



Koori Mail
14-Jul-2010

Page: 22

General News

By: Native Title Tribunal President Graeme Neate

Market: National

Circulation: 9562

Type: Magazines Lifestyle

Size: 338.91 sq.cms

Frequency: Fortnightly

Commitment is reinforced



NATIVE TITLE AND YOU

with National Native Title
Tribunal President
GRAEME NEATE

THE Australian Government's recent Budget announcement for 2010-14 has prompted the National Native Title Tribunal to reinforce its commitment to facilitate timely and effective native title and related outcomes.

In May this year, the Budget papers stated that the Tribunal's allocation for the next four years would be reduced substantially.

The Tribunal has responded positively and promptly to this challenge, and is reorganising its resources in the new financial environment.

Last month, the Victoria/Tasmania Registry moved into the Owen Dixon Commonwealth Law Courts Building in Melbourne, just around the corner from its previous offices. The move will enable the Tribunal to benefit from its proximity to the Federal Court and from some savings in accommodation costs.

At the end of this month, the Tribunal's registry in Darwin will close. Northern Territory business will be conducted from Adelaide where, on 2 August, the South Australian Registry will become the Central Australia Registry to serve both Northern Territory and South Australian native title clients.

Tribunal members and staff will visit the Northern Territory as required for face-to-face meetings. This move reflects the reduced workload for the Tribunal in the Northern Territory in recent years, as the Federal Court has case-managed native title claims.

The Tribunal is also realigning its structure to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.

Consultants engaged early this year have completed a review of the structure of the Tribunal. They identified ways to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Some of the findings of this review are being implemented immediately, and it is anticipated that these and other changes over the next year or so will reduce the Tribunal's costs and improve its

performance.

The minister with portfolio responsibility for the Tribunal, Attorney-General Robert McClelland, recently reinforced his support for the Tribunal's independent role in the native title system.

In a letter to me, Mr McClelland noted that while the Tribunal's budget has been cut, its function is unchanged: To help achieve timely and effective native title outcomes.

"By assisting people achieve timely and effective native title outcomes, the National Native Title Tribunal has a key role to play in improving the performance of the native title system," he wrote.

The Attorney-General set out his expectations for the Tribunal's work in 2010-2011:

- Co-operate with the Attorney-General's Department, the Federal Court and other participants in the native title system to implement the Government's reforms of the native title system
- Continue delivering services to clients and stakeholders
- Work resourcefully to operate within its financial parameters
- Provide statistical and performance information as required.

Mr McClelland's focus is consistent with the Tribunal's mission: To facilitate the achievement of timely and effective outcomes, and to carry out our functions in a fair, just, economical informal and prompt way.

Although the environment in which the native title system works continues to change, the Tribunal remains focused on its goals and steadfast in its commitment to work with clients and stakeholders to achieve high quality native title and related outcomes.

- For more about changes at the Tribunal, and to read the Attorney-General's letter to the President, visit the www.nntt.gov.au