



New Registrar is on the job



ON 20 October 2008, I took up my appointment as Registrar of the National Native Title Tribunal.

My statutory responsibilities as Registrar include assessing claimant applications for registration and maintaining registers for native title applications, native title determinations and Indigenous land use agreements.

In addition, I assist the President to manage the administrative affairs of the Tribunal.

One of my key initial objectives is to finalise, with my colleagues, the development of the Tribunal's new Strategic Plan.

This document will establish our priorities, strategic initiatives and targets for the next three years.

The plan will focus on the achievement of excellence in service-delivery and agreement making.

Another of my key objectives is to strengthen the Tribunal's relationships with all its clients and stakeholders.

I look forward to the opportunity of meeting those clients and stakeholders at the earliest possible opportunity.

In this way I hope to assist my colleagues in responding to the needs and concerns of participants in Australia's often complex native title system.

I come to the position of Registrar from an administrative position in the academic sector.

Formerly, I was Dean International at the Curtin Business School, at WA's Curtin University of Technology. As Dean International, I was responsible for the strategic business development of the

Business School's international program portfolio.

Legal issues

However, I also have a long-standing interest in Indigenous people and the law and I have written on a wide variety of Indigenous legal issues for more than 10 years.

In August 2008, the second edition of my Aboriginal Benchbook for West Australian Courts was published. The Benchbook was designed to assist judicial officers deal with accused Aboriginal persons and Aboriginal witnesses in criminal trials.

First produced in 2002, the Benchbook aims to give effect to recommendations contained in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) final report.

Between 1999 and 2003 I held appointments in the West Australian District Registry of the Federal Court of Australia, including as Deputy District Registrar and Native Title Co-ordinator.

Prior to that, I was a legal academic, specialising in property law, native title and criminal law. I have also been a solicitor in general practice.

As we approach 2009, important challenges for proceedings under the Native Title Act lie ahead, including foreshadowed legislative amendments.

Against this dynamic and exciting background, I look forward to assisting all stakeholders, internal and external, to identify and implement positive, enduring solutions to native title and related issues.