

Native Title Conference

Welcome from the Native Title Services Victoria Board

We would like to welcome you to the 2009 Native Title Conference, now in its 10th year. This year the conference returns to Melbourne, where it started, and is being held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People. We wish to thank our hosts, the Wurundjeri people, for inviting us to hold the conference on their country.

This important national event provides us all with the opportunity to have new conversations, make new connections and strengthen old friendships.

This year we encourage you to step back from the day-to-day processes of the Native Title Act and consider what drives claimants to seek resolution through a native title claim. As we all deal positively and openly with these issues the successful operation of native title processes will be more likely to occur.

We would like delegates to discuss how we can all respond to traditional owners' rights and aspirations creatively, bringing constructive, pragmatic approaches to the difficult conversations that are intrinsic in indigenous land settlements not only in Australia but throughout the world. Through such approaches we can make significant headway in securing long term economic and social benefits for the whole community.

Put simply, we want to get back to basics, renew the purpose of native title and do the right thing. We invite you to specifically share your thoughts on the challenges and opportunities in relation to:

- Strengthening communities
- Rivers, Lakes and Sea country
- Respectful engagement
- Economies, ecologies and ideologies
- Connecting throughout diversity
- Stories to learn from

Significantly, the Melbourne Cricket Ground is located on land that has a rich history as a gathering place of first

nation people and continues today as a gathering place for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

To register your attendance at this year's Native Title Conference, or for more information: phone: 02 6246 1161, email: ntru@aiatsis.gov.au or visit website: <http://ntru.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Changes to QLD NTRBs & SA's new NTRB

By Ingrid Hammer, Research Officer, NTRU

The status of native title representative bodies has changed in both Queensland and South Australia in recent months. In Queensland there have been changes to the regions of responsibility, and a new body has been established in South Australia.

In Queensland there have been a number of changes that affect the operations of land councils. Although the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation has remained with the Gulf region, Queensland South Native Title Services (QSNTS) now has responsibility for the Greater Mount Isa region. In addition to this QSNTS will include the former Gurang Land Council's areas of responsibility. The Torres Strait Regional Authority remains the representative body for the Torres Strait and the Cape York Land Council is also unchanged.

In news from the south, South Australian Native Title Services (SANTS) has become the State's new native title representative body. The former body, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Inc (ALRM) Native Title Unit, has been rolled over into the new organisation, making for few disruptions to existing operations.

SANTS became the new peak body on July 1 2008 after discussions that concluded that the interests of stakeholders would be better served by a new, independent organisation. ALRM will continue to exist and carry on its ambition to progress the legal interests of the Indigenous people of South Australia, with all native title representative body functions being vested in SANTS.

The idea to create a separate entity was floated as early as 2000, with further discussions continuing until 2006 between ALRM Native Title Unit, the Aboriginal Congress of SA Inc, ALRM and the Commonwealth.

Since the new body has come into force an interim board has been appointed to oversee operations, with the expectation that up to 10 members will sit on the board in the future.

The vision and values of SANTS include:

- To enhance the economic, social and cultural condition of the traditional owners of South Australia by promoting and protecting their native title rights and interest in lands and waters
- To the greatest extent possible, to provide the traditional owners of SA with grass-roots control of SANTS's functions
- To ethically and efficiently perform and deliver Native Title Representative Body services and functions

- To show respect for elders and other Indigenous people
- To achieve the best possible outcomes for Indigenous people
- To foster innovation and seek better ways of achieving our objectives
- To provide a safe, diverse and trusting workplace

The organisational structure of SANTS includes the areas of corporate services and client services, with up to thirty people employed in the organisation at one time.

ALRM was farewelled and SANTS was kicked off with a celebratory dinner held at AAMI stadium in Adelaide. The CEO position at SANTS is filled by Parry Agius, while Neil Gillespie takes on the role of CEO of ALRM.

More information is available from the SANTS website: <http://nativetitlesa.org>

