

Bushwork Consultants and took place under the kinds of funding uncertainties which beset most PBCs. Just prior to the workshop, the PBC learnt that it had received only half of the funding requested from FaHCSIA which is insufficient to keep its office open and employ a co-ordinator. A 'roadmap' document will be produced from the workshop which sets out a plan for consolidating fundamental building blocks for the PBC and a range of options for the Governing Committee to discuss and make decisions about in the future. Learnings from the workshop will inform an NTRU PBC planning paper will be published in 2009.

It is critical that the Djabugay locate funding for the continuation of its office and coordinator position. This is a particularly urgent issue given that the Department of Natural Resources and Water in Queensland is seeking to finalise a Draft Plan of Management for the Barron Gorge National Park over which the Djabugay received a determination of native title rights and interests in 2003. Without an office and coordinator, it will be impossible to co-ordinate Djabugay activities including a formal response to the Draft Plan which is a central aspect of Djabugay's Indigenous Land Use Agreement. Neither has the North Queensland Land Council received funding to prepare a response to the Draft Plan.



*Front: Rosetta Brim, Tommy Brim, Rhonda Brim, Edwin Donahue, Kerry Brim, Geraldine Hobbler, Michelle Hunter, Gerald Hobbler;
Back: Hanz, Ross, Wally Brim, Rhonda Duffin, Ian, Valeska Kapteyn, Ian Cannon, Andy Duffin and Toni.*

House of Representatives Report Recognises Importance of Indigenous Enterprise

By Ingrid Hammer, Research Officer, AIATSIS

The report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs follows an inquiry into the support that is available for Indigenous enterprise, and the avenues available for expansion of Indigenous businesses.

Indigenous business participation is relatively low, at only six per cent compared with 17 per cent for non Indigenous self employed. Non Indigenous people are also three times more likely to own and run their own business than Indigenous people, whose low outcomes are exacerbated with remoteness. During the inquiry the Committee heard that Indigenous people— young and old, from urban to remote regions— increasingly see business as an opportunity to benefit their communities and are keen to engage with the mainstream economy. The range and diversity of Indigenous owned businesses currently in operation was also impressive. The Committee recognised that it would be ineffective to create a standard program to respond to Indigenous business needs, and that in order to assist Indigenous businesses to grow, further action is required. The report details, amongst other things, that more comprehensive trend data, greater research into natural resource management and, further education as to enterprise based opportunities and the availability of governmental assistance would be beneficial to Indigenous businesses across Australia.

The Committee acknowledged the significance of ILUAs to the economic prosperity of Indigenous business enterprise, but noted the potential for power imbalances in the negotiation of such agreements. AIATSIS was recognised by the Committee as being important for the development of resources for native title groups to identify government resources and programs. Director of Research, Lisa Strelein, gave evidence to the Committee, and several of the key recommendations in the report reflect the AIATSIS submission. The report also reaffirms the position of AIATSIS: that there remains a considerable gap between the government expectation that native title determinations should lead to an increase in economic and social prosperity for Indigenous groups, but a lack of corresponding support, funding and ongoing monitoring of the agreement process.

There recommendations specific to native title holders detailed in the report are:

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommends that the Australian Government recognise the vital contribution of Indigenous business development to the economic and social sustainability of Indigenous communities and, accordingly, develop the methodology to adequately value this economic and social contribution when assessing the investment returns for providing assistance to Indigenous businesses.

Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop templates for Indigenous Land Use Agreements to specify that corporate and industry partners fund Indigenous partner corporations to access advice, including financial, taxation and in particular expert legal advice of a quality comparable to that available to the other negotiating partner. This is to ensure that the terms of agreement meet the social and commercial objectives of the Indigenous communities involved.

Recommendation 4: The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop a process for monitoring the content and implementation of Indigenous Land Use Agreements, and develop a complaints process for Indigenous partners.

There were also a number of specific recommendations that are relevant to prescribed bodies corporate in relation to business assistance, financing and mentoring:

Recommendation 10: The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provide a program of funding, including micro-funding, with an emphasis on remote area enterprises, to enable entrepreneurs to establish cooperative enterprises, especially in the arts sector. The Committee recommends that Indigenous Business Australia in association with a corporate partner in the financial sector deliver this program.

Recommendation 11: The Committee recommends that the Australian Government as part of the current review of Australia's taxation system include consideration of how to encourage Indigenous start up business through the taxation system.

In concluding remarks, the Committee advocates the creation of an inter-departmental committee and a one stop shop for Indigenous businesses. In addition, it encourages the Federal Government to work to ensure its procurement guidelines provide opportunities for Indigenous businesses across the spectrum.

Available:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/indigeno/enterprise/report.htm>

NTRU Projects Report

Taxation of native title payments literature review

The NTRU has conducted an extensive literature review on native title benefits and payments. This paper reviews the current literature and information on native title agreements and seeks to identify and start to explore key research questions and issues related to the different types of native title agreements; the nature of payments and benefits received under native title agreements; the way in which these benefits are or could be provided and administered; who has responsibility for providing and administering them; and the potential and need for agreement benchmarking and an implementation framework. This paper highlights the need for further