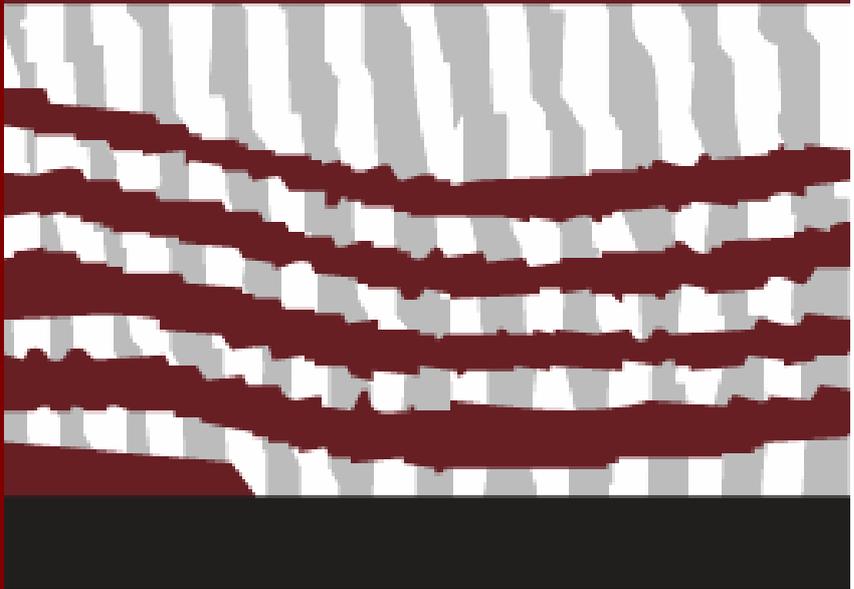
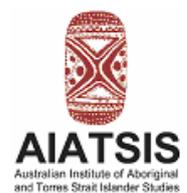


**Second National Meeting of
Registered Native Title Bodies
Corporate: Issues and Outcomes
Melbourne, 2 June 2009**

By Toni Bauman and Cynthia Ganesharajah



**Native Title Research Report
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Second national meeting of registered native title bodies corporate: issues and outcomes
Melbourne, 2 June 2009

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Executive Summary

1. On Tuesday 2 June 2009, 61 representatives from Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBCs) from around Australia gathered together at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Victoria, on Wurundjeri country, for the second national meeting of RNTBCs.
2. The meeting provided RNTBCs with the opportunity to network, share experiences and develop strategies to move forward. RNTBCs were also provided with information about potential program and funding sources from representatives of FaHCSIA, DEWHA and DEEWR.
3. RNTBC representatives stressed that their roles as traditional owners and cultural custodians meant that they should be engaged as primary stakeholders in communities.
4. A number of RNTBCs, through the determination and commitment of their volunteers, are successfully engaging with local government and industry, and involving young people in their activities.
5. However, RNTBCs feel that their decisions are often not respected and that they are often ignored in key consultation processes.
6. RNTBCs also often provide a number of services to communities that go unrecognised. They deal with a range of issues, many of which are government responsibilities including, health, housing and development issues.
7. As was the case at the first national meeting held in Canberra on 11-13 April 2007, a lack of resources and specifically designated funding to enable RNTBCs to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, provide certainty to developers and pursue development opportunities, was a key issue. Some RNTBCs also sought the ability to directly apply for FaHCSIA funding rather than through NTRBs/NTSPs.
8. In the absence of resources, participants identified a number of activities they could undertake in self-strengthening and building capacity including, developing whole-of-community agendas, facilitating relationships between Elders and young people, and creating education packages for local communities, schools and governments.
9. Whilst capacity could be built through undertaking ORIC governance training, comments were made that ORIC's training is often directed towards regulatory compliance and that there is also a need for RNTBCs to undertake broader governance training that addresses issues of decision-making and dispute management processes and develops leadership.

10. Participants also identified: the importance of RNTBCs supporting each other in business and commercial activities; the need for an information-sharing database or RNTBC web site; and the need for regular RNTBC national and state/territory based meetings to address the needs of this unique sector.
11. The meeting resolved to establish a national peak body whose functions would be to represent and advocate for RNTBCs and develop a national RNTBC strategic framework. Provisions were put in place to establish a small working group or task force to progress the resolution.
12. Another key role for the RNTBC peak body would be the progression of a native title compensation test case by native title holders (who already have native title determinations).

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEWHA	Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
IEDS	Indigenous Economic Development Strategy
IEP	Indigenous Employment Program
NNTT	National Native Title Tribunal
ORIC	Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
RNTBC	Registered Native Title Body Corporate
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
UES	Universal Employment Services

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1. Introduction

On Tuesday 2 June 2009, 61 representatives from Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBCs) from around Australia gathered together for the second national meeting of RNTBCs (see list of participants in Attachment 1). The meeting was held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, on Wurundjeri Country, in Victoria prior to the annual Native Title Conference which participants also attended. A critical outcome of the meeting was a resolution to establish a national body to advocate for RNTBC interests.

Evaluations from the meeting suggested that participants welcomed the opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas and participate in open debate as well as to learn about potential funding and program resources (see evaluation report in Attachment 2). However, some participants also expressed disappointment at a lack of progress since the first national meeting which was held in Canberra on 11-13 April 2007. They were concerned that many of the issues discussed at the first meeting had not been resolved, including the need for specifically designated funding for RNTBC governance and administration.¹

The first national meeting was attended by twenty-three RNTBC representatives. The increased numbers of representatives at the second national meeting reflected an increase in the numbers of RNTBCs overall (63 in June 2009 compared to 50 in April 2007), as well as a significant increase in FaHCSIA funding and the support of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) for the second meeting. Budgets for RNTBC national meetings are high, particularly given the significant travel costs for participants, many of whom are remotely located and a significant number of whom live in the Torres Strait.²

Like the first national meeting, the second national meeting was a component of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Native Title Research Unit's (NTRU) Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) Project.³ The project aims to develop a better understanding of the challenges facing native title corporations post determination and to support these communities through research and participatory planning. As part of this project, NTRU has held workshops and engaged in a number of action based research partnerships with PBCs across Australia

¹ See T Bauman and T Tran, 'First National Prescribed Bodies Corporate Meeting: Issues and Outcomes Canberra 11-13 April 2007', Research Report No.3/2007, Native Title Research Unit, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, 2007.

² There are 20 Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate in the Torres Strait.

³ Although native title corporations are sometimes referred to as PBCs, this is not strictly accurate. Under ss 55-57 Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) as part of the determination of native title native title groups are required to nominate a 'prescribed body corporate' or PBC to hold (as trustee) or manage (as agent) their native title. Following a determination, prescribed bodies corporate are entered onto the National Native Title Register. At this point, the corporation becomes a registered native title body corporate or RNTBC. While the terms PBC and RNTBC are often used interchangeably, the Native Title Act 1993 deals with them separately. On the whole, the term RNTBC is more accurate.

to provide assistance to PBCs and develop recommendations based on a better understanding of the sector.⁴

1.1 Aims of the 2009 RNTBC National Meeting

The second national RNTBC meeting shared a number of aims with the first meeting. This was necessary since a number of RNTBCs had not been represented at the first meeting.

Broadly, both meetings aimed to provide an opportunity for RNTBCs to:

- share experiences and learn from each other;
- network with and support each other;
- obtain information from the AIATSIS PBC Project (2006-2009);
- develop strategies to move forward;
- obtain information about Government funding opportunities;
- inform government policy and program development; and
- identify research issues for NTRU.⁵

1.2 Structure of the 2009 RNTBC National Meeting

The 2009 national RNTBC meeting was facilitated by Ms Cathy Craigie who was assisted by Dr Lisa Strelein, Director of Research, and Ms Toni Bauman, Research Fellow, in the Native Title Research Unit at AIATSIS. The participants were welcomed by Elders of the Wurundjeri traditional land owners, Vicki Nicholson-Brown and Alice Kolasa, and also Mick Dodson, Chairman of AIATSIS.

The agenda for the meeting aimed to provide RNTBC representatives with the maximum opportunity to listen to and get to know each other and to work out ways forward. The agenda also aimed to provide information from Australian Government representatives about potential funding opportunities (see agenda in Attachment 3). Two breakout discussions were held with participants divided into six groups across states and territories. A participant from each group then reported back to the meeting.

Following Lisa Strelein's brief context setting presentation to the meeting, participants entered their first breakout discussions where they were asked 'What has your RNTBC been doing over the last 12 months?' Participants discussed their activities, successes and best practice, and showed great interest in hearing from each other.

Three representatives from Federal Government departments, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA), and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) then provided information on possible funding sources for RNTBCs. These presentations are summarised in Section 2 of this report.

⁴ For further information about the project see, Native Title Research Unit, *Major Projects: Prescribed Bodies Corporate*, Native Title Research Unit, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, viewed 22 June 2009, <http://ntru.aiatsis.gov.au/major_projects/pbc_rntbc.html>.

⁵ Bauman and Tran, pp5-6.

In the second breakout session, RNTBCs were asked to focus on their priorities and arrive at future actions which might be undertaken, including contributions RNTBCs could make themselves, particularly in the absence of resources.

Three participants were then selected to report on the outcomes of the meeting at the National Native Title Conference, Native Title Representative Body Day (NTRB) on Wednesday 3 June 2009 (see PowerPoint in Attachment 4).

Participants from the second national meeting also regrouped for a debriefing, feedback and strategic discussion in the final session at the Native Title Conference on Friday 5th June 2009.

2. Government Presentations

Three representatives of Australian Government departments were invited to provide information to the meeting on programs that were relevant to RNTBCs. The contact details of these representatives are available in Attachment 5.

2.1 Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

Mr John Eldridge, Director of NTRB Monitoring and Support Section from FaHCSIA provided a brief update on the support available for RNTBC's through FaHCSIA's native title program. He also spoke to RNTBCs who attended the debriefing, feedback and strategic discussion in the final session at the Native Title Conference on Friday 5th June 2009.

He reported that FaHCSIA was unsuccessful in obtaining new specific funding for RNTBCs in the last Budget and that there is no structured program for funding support for RNTBCs post determination. Despite this outcome, FaHCSIA will continue to seek specific funding for RNTBCs, who in the meantime were encouraged to seek funding from the range of programs currently offered.

Mr Eldridge stated that in terms of long term funding arrangements there is a positive outlook. Currently, the NNTT estimates that it will take approximately 30 years to resolve the 500 odd claims on hand. Both the Commonwealth and the States have expressed a desire to increase the resolution rates of native title claims and there have been discussions about negotiating broader settlement packages. This signals an ongoing funding emphasis on claims processing rather than post-determination work. Mr Eldridge noted, however, that as claims are resolved over the short to medium term, the demands on NTRBs and Native Title Service Providers (NTSPs) will decrease and it should be possible for some resources to be diverted to RNTBCs. (However, post determination work is complex and many RNTBCs will still require the support of NTRBs/NTSPs).

Mr Eldridge noted that one-off funds had become available for transfer to the native title and land rights program for the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 financial years and this had enabled FaHCSIA to make some small provision for critical PBC needs in those

years (around half a million dollars was distributed amongst 10 RNTBCs in the 2007/2008 financial year and amongst 12 RNTBCs in the 2008/2009 financial year).

Mr Eldridge also noted that it is in the interests of State and Territory Governments to contribute to the ongoing support of RNTBCs. In particular, it is in their interests to have RNTBCs capable of responding to proponents in a timely way since RNTBCs represent a convenient and effective vehicle for their engagement with communities. It makes sense for settlement negotiations to deal with the question of ongoing support for RNTBCs to ensure that arrangements negotiated are sustainable into the future.

At the meeting debrief on 5 June, Mr Eldridge stated that FaHCSIA currently have set aside \$1 million for PBC 'crisis support' for 2009-2010. He urged RNTBCs interested in applying for funding to contact their NTRB before the funding submission deadline on Friday 12 June 2009. He emphasised that this arrangement was a short term palliative measure to provide crisis assistance to RNTBCs who were in need of such assistance, and was not presented as a structured program of support in its own right.

Mr Eldridge also noted that NTRBs/NTSPs and the TSRA have the capacity to propose an allocation of funds or in-kind support for RNTBCs from their own budgets. They may also have the capacity to assist RNTBCs to make funding submissions. One RNTBC was particularly concerned about the need for any funding applications to be made through NTRBs/NTSPs since they are in litigation with their NTRB.

Overall, RNTBC representatives at the national meeting were disappointed in and discouraged by the FaHCSIA funding information. The lack of designated funding for the RNTBC sector does not recognise their important roles under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and the *Native Title (Prescribed Bodies Corporate) Regulations 1999* (Cth) or provide resources for them to fulfil these roles.

2.2 Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA)

Mr Peter Jebb, Assistant Director, Working on Country, Australian Government Land and Coasts Division at DEWHA discussed the possibility of RNTBCs seeking funding under the Working on Country program. Under Working on Country, the Government purchases environmental services from groups and organisations involved in a range of natural and cultural heritage management and protection activities.

Working on Country (and Indigenous Protected Areas) are elements of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative. Applications for funding through these elements are now made by way of submissions in response to Caring for our Country's annual Business Plan, released in September each year.

Working on Country was established two years ago and provides \$90 million to fund up to 300 ranger positions over 5 years. To date approximately 200 rangers within 30 projects have been contracted. There have been three rounds of funding that have included an eligibility requirement that projects were only funded if they were on

Indigenous held land. However, an additional funding round from a separate funding stream (providing \$42 million of funding over 4 years until 30 June 2013) outside of the Caring for our Country initiative recently took place. Tenure requirements for this funding round were flexible in that it was not restricted to Indigenous tenure and includes the possibility of co-operative land management over land which is not Indigenous held but in which Indigenous people may have interests and responsibilities. Applications for this round are currently being assessed.

Mr Jebb provided a list of contacts for Working on Country, Indigenous Protected Areas and the network of Indigenous Land Management Facilitators and recommended that organisations use these contacts to develop their ideas in relation to natural and cultural heritage management and protection prior to making funding submissions to the Business Plan. (See Attachment 5).

2.3 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Ms Madonna Tomes, Director, Economic and Business Economic Development and Partnership Team, drew attention to DEEWR and other programs under which RNTBCs could seek assistance (there is a list of funding program websites and contact details in Attachment 6).

In particular she spoke about the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) (more information about this program is also in Attachment 6). The IEP is focused on skills development and provides:

- assistance to job seekers and the employer to sustain positions;
- mentoring support, traineeships, on-the-job training; and
- self-employment opportunities e.g. working with local communities and organisations where there may be subcontracting opportunities.

Ms Tomes also noted that there are a range of mainstream business development programs administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research under which RNTBCs could seek assistance.

3. RNTBC Successes and Activities

A key aim of the meeting was for RNTBCs to share experiences and learn from each other so they could develop strategies to move forward. An important part of this experience was RNTBC representatives sharing their success stories and describing their activities over the past twelve months.

Three broad areas of activity and success emerged, though a number of others were also raised. These were: determination and commitment to country; engagement with industry and local government; and involvement of young people.

3.1 Determination and commitment to country

A strong theme in many discussions was the determination to succeed and the commitment to country and community of RNTBC members. Many work voluntarily

for RNTBCs, a contribution which is often not taken into account in assessing the worth of RNTBCs.

RNTBCs were described by one participant as ‘public servants for our mob’.

3.2 Engagement with community, industry and governments

A number of RNTBCs have successfully partnered with governments and industry on specific projects. Involvement in industry including in local timber, farming and fishing industries and property development, working with local governments and participation in caring for country programs has enabled the building of rapport and strong relationships.

Examples of community, industry or local government engagement included:

- performing welcome to country and developing cultural protocols;
- community consultations around a range of issues;
- networking and building relationships with neighbours;
- negotiating cooperative land management arrangements and plans over conservation areas;
- working with the community and establishing community architecture;
- working on joint ventures;
- undertaking cultural heritage management and/or natural heritage management;
- keeping the community and RNTBC members informed through newsletters, radio, television, and community gatherings such as barbecues; and
- sponsoring a local AFL team.

3.3 Involvement of young people

The need to include young people and to ensure their participation in RNTBC processes and activities was emphasised. This is a critical issue if effective succession planning and capacity building processes are to be put in place and if younger RNTBC members are to have a sense of ownership of the corporation.

A number of examples were given of involving younger people in RNTBC activities including:

- ensuring their attendance and involvement in monthly meetings;
- assisting them in obtaining training in land management and forestry (one RNTBC had four forestry graduates);
- taking them on trips over country; and
- creating jobs for them.

4. RNTBC Key Challenges

A number of key issues were identified by RNTBC representatives including:

- the need for clarity in the role of RNTBCs;
- recognition of and respect for RNTBCs as cultural custodians and ‘First Nations’;
- resources and capacity;

- secure and direct funding;
- corporate governance support;
- the extent of corporate governance demands; and
- maintaining and developing a range relationships.

4.1 The role of RNTBCs

There is often a lack of understanding in the community about the roles of RNTBCs. Whilst participants emphasised the primary responsibility of RNTBCs as traditional owners in caring for country, many RNTBCs are also performing a range of other functions, a number of which are government responsibilities.

RNTBCs can be overburdened with these additional responsibilities which might involve a range of negotiations in the community around issues such as health, housing, and community development and planning. Participants also noted that they were often asked to be the conduit between traditional owners, governments and others in the community and to play a significant liaison role.

RNTBC members have multiple roles and responsibilities both within their RNTBC and in relation to their commitments outside the RNTBC which can give rise to conflicts of interest if not managed transparently.

4.2 Recognition and respect for RNTBCs as cultural custodians and 'First Nations'

Participants felt that their roles as traditional owners and as cultural custodians were not respected. They commented that their decisions and suggestions are often not taken seriously by governments, other Aboriginal organisations and authorities and the broader community. One State government, for example, had ignored a review undertaken by an RNTBC and its recommendations.

As cultural custodians, RNTBCs are also constantly seeking ways of balancing their cultural and commercial responsibilities. They asked: how do you separate culture in order to do business in the commercial world? How do you maintain identity while pursuing investments? Participants discussed the possibility of using their corporations as a vehicle for 'culture' by reflecting their traditional decision-making structures in their corporate structures.

Some participants suggested that RNTBCs need to work to create a political profile that reframes perceptions of RNTBCs so that they are seen as valued and respected members of the community. This could mean that native title becomes a form of socio-political recognition that moves beyond the language of 'RNTBC' to language that reflects the status of native title holders as First Nations of Peoples.

4.3 The need for resources and capacity

The lack of resources for RNTBCs, which significantly reduces their capacity, was a strong theme in discussions. Participants described difficulties during start-up or establishment processes and in coordinating and organising meetings. Many RNTBC members also have numerous other community responsibilities and are required to

attend countless meetings dealing with issues related to what are often communities in crisis. They also noted the imbalances and unfairness in negotiations between well resourced companies and government departments with paid staff and RNTBCs members, many of whom are working voluntarily with few resources.

Without resources, RNTBCs are unable to fulfil their obligations under the *Native Title (Prescribed Bodies Corporate) Regulations 1999* (Cth) including consultation with native title holders, or meet their responsibilities in the implementation of any agreements that are negotiated.

Funding that has been available for RNTBCs, through agreements or compensation, is often used for administration, governance or meeting the requirements prescribed by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and there are few resources to carry out caring for country activities although this is the fundamental RNTBC responsibility as land holders.

Overall, the lack of funding and resources means that RNTBCs are unable to fully capitalise on economic opportunities and that they must carefully consider entering into agreements in light of their capacity to meet the agreement provisions. Without resources and legal and financial capacity, RNTBCs also have difficulty in attracting capital for joint ventures and other investments.

The lack of funding has led some RNTBCs to feel that they have been set up to fail. Even as RNTBCs are encouraged to apply for funding, whether from FaHCSIA or other state and territory programs which may be on offer, they require significant resources and capacity to prepare and submit applications and to lobby external parties for funding. That is, applying for funding and being successful in funding applications requires funding in the first instance!

4.4 Secure and direct funding

Many participants at the meeting were concerned that RNTBC FaHCSIA funding is being channelled through NTRBs/NTSPs rather than being allocated to RNTBCs directly. They were particularly concerned about the potential for conflicts of interest when RNTBCs and NTRBs/NTSPs are effectively competing for funding from the same 'bucket' or when there may not be good relations between RNTBCs and NTRBs/NTSPs. As noted above, this concern was repeatedly expressed by one RNTBC who is currently in litigation with their NTRB, yet is expected to make their funding submission through them. This issue was also raised in the context of the Torres Strait, as participants from the Torres Strait spoke about the lack of clarity in regional governance particularly with the new Torres Strait Regional Shire Council replacing the Island Co-ordinating Councils, and about issues relating to the separation of powers and the TSRA. Many Torres Strait representatives did not believe that native title is a priority of the TSRA, although, discussions are planned between Torres Strait RNTBCs and the TSRA.

Participants were also critical of the periodic and/or temporary nature of funding, stating that it was detrimental to their activities. RNTBCs are unable to deliver real outcomes if the longevity of a project is not secure and funding ceases throughout the course of the project – often at critical moments where foundations are being built.

Others felt that governments were heavy handed in insisting upon how funds should be spent, leaving RNTBCs with little ability to own decisions and carry out projects which are their priority. Some participants argued that this is a violation of human rights, as it is when RNTBC resources are directed to basic services that are a government's responsibility to provide.

4.5 Corporate governance

Given the complexities of RNTBC corporate governance and ORIC's compliance requirements for RNTBCs, participants noted that they are often simply playing 'catch-up'. They discussed the need to be on the 'front foot' rather than always responding to the needs and demands of others, in particular, those of governments.

Participants also discussed the financial and logistical challenges in keeping up with ongoing legislative changes. For example, the transition to the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cth) (CATSI) and changes in Indigenous tenures under Queensland legislation.⁶

One participant stated that 'what works is what people want to do for themselves not what the law or ORIC says'. At the same time, participants recognised the need for governance training for company directors to ensure the corporation is run efficiently and according to the rules.

4.6 Building relationships and awareness of RNTBC roles

Participants were concerned about improving relationships not only between RNTBCs and a range of other individuals and organisations, but also amongst their own members and factions. Some participants felt that they spent a lot of time resolving disputes within the community and maintaining good relations which was an exhausting, confronting, and difficult part of native title. There was a general feeling that RNTBCs need to move beyond past conflicts.

Building relationships will require developing common understandings about the roles of RNTBCs and why they should be engaged as primary native title bodies through community education. Such a lack of awareness leads to a lack of respect for RNTBC decisions.

Building relationships with and respect for RNTBCs by governments and industry will also require governments and industry to improve their cross-cultural communication skills. Some participants noted that there had been clashes in ways of doing business with government bureaucracies and mining companies who often appear to value 'money' as a priority in negotiations rather than cultural issues. At the same time, however, the experience of dealing with a RNTBC could raise cultural awareness in third parties.

⁶ *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Qld); *Torres Strait Land Act 1991* (Qld).

RNTBCs at the meeting also recognised the need to network amongst themselves, and to build business partnerships with each other - 'RNTBCs need to hook up' - as well as building international networks through global Indigenous treaties and forums.

5. Priorities for Future Action: Self Strengthening and Capacity building

Two main priorities for action to support RNTBCs were identified at the meeting: self-strengthening/capacity building and creating a national peak body. An emphasis in the discussions was placed on what RNTBCs can do for themselves without depending on other people or agencies to improve what they are doing, and within the constraints of limited or no resources.

This section discusses self-strengthening and capacity building measures. The national RNTBC peak body proposal is discussed in the following section, Section 6.

5.1 What RNTBCs can do for themselves

It was agreed that there were a number of actions that RNTBCs could take themselves in order to self-strengthen/ build capacity. RNTBCs could self-strengthen through:

- building cohesion by developing a whole-of-community driven agenda that would at the same time promote individual leadership;
- involving younger members in all aspects of RNTBC business;
- maintaining law and custom by, for example
 - recording customs,
 - asking Elders to teach the children about traditional law and custom,
 - considering the relationship between and affects on laws and customs of the native title corporation's constitution, and
 - developing cultural protocols;
- improving recognition and respect for RNTBCs by
 - educating and engaging with government agencies and committees,
 - producing educational materials about native title and the roles and responsibilities of RNTBCs partly from a human rights perspective,
 - developing native title and RNTBC awareness strategies in schools,
 - developing communication protocols and protocols for doing business with RNTBCs, and
 - developing ongoing and sustainable projects rather than one-off projects; and
- setting aspirational goals and targets.

5.2 Collaborative capacity building

Although there were things RNTBCs could do themselves to self-strengthen/build capacity, there were also a number of activities that would require RNTBCs to obtain assistance from external parties, such as governments. Collaborative capacity building was seen to involve:

- refining corporate structures, increasing knowledge of responsibilities and developing codes of conduct for Directors and members;
- governance training which includes but goes beyond the kind of technical training ORIC offers;

- networking and information-sharing by, for example, establishing, with AIATSIS support, a shared RNTBC database or web site that could also be a register of government departments, commercial organisations or business people willing to assist PBCs to develop commercial activities or provide funding assistance;
- expanding themes in the National Native Title Conference to reflect the existence, operation and expression of native title in a post-determination context;
- using international comparisons to inform best practice; and
- economic and social development plans which contain clear guidelines for implementation, for example
 - ‘roadmaps’ for RNTBCs which set out clearly the current state of the RNTBC, governance issues requiring addressing, potential future plans etc (it was suggested that AIATSIS develop a template), and
 - business plans and vision statements.

6. A National RNTBC Peak Body

Participants at the meeting made the following resolution (see attachment 8; see also attachment 9 for a media release from the meeting):

We the native title Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) representatives at this 2nd national meeting of PBCs on the 2nd of June 2009 at the MCG on Wurundjeri country resolve that a national PBC peak body will be established to represent our collective interests as PBCs.

Endorsed by the meeting

Endorsed by the Wurundjeri Elders present

The form of such a peak body was not discussed in any detail but there are a range of options including that it be established as a council, working group, or steering committee. Suggestions to incorporate the body were met with some concern, at least at this stage. The possibility of creating a position for traditional owners in the new national Indigenous representative body was also discussed. Participants stated that ‘RNTBCs are the only people who can rightfully represent people speaking for country’.

The role of the national RNTBC body, as discussed in the final debriefing session at the Native title Conference, would be to:

- campaign/lobby for a structured funding regime for RNTBCs in future budgets;
- engage with governments and advocate on behalf of all RNTBCs;
- campaign for working on and caring for country funding to be paid directly to RNTBCs;
- design an engagement framework with the Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts;
- develop a national strategic framework for RNTBCs;
- evaluate RNTBC activities;

- coordinate regular meetings and conferences on themes relevant to RNTBCs that could also evaluate interim change; and
- organise and/or support research into a test case on compensation for loss of native title by RNTBCs (who already have native title determinations).

6.1 Action relating to the establishment of the peak body

Participants at the final debriefing session at the Native Title Conference agreed to establish a small working group or task force of committed people who are willing to work towards establishing the national peak body.

Actions allocated were as follows:

- one or two RNTBCs members from each state and territory were given the responsibility to canvass RNTBCs in their state or territory to nominate an appropriate representative for the task force. These representatives were
 - New South Wales - Mary-Lou Buck (Dunghutti),
 - Northern Territory - Darryl Pearce (Lhere Artepe),
 - Queensland - Alwyn Lyall (Jabalbina) and Rhonda Brim (Djabugay);
 - Torres Strait - Seriako Stephen (Ugar Kem Le Ged Zeuber Er Kep Le) and Ned David (Magani Lagaugal), and
 - Western Australia - Des Hill (Miriuwung and Gajerrong 1) and Nommie Wade (Yawuru);
- representatives from Victoria or South Australia who were not present at Friday's meeting could be approached to come on board at a later date;
- task force nominations were to be sent to Kelly McCosker, TSRA by Friday 26 June 2009 (Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au); and
- once established, task force members would allocate roles and tasks for the achievement of set goals.

In addition:

- FaHCSIA was to be asked by 6 June 2009 by AIATSIS and/or Daryl Pearce to consider a request that \$100 000 of allocated RNTBC funding be used to support the development of the peak body;
- representatives of Torres Strait RNTBCs committed to approaching the TSRA for contributions to the peak body; and
- NTRU/AIATSIS was asked to confirm the possibility of supporting the development of a peak body.

It was also suggested that financial contributions could be made towards the national peak body by those RNTBCs who do have financial resources.

7. Future National RNTBC Meetings

Evaluation forms completed by participants suggest that PBC members found the opportunity to network with other PBCs from around Australia, to share experiences, exchange ideas and participate in open debate very useful. All participants wanted to see national RNTBC meetings become a regular annual or bi-annual event.

Several priorities were identified for future meetings:

- they should be longer than one day;

- they should start with an update on progress made since previous meetings;
- they should involve young people as a priority to enable knowledge to be passed on to future leaders; and
- representatives at ministerial level should be invited to the final session to answer PBC questions.

Suggested topics for inclusion in future meetings:

- corporate governance training; and
- the provision of information on agreement making, company structures and development plans.

8. Conclusion

The successes of RNTBCs are encapsulated in their commitment and determination in representing traditional owners and fulfilling obligations to care for country. Some RNTBCs have been able to successfully engage in combined projects with industry and/or local government. Others have effectively included their young people in RNTBC processes, making progress towards succession planning and capacity building. These successes are critical in highlighting the potential that RNTBCs have to positively impact their native title community and the local community and make valuable contributions to the broader community.

The most significant challenges facing RNTBCs relate to defining the appropriate role for RNTBCs, concerns about the amount and distribution of funding and the ongoing lack of resources and capacity. These issues are complex and interrelated. However, they are not new. These issues have been previously highlighted and are ongoing issues in the post native title determination context. If native title is to deliver benefit to Indigenous communities, and facilitate local and regional development, there is an urgent requirement to take RNTBCs seriously and resource them.

A significant development from the meeting was the consensus and support for the development of a new national peak body. Strong commitments and preliminary work were undertaken towards the development of such a body and participants were hopeful that AIATSIS would be able to continue its role in supporting RNTBCs and PBCs.

9. List of Attachments

Attachment 1: List of RNTBC participants

Attachment 2: Evaluation report

Attachment 3: Meeting Agenda

Attachment 4: Powerpoint slides from NTRB Day Presentation

Attachment 5: Contact list of Government representatives

Attachment 6: DEWHA contact list

Attachment 7: DEEWR business support funding list

Attachment 8: Melbourne RNTBC Resolution

Attachment 9: Media Release

Attachment 10: List of documents from the Meeting Pack distributed at the meeting.

Attachment 1: Participants contact list

Name	Registered Native Title Body Corporate	Telephone	Email
Western Australia			
Donovan Jenkins	Tjurabalan Native Title Aboriginal Corporation	0427 673 586	featherfootproductions@hotmail.com
Joe Edgar	Karajarri Traditional Lands Association Aboriginal Corporation	02 6246 1160	joseph.edgar@aiatsis.gov.au
Mervyn Mulardy	Karajarri Traditional Lands Association Aboriginal Corporation	08 9193 6729	anna.mardling@klc.org.au
Shirley Spratt	Karajarri Traditional Lands Association Aboriginal Corporation	08 9193 6729	anna.mardling@klc.org.au
Des Hill	Miriuwung and Gajerrong 1 Aboriginal Corporation	08 9168 2557	d.hill@yawoorroongmgcorp.com.au
Chris Griffiths	Miriuwung and Gajerrong 4 Aboriginal Corporation	08 9169 2590	
John Albert	Bardi Jawi Niimidiman Aboriginal Corporation	0427 380 199	karenyjones@hotmail.com
Debra Pigram	Yawuru Native Title Holders Aboriginal Corporation	08 9192 5155	rubibi.fieldofficer@klc.org.au
Anom Wade	Kunin (Native Title) Aboriginal Corporation	08 9192 5155	anom.wade@klc.org.au
Marcus Holmes	Jidi Jidi Aboriginal Corporation	08 9486 9197	mholmes@taylorinfoot.com.au
Sue Boyd	Wintawari Guruma Aboriginal Corporation	0428 757 457	donboyd@bigpond.com
Phil Davies	Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation	08 9182 1497	pdavies@juluwarlu.pilbara.net
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Nyaparu (Margaret) Rose	Nyangumarta/Warnman Aboriginal Corporation	08 9172 5433	mrose@yamatji.org.au
Marie Brown	Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation	08 9037 1147	
Peter Twigg	Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation	08 9037 1147	pjtwigg@ozemail.com.au
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Matthew West	Tjamu Tjamu Aboriginal Corporation	08 9425 2000	philramsav@centraldesert.org.au
Christina Araujo	Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation	08 9486 9797	christina@wdlac.com.au
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Preston Thomas	Yarnangu Ngaanyatjarrauparna Aboriginal Corporation	08 8950 1741	alex.knight@ngaanyatjarra.org.au
Beverly Thomas	Yarnangu Ngaanyatjarrauparna Aboriginal Corporation	08 8950 1741	alex.knight@ngaanyatjarra.org.au
NT			
Darryl Pearce	Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation	08 8953 6555	darryl.pearce@lhereartepe.org.au
NSW			
Mary-Lou Buck	Dunghutti Elders Council	08 6562 2855	decac1@bigpond.com
Ruth Maruca	Dunghutti Elders Council	08 6562 2855	decac1@bigpond.com
Doug Williams	Githabul Nation Aboriginal Corporation	0424 879 810	doug.williams@environment.nsw.gov.au
VICTORIA			
Sandy Hodges	Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	03 5381 0977	sandy.bglc@bigpond.com
Gail Harradine	Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	03 5381 0977	gail.bglc@bigpond.com
Eileen Alberts	Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	03 5527 1427	ceo@gunditjmirring.com
Thomas Day	Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	03 5527 1427	ceo@gunditjmirring.com

QLD			
Harry Bowen	Dhubbiwarra Aboriginal Corporation	07 4053 9222	harold.bowen@health.qld.gov.au
Brian Cobus	Hopevale Congress Aboriginal Corporation	07 4053 9222	brian.cobus@balkanu.com.au
Alwyn Lyall	Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation	07 4019 6202	alwyn.lyall@balkanu.com
Janine Chevathun	Ngan Aak Kunch Aboriginal Corporation	07 4060 6218	planning.bpo@gmail.com
John Wason	Bar-Barrum Aboriginal Corporation	07 4093 1223	johnwason@skymesh.com.au
Barry Hunter	Djabugay Native Title Aboriginal Corporation	07 4084 0967	hantz@djabugay.org.au
Rhonda Brim	Djabugay Native Title Aboriginal Corporation	07 4084 0967	hantz@djabugay.org.au
Tania Hunter	Djabugay Native Title Aboriginal Corporation	07 4084 0967	hantz@djabugay.org.au
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Peter Wallace	Jabalbina Yalanji	07 4042 7000	afyfe@nqlc.com.au
Emily Hobbler	Choorechillum (Ngadjon Jii) Aboriginal Corporation	07 4042 7000	afyfe@nqlc.com.au
TORRES STRAIT			
Dan Mosby	Kulkalgal TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
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Francis Nai	Masigalgal TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
Seriako Stephen	Ugar Kem Le Ged Zeuber Er Kep Le TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
Herbert Warusam	Saibai Mura Buway TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
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Fred Peters	Gebergal TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
Terrance Whap	Goemulgaw TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
Jack Billy	Porumalgat TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au
Milton Savage	Kaiwalagal TSI Corporation	07 4069 2957	Kelly.McCosker@tsra.gov.au

Attachment 2: Meeting Evaluation

Meeting Evaluation

Evaluations completed by participants indicated that the meeting was very useful with an average rating of approximately 4 (3.85)/5. RNTBC representatives were happy to have the opportunity to network with other RNTBCs from around Australia. The opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas and participate in open debate was described as the most valuable aspect of the workshop. Another useful part of the workshop was the opportunity to learn about potential funding and program resources.

The main suggestion for improvement was that the workshop should be longer to allow more detailed discussions.

Additionally, participants identified key priorities for future meetings. These included:

- beginning the meeting with an update on progress since the last meeting;
 - including information and training on corporate governance and development;
 - greater involvement from young people; and
 - inviting government representatives at the Ministerial level to the final session to answer RNTBC questions.
-

Attachment 3: Meeting Agenda



Native Title Research Unit
Fax: 02 6249 7714

National Meeting Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate 2 June 2009

Tom Wills Room, Melbourne Cricket Ground

Facilitator: Cathy Craigie

- 8:45am **Tea and coffee on arrival**
- 9:00am **Welcome to Country**
Wurundjeri Traditional Owner
- 9:15am **Welcome and introduction**
Professor Mick Dodson, Chair AIATSIS
- 9.30am **Setting the context: the post native title determination landscape
& the
NTRU PBC research project**
Dr Lisa Strelein, Director of Research Programs NTRU
- 9.45am **Your RNTBC activities (breakout group discussions)**
‘What has your PBC been doing over the last 12 months?’
- This is an opportunity for delegates to meet and discuss their PBC and where it is at. Participants will aim to describe their activities, successes and best practice over the last twelve months and associated issues.
- 10.45am **Morning tea**
- 11.15am **Your RNTBC activities (continued)**
Plenary - report back and discussion from previous session
-

- 12.00pm **RNTBC Update from Family and Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)**
John Eldridge, Director NTRB Monitoring and Support Section, FaHCSIA
- Brief update on support available for PBCs through FaHCSIA's native title program.
- 12.30pm – 1.30pm **Lunch break**
- DVD 'Growing up strong - Indigenous Protected Areas'**
- 1.30pm **Caring for our Country: Funding and program opportunities for RNTBCs**
Will Philippiadis, Caring for our Country Facilitator, Department Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts
- A discussion of the opportunities under the national Caring for our Country program with a specific focus on IPA's, support for co-management arrangements and the Working On Country Program.
- 2.00pm **Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 'DEEWR funding and program opportunities'**
Madonna Holmes, Director and Jacqueline Jago, Assistant Director, Economic and Business Economic Development and Partnership Team, DEEWR
- Reforms to the Indigenous Employment Program provide a range of assistance for Indigenous employment, business and economic development projects.
- 2.30pm **Priorities for RNTBCs (Breakout group discussion)**
1. What are your RNTBC's 3 priorities for action?
 2. What are the 3 biggest challenges in achieving them?
 3. What are your recommendations in relation to these priorities and challenges?
 4. Who will represent your group in the presentation from this meeting to the Native Title Conference NTRB/PBC day tomorrow morning (3rd June)?
- 3.30pm **Afternoon tea**
- 3.45pm **Plenary - report back from breakout groups**
This session allows participants to hear back from each group's discussions. The forum will settle recommendations and nominate representatives to present to the Native Title Conference.
- 4.45pm **Closing remarks**
Dr Lisa Strelein
- 5.00pm **Meeting for nominated representatives who will present to the Native Title Conference**
-

Attachment 4: Powerpoint slides from NTRB Day Presentation

Native Title Prescribed Bodies Corporate

Native Title Conference
Melbourne
3 June 2009

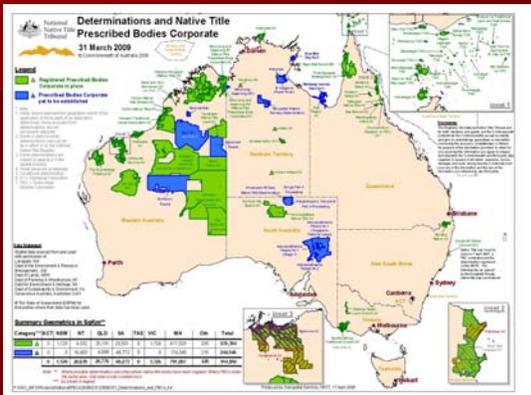
2nd National meeting 2nd June 2009 MCG Tom Willis Room

- Approx 75% of registered PBCs represented from across Australia
- Opportunity to:
 - Share experiences and network
 - Look at ourselves as an emerging sector
 - Consider our representative and advocacy needs



The Significance of PBCs

PBCs will not go away: they are the future of land & sea management and decision making about country in Australia



The PBC Sector

- Critical mass – approx 71 PBCs - a force in our own right
- Represent in excess of 50,000 traditional owners
- Rightful owners of substantial amounts of land and water in Australia and recognized by the highest courts in Australia
- Engaged in mining, commercial enterprises, fishing and property development, land management, and local government
- Significant regulatory functions and responsibilities

The PBC Journey

- All PBCs are unique
 - at different stages in the Journey
 - some more advanced and some just learning the system and coming to grips with it
 - a diversity of experiences
 - some with major development projects
 - others attempting to negotiate as 'first nation' land owners with no resources
- But PBCs also have many things in common
 - Most carry out significant unpaid work which should be recognised
 - All are committed to their mandate as the custodians of country
 - PBC's aspire the dreams of independently caring for their country and representing their own interests to those in government with decision-making powers

Native title holders are moving forward

- Need to be proactive
- Looking for a change in their relationship with governments and agencies and to be taken seriously
- Supported by land councils in establishing our title, but also looking for your support in asserting our independence
- limited options for funding and resourcing native title processes once native title is determined
- need all levels of government to recognise the functions PBCs perform and the importance of their role.

What are we going to do to strengthen our ourselves from the grassroots?

- self-accountability, self-transparency and self sufficiency
- educating our members about our rights and achievements and native title
- focusing on law and custom and the role of our elders
- Showing individual leadership, accepting and acting upon our responsibilities
- building internal social cohesion

Capacity building and economic development

- Wanting to become independent of government funding and finding ways to do it
- Each PBC needs a strategic roadmap
- Business plans
- Networking with other PBCs to do business with each other

A National Peak Body

Melbourne PBC Resolution

We the native title Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) representatives at this 2nd national meeting of PBCs on the 2nd of June 2009 at the MCG on Wurundjeri country resolve that a national PBC peak body will be established to represent our collective interests as PBCs.

Unanimously agreed by the meeting and the Wurundjeri Elders present

What can a national peak body do?

- provide a national voice
- coordinate information and research
- mentor new PBCs
- lobby to influence policy
- sit with other national bodies such as the Council of Australian Governments and any national Indigenous representative body
- advocate within a tiered State/Territory coalition of PBCS (particularly in securing State/Territory Government support for PBCs and changing attitudes to Indigenous land ownership)

A Strategic Approach

- Regular national meetings - annually or biannually involving evaluations of the interim period
- Direct approaches to the Prime Minister, the AG, the FaHCSIA Minister and relevant Commonwealth State and Territory Ministers
- Compensation test case strategically chosen by PBCs
- Other test cases: eg limits to tenure, what is native title?

Attachment 5: Government representative details

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

John Eldridge
Director, NTRB Monitoring and Support Section
Indigenous Programs Branch
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

PO Box 7576
Canberra Business Centre
ACT 2610

T: 02 6121 4775
M: 0421 619 421
E: John.Eldridge@fahcsia.gov.au

Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Peter Jebb
Assistant Director, Working on Country
Australian Government Lands and Coasts
Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

T: 02 6275 9158
F: 02 6274 1006
E: peter.jebb@environment.gov.au

Website: www.nrm.gov.au
Enquiries: 1800 552 008

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Madonna Tomes
Director, Economic and Business Development Partnerships Team
Innovation and Partnerships Branch, Indigenous Group
Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations

2M52, GPO Box 9879
Canberra 2601 ACT

T: 02 6121 6161
F: 02 6250 4677
E: madonna.tomes@deewr.gov.au

Attachment 6: DEWHA contacts



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Website: www.nrm.gov.au

Working on Country:

Fiona Fraser

02 6274 2742

Fiona.Fraser@environment.gov.au

Indigenous Protected Areas:

WA, Qld	Jenifer Rahmoy	02 6274 1724 Jenifer.Rahmoy@environment.gov.au
NT, SA	Marcus Sandford	02 6274 2791 Marcus.Sandford@environment.gov.au
NSW, Vic, Tas	Kevin McLeod	02 6274 2513 Kevin.Mcleod@environment.gov.au

Indigenous Land Management Facilitators:

Will Philippiadis	East Melbourne	william.philippiadis@dse.vic.gov.au	(03) 9637 8979 0438 089 231
Lee Pearson	Gosford	lee.pearson@environment.gov.au	(02) 6545 8007 0428 874 846
John Hunter	Cairns	John.Hunter@icc.gov.au	(07) 4048 8636 0407 012 378
Bruce Hammond	Ingle Farm	bruce.hammond@environment.gov.au	(08) 8303 9493 0427 009 972
Paul Bowers	Perth	paul.bowers@environment.gov.au	(08) 9387 6528 0408 090 813
Deb Pearce	Kununurra	debra.pearce@icc.gov.au	(08) 9168 2391 0419 148 376
Rocky Sainty	Hobart	rocky.sainty@dpiw.tas.gov.au	(03) 6233 2720 0417 016 598
David Dolman	Alice Springs	dave.dolman@environment.gov.au	(08) 89594246 0438 091 963
(Harold) Ally Coe	Canberra	harold.coe@environment.gov.au	(02) 62741653 0428 102 963

Attachment 7: DEEWR Business Support Funding List

1. Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) - Who do I contact to get more information about IEP?

The Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) provides a range of assistance for Indigenous employment, business and economic development projects. The IEP will support communities to develop economic strategies and support more Indigenous people to find employment including by starting their own businesses.

The IEP primarily looks at skills development. It provides; assistance to job seekers and to the employer to sustain positions, mentoring support, traineeships and self-employment opportunities.

The key criterion for IEP projects is the creation of jobs for Indigenous people. The key question RNTBCs should ask is, "how will this idea create jobs for Indigenous people?"

RNTBCs can get help with funding applications from two panels within the IEP. The first panel is the Employment Panel which works with employers to help them employ Indigenous people. The second panel is the Economic Development and Business Support Panel. This panel supports Indigenous businesses by for example, developing viable business plans.

Further information about the IEP program can be obtained from:

- the Indigenous Employment Line on 1802 102;
- submit an Enquiry Form via post, fax or email to your nearest DEEWR office (see details on the form)
(<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/SiteCollectionDocuments/Employment/Programs/IEP/factsheet/DEEWR-IEP-Form1301-enquiry.pdf>);
- the Department's website at deewr.gov.au/Indigenous;
- the nearest Indigenous Coordination Centre or Government Business Manager on 1800 079 098; or
- the Indigenous Communities guide to the reformed IEP
<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Employment/Programs/IEP/Documents/IEPFactSheetsOVERVIEWweb.pdf>.

2. Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs <http://www.iba.gov.au/productsandservices>

3. Small business assistance generally – Dept. of Infrastructure, Industry Science and Research – look on Business.gov.au Fact sheets, check lists, forms, directories and 'how to' guides. Particularly good for information on registration and licences (provides information on different state / territory initiatives and programs)

AusIndustry www.ausindustry.gov.au On the 'Find AusIndustry Grants & Assistance' page, you can type in an organisation / entity type and there is a scroll down list of the variety of requirements that the type of organisation might have. The website then provides the industry / business scheme that relates.

Business Enterprise Centres - <http://www.beca.org.au/> (see Services and Products page)

There are BECs in all States / Territories. They provide a range of assistance and / or advice for any business / corporate entity, including business information, training programs, business referrals, government programs (New Enterprise Incentive Scheme, Small Business Improvement Program and Smart Start), Business Networks, Workshop / Seminars, Mentoring Support, Business Analysis and General Management information.

4. Governance - ORAC (Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations) - website www.orac.gov.au The Registrar provides a training program to help members and directors of corporations understand their roles, responsibilities and other issues.

5. Tendering to private industry and government - The Industry Capability Network Limited is independently managed and financially supported by the Commonwealth Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). The network has 24 offices located around Australia and a staff of around 80 technical experts across a number of major industries. **ICN** is an Australia & New Zealand wide network that assists businesses to maximise the opportunities that arise from purchasing requirements from both the government and private sectors. Shortcut to: <http://icn.org.au/>

6. Greencorps - <http://www.greencorps.gov.au/greencorps/Aboutus/> Greencorp provides an opportunity for young Indigenous people to volunteer and get some skills that might help them get a job in the future. Most Green Corps projects are located in regional or remote areas but there are also opportunities in metropolitan areas.

Attachment 8: Meeting Resolution

Melbourne PBC Resolution

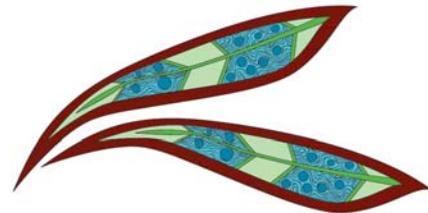
We the native title Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) representatives at this 2nd national meeting of PBCs on the 2nd of June 2009 at the MCG on Wurundjeri country resolve that a national PBC peak body will be established to represent our collective interests as PBCs.

Endorsed by the meeting

(70 people representing 50 PBCs)

Endorsed by the Wurundjeri Elders present

Attachment 9: Media Release



Tuesday 2 June 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Native Title holders call for national peak body

More than 60 native title holders have called for a national peak body for Prescribed Bodies Corporate to have a direct line of communication with Governments about land and sea matters at a meeting in Melbourne today.

Representing more than 50 Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), the meeting was held ahead of the 10th annual Native Title Conference at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, co-convened by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and Native Title Services Victoria (NTSV).

“The PBCs need to talk directly with government – not just with the agencies. This government has said ‘sorry’ to the stolen generations and we don’t want to lose that emotional connection we have,” Vince Mundraby Mandingalbay Yidinji PBC (Qld) said.

“It’s been 17 years now since the Mabo decision and it’s time to recognise the rights of PBCs over our land and sea if we are to secure economic development for our people.”

“PBCs are the future of land management and decision making about country in Australia,” CEO of Lhere Artepe PBC (NT) Darryl Pearce said at the second national meeting of PBCs in Melbourne today.

“As the rightful owners of substantial amounts of land and water in Australia, recognised by the courts, PBCs are looking for a change in their relationship with governments and agencies and to be taken seriously.”

James Bon from Mer Gedkem Le PBC (Murray Island, Qld) said the meeting agreed that PBCs need to establish a national voice to coordinate information, to mentor new PBCs, lobby to influence policy and sit with other national bodies such as the Council of Australian Governments.

“Any new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative structure should take into account native title holding groups,” Mary Lou Buck of the Dunghutti Elders Council PBC said.

The meeting also recognised the need to build the strength of PBC organisations and of their communities. The meeting examined the limited options for funding and resourcing native title processes once native title is determined and called for all levels of government to recognise the functions PBCs perform and the importance of their role.

At 19 January 2009 there were 82 determinations that native title exists, and 80 PBCs established, or in the process of being established.

Attachment 10: List of documents in Meeting Pack

1. Agenda
2. Participant's list (name, name of PBC, position, email, fax, phone, postal address)
3. Latest PBC Map
4. Report of the First National Meeting
5. Registered National Title Bodies Corporate Toolkits (National and State & Territory)
6. Prescribed Bodies Corporate Profile on Native Title Research Unit Resource Page
7. Latest RNTBC list
8. Evaluation Form