Native Title Research Advisory Committee Charter

AIATSIS Council
August 2015
PURPOSE
The AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee is established by Council to provide advice to the Principal on the research program of the Native Title Research Unit.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE
Council shall appoint members of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee. The Committee shall have no fewer than seven and no greater than twelve members, being men and women comprising:

- the AIATSIS Principal, also Committee chairperson (ex officio);
- two AIATSIS Council members;
- a representative of the primary funding body of the Native Title Research Unit, nominated by the Commonwealth Department responsible for Indigenous Affairs and approved by Council (normally the First Assistant Secretary with responsibility for native title organisations);
- at least two (and up to eight) native title experts, who are in current practice, connected with native title processes and reflect the disciplinary diversity involved in native title practice; and
- other members as nominated by the Council or the Principal from time to time.

Membership shall comprise a minimum of six Indigenous members and should seek to reflect a gender and age balance as well as a balance between institutional and non-institutional membership.

TERM OF OFFICE
AIATSIS Council members and expert members are appointed to the NTRAC by Council for a period of two years. Members may be reappointed by Council. There is no maximum term of office.

PROCEDURES:
1. Meeting Chair
Meetings of the Committee will be chaired by the Principal of AIATSIS. When the Principal is unable to attend meeting the role of chair will be filled by the Deputy Principal of AIATSIS. If neither of these members are in attendance then meeting attendees will elect the chair for that meeting only.

2. Frequency of Meetings
Meetings of the Native Title Research Advisory Committee will be held at least twice each year. Meetings will be held in April/May and November/December. One meeting will be held in Canberra and the second will be conducted by teleconference. On occasion it may be necessary to conduct intercessional business, in such circumstances AIATSIS will in the first instance endeavour to conduct such matters through telephone and email correspondence.

3. Quorum
Five members, including one member of Council constitute the quorum for the meeting.

4. Attendance
If Committee members are unable to attend a Committee meeting in Canberra they may request to participate in the meeting via telephone or (if available) video conference. As Committee members are appointed on the basis of their personal expertise, it is not appropriate for members to delegate attendance. However, in circumstances where the nominated Commonwealth Government departmental representative is unable to attend they may delegate attendance to another officer within their program area who has an appropriate level of expertise, namely an executive level officer with direct responsibility for native title matters.

If a member fails to attend one meeting within a two year period then their membership will be reviewed.

5. Preparation of Agendas and Minutes

The agenda for the meeting will be prepared by the Native Title Project Officer, or other NTRU staff member in consultation with the Chairperson and the Director responsible for the Native Title Research Unit. A draft agenda will be circulated to Committee members and they will be invited to submit additional agenda items for consideration by the Principal.

Minutes of the proceedings of the Native Title Research Advisory Committee will be kept by the Native Title Project Officer, or other NTRU staff member and circulated to members for review/comment.

Minutes of meetings of the NTRAC will be tabled at Council.

6. Conflict of Interest

Committee members will be provided with the AIATSIS Conflict of Interest policy on commencement. Where conflicts of interest exist, such conflict should be dealt with in accordance with the policy and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

7. Distribution of papers

The Native Title Project Officer (or other NTRU staff member) will circulate papers to members of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee at least seven to ten days prior to meetings.

8. Timely consideration and review of research activities

Written reports including details of ongoing and planned research activities, will be provided to the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee in a timely way to enable proper consideration of all issues.

9. Responsibilities of members

AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee members are required to abide by the rules of conduct as advised by the AIATSIS Council.

10. Participation of non-members in Committee meetings

The Director with responsibility for the Native Title Research Unit will participate as a visitor in Committee meetings. An NTRU staff member will attend the meeting for the purposes of recording meeting minutes. Additional NTRU staff members, particularly research fellows may be invited to participate in meetings as visitors to provide information directly to Committee members. From time to time members of the Committee may request participation of other visitors in Committee meetings through the Chair. Participation of visitors is at the discretion of the Chair.

11. Methods of decision making

Where specific direction from Committee members is sought, members of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee shall endeavour to reach decisions by general agreement.
12. Reporting of complaints

All complaints relating to the research activities of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Unit will be dealt with, in the first instance, by the Director with responsibility for the Native Title Research Unit, who will endeavour to resolve them in a timely and satisfactory manner. Should the complainant wish to take his or her complaint further, they will be advised to contact the AIATSIS Principal. The Director with responsibility for the Native Title Research Unit, may inform members of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee of any complaint received that is relevant to the purpose of the committee and all steps taken to address such complaint, particularly in circumstances where the Committee members may be able to provide advice.

13. Confidentiality of the committee proceedings

All papers and proceedings of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee are confidential and remain the property of AIATSIS. Information will be made available only to those authorised to receive it, namely members of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee and AIATSIS Council.

14. Remuneration

Council members of the AIATSIS Native Title Research Advisory Committee will receive sitting fees for their attendance at Committee meetings. Other members will not receive remuneration for attendance at Committee meetings.

15. Payment of travel and accommodation costs

Travel and accommodation costs incurred for interstate members to attend meetings will be paid by AIATSIS. In keeping with AIATSIS Council policy, where required, business class travel will be organised for Council members, economy class travel will be organised for other Committee members.

Last amended 15 August 2015