indigenous people. A copy of the full draft report is available at: http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/mines/publications/pdf/eng_prin_draft_consult.pdf

Conferences

The 12th Annual Cultural Heritage and Native Title Conference is being held at the Duxton Hotel in Perth from the 19-21 April 2005. For more information including agenda and costings, please refer to the following link:
http://www.iir.com.au/conferences/confdetail.html?detail=I0276.html&cat_code=resources&conf_code=I0276

The National Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference is being held at Ross River Homestead approximately 83km east of Alice Springs on the Ross Highway from the

19-21 April 2005. Information about this conference is available at:
<http://www.clc.org.au/OurLand/conference.asp>

Websites

The Northern Territory Government has created a website on the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*. The website can be viewed at: <http://www.dcm.nt.gov.au/dcm/parks/index.shtml>

FEATURE

Five Communities Join Native Title History

By the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA).

In a remarkable week, the Torres Strait Islands of Erub, Ugar, Iama, Badu and Boigu made the history books in December 2004 after receiving their native title from the Federal Court of Australia, marking a major milestone for the region.

The Federal Court of Australia travelled to each of the five Islands to conduct a special sitting of the Court, which was attended by traditional owners for the purpose of formally recognising their native title rights.

TSRA Chairperson, Mr Toshie Kris said the entire Torres Strait celebrated this moment in history, which signified the recognition of native title over the last of Torres Strait's community Islands in which claims were lodged under the *Native Title Act (Cth) 1993*.

"Our people's struggle for native title land recognition started with Mer Island and the Mabo case in 1992 and I was privileged to see this legacy continue and witness the last of 14 island communities being granted their native title rights over their islands," Mr Kris said.

"Native title is about being recognised as owners of this land and for our spiritual and cultural connections with our land and sea. It's our heritage and gives meaning to our lives and that's why it's so important."

"We have fought long and hard to secure this recognition and I would like to commend the traditional owners of all five recent claims for their ongoing commitment and resilience – it has not been an easy path for anyone involved but the decision by the Federal Court of Australia has made it all worth it."

"The TSRA's Native Title Office, under direction from the Islands' traditional owners, had been in protracted negotiation with the State of Queensland for the previous 4 years to achieve this recognition."

"The consent determinations were being blocked by the State's position that native title had been extinguished over all land on which works to benefit the native title holders had been built, for instance local community housing and community infrastructure."

"Clearly, this was a major hurdle for the communities and we are all extremely relieved that the State agreed to recognise exclusive native title over the areas claimed by each of the five Torres Strait Island communities."

"The TSRA's Native Title Office has had a challenging task of advancing these claims and should be commended."

"It has been like a long journey and we have made it home with our integrity, cultural pride and determination strengthened," Mr Kris said.