

## NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE 2012 Echoes of Mabo: Honour and Determination

**4-6 June 2012, Townsville**

In 2012, the annual National Native Title Conference will be co-convened by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) on the traditional lands of the traditional owners of the Townsville area. It will be held at the Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre from 4-6 June 2012. In 2012 the conference celebrates 20 years since the Mabo decision, and is timed to follow on from events organized by the community on Sunday 3 June in Townsville.

This year the theme of the conference is "Echoes of Mabo: Honour and Determination". The conference will address the following sub themes:

- Recognition, Reform, Revolution
- Leadership and Legacies
- Families and Youth
- Culture and Country

Relevant topics within these themes include decision making, case law, the experiences of Prescribed Bodies Corporate, compensation, water, hunting practices, cultural life, joint-management, anthropology and legal practice, mediation and dispute resolution, document and information management, making and implementing agreements, benefits, economic development, local government planning regimes, health, governance, weeds, housing, climate change, heritage, lateral violence, history, language, funding, policy, legal reform, environmental issues, international comparisons, research and statistics, sovereignty, reflections on the last 20 years, social relationships, theoretical developments, and future trends.

Conference presentations will be in five formats: keynotes and plenary speeches, dialogue forums, technical workshops, topical workshops and Indigenous talking circles.

### Call for Papers

We encourage you to submit proposals for papers, panels and talking circles for consideration by

the conference conveners. Please submit your proposal with an abstract (up to 200 words) and biography (up to 150 words for each presenter) to [nativetitleconference@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:nativetitleconference@aiatsis.gov.au) by Monday 20 February 2012. Your proposal must include the Call for Papers Submission Form, available on our website or through contacting the NTRU. If you have any questions, please contact us on (02) 6246 1167 or at [nativetitleconference@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:nativetitleconference@aiatsis.gov.au)

For regular conference updates, visit the website: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/ntru/NTC12.html>

The program conveners will endeavour to meet your proposal, but this may not always be possible, or another choice may be offered to include you in the program.

## RNTBC Regional Meetings

**Matthew O'Rourke,  
PBC Project Officer, AIATSIS**

At national meetings of Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBCs) convened by AIATSIS in 2007 and 2009, RNTBCs requested state or regional opportunities to meet with each other and engage directly with Commonwealth and State government representatives about issues relevant to managing native title rights and interests. Native title holders in Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria have now had the opportunity to meet in these settings. These meetings aim to provide directors or representatives of RNTBCs with an opportunity to come together to discuss shared challenges, concerns and achievements.

The NTRU has convened three RNTBC meetings, the first on 31 August– 2 September 2011 in Balgo WA. The meeting comprised representatives from Tjumu Tjumu (Aboriginal Corporation) and Parna Ngururpa (Aboriginal Corporation) and took place at the Balgo Community Centre. The meeting was co-facilitated with the Central Desert Native Title Services and with the support of consultant anthropologist, David Martin.

Western Australia government representatives from various departments attended the meeting. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities discussed the Caring for Country Program, Indigenous Protected Areas and carbon farming. The Department of Indigenous Affairs



(DIA) provided examples and outlined opportunities for leasing Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) land and the Department of Regional Development and Lands (Royalties for Regions) provided an overview of potential funding opportunities. Commonwealth government representatives from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy also attended and discussed RNTBC internet access, remote business, recording culture and the My Story database.



Western Australia Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate meeting in Balgo

The second meeting took place in Cairns on 25-27 October 2011. Representatives from 26 Queensland RNTBCs attended the workshop. This included representatives from five RNTBCs of the Torres Strait Islands. The Queensland meeting involved native title representative bodies throughout the state and was facilitated by Lisa Strelein, Vincent Mundraby and Valerie Cooms.

Queensland government representatives from various departments attended the meeting. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Acts Branch of the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) discussed the transfer of land under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Acts 1991, they gave examples for transfer of inalienable freehold in Cape York and land trusts under specific protected areas. The Department of Local Government and Planning discussed planning processes and relationships with local councils. The Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office in the Department of Communities provided information on facilitating home ownership, surveys, community engagement and planning and 40 year leases.

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) discussed the development of economic and business expertise for Indigenous organisations. Commonwealth government agency representatives from FaHCSIA presented information on existing funding and support for RNTBCs and the Indigenous Leadership Program. Indigenous Business Australia spoke to the group on potential collaborations with RNTBCs.



Queensland Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate meeting in Cairns

The most recent meeting took place in Melbourne, 13-14 December 2011. Representatives from all four Victorian RNTBCs attended the meeting. The Victorian meeting was facilitated by Austin Sweeney of NTSV and Lisa Strelein of AIATSIS. Victorian government representatives from Aboriginal Affairs Victoria discussed potential opportunities for cultural heritage business development and the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic). A representative from the Parliament of Victoria Environment & Natural Resources Committee gave a presentation on the parliamentary inquiry into Registered Aboriginal Parties. Representatives from the Department of Sustainability & Environment presented on state government planning for Victoria's Forests and Parks. The Native Title Unit from the Department of Justice and FaHCSIA both spoke about RNTBC funding.

All meetings provided the opportunity for RNTBCs to familiarise themselves with each other's activities, issues, structures, challenges and aspirations. Short informal presentations from RNTBC representatives and breakout sessions with small groups were used

to promote discussion. These sessions highlighted the work that RNTBCs are doing and this was then compared to what they would like to be doing if they had resources and time.



Victorian Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate meeting in Melbourne

Common issues were shared at all workshops, with many RNTBC representatives speaking positively about the strength and determination of their groups. However as was the case at both national RNTBC meetings in 2007 and 2009, RNTBCs were disheartened by the lack of funding for RNTBCs to allow for effective governance, coordination, administration and to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Participants from all meetings identified the importance of RNTBCs supporting each other in business and commercial activities and for regular RNTBC national and state or regional based meetings.

It is hoped that through the AIATSIS RNTBC Support Project progress can be made towards national RNTBC representation to generate greater cohesion in the RNTBC sector and influence policy design in a way that matches the needs of native title communities. All three meetings have provided RNTBCs with the opportunity to discuss these issues. AIATSIS is still in the process of seeking representatives from other jurisdictions.

A South Australia RNTBC meeting will be taking place on the 11-13 February 2012 in Port Augusta, SA. This will be co-convened with South Australia Native Title Services (SANTS). AIATSIS acknowledges the funding support of the Native Title and Leadership Branch of FaHCSIA for these workshops. For further information please contact Matt O'Rourke on (02) 6246 1158 or [morourke@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:morourke@aiatsis.gov.au).

For more information on RNTBCs see the website at [www.nativetitle.org.au](http://www.nativetitle.org.au)

## Weeds management on native title lands

Nick Duff, AIATSIS

A new AIATSIS research project is considering the relationship between native title and the weeds responsibilities of 'land holders' under different State and Territory land management legislation. This project is funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), and is considering three research issues:

- the implications of the changing nature of land ownership for Australia's weed management;
- the weed management priorities of native title holders; and,
- the opportunities and limitations of current weed institutions, policies and programs with respect to native title holders.

In October 2011, NTRU Research Fellow Jessica Weir convened a workshop, 'Managing Weeds on Native Title Lands', in partnership with Bruce Gorrington from the Nulungu Centre for Indigenous Studies at Notre Dame University's Broome campus, and with input from the Kimberley Land Council. Workshop participants included Kimberley Indigenous Ranger groups, registered native title bodies corporate (RNTBCs), State and Commonwealth government departments, non-government organisations, and the Kimberley Land Council. The workshop was facilitated by Paul Mitchell from EthnoScapes. One aim was to provide an opportunity for non-Indigenous stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the cultural landscape for weeds management on native title lands, as well as the governance and logistical environment of RNTBCs (the corporate entities that hold native title rights and interests under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth)). Another aim was to give RNTBC land managers an opportunity to talk to other stakeholders about effective systems of weed management and issues of funding.

The workshop included a field trip to Minyirr Park, a coastal reserve adjoining Cable Beach in Broome. The field trip was hosted by Yawuru man Michael 'Micklo' Corpus and the Yawuru Rangers, who spoke to participants about Minyirr Park's cultural significance, the ecological degradation it had experienced over the years, and the efforts that traditional owners had made to protect and rehabilitate the site in conjunction with the Shire of Broome and the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation.