



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL  
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

# NATIVE TITLE IN THE NEWS

December 2015

## New South Wales (NSW)

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
23/12/2015	NSW	'Whitefella' draws up own treaty for his land with traditional owners	The Dabee have been given a treaty by a non-Indigenous family for recognition of their country situated in New South Wales' easterly region. Mr Dixon a spokesman for the family has drafted a document that acknowledges the Dabee as the traditional owners of the land. Dixon says that 'he chose to draft his own treaty because he did not want to wait years for the federal government to declare the land belonged to the Dabee under Native Title law'. Ms Syme a senior Dabee woman said with reference to Mr Dixon's efforts 'that I think he's really trying to make amends for what happened in the past and, like, he wants to ensure that his family knows the real history of this area where he's come to live.'	<a href="#">SBS</a> , Australia, 23 December 2015
7/12/2015	NSW	Mining funds reserved for Indigenous groups allegedly funnelled back to industry	The Upper Hunter Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Trust in New South Wales is under scrutiny because it has allegedly failed to distribute trust money to Indigenous communities, and instead provided money for mining development in the region. Upper Hunter native title claimant Scott Franks said 'he believed the money was to be used exclusively to safeguard Indigenous sites and fund local projects'. Yet \$300,000 from the fund was provided to the Mudgee-based Aboriginal Resource Group (ARG).	<a href="#">ABC News</a> , Australia, 7 December 2015
4/12/2015	NSW	Native Title Agreement signed with Gomeroi Nation	In a live bulletin, Kerrin Thomas discussed the details of a Native Title Agreement signed with Whitehaven Coal by 18 members of the Gomeroi Nation.	<a href="#">ABC News</a> , Australia, 4 December 2015

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
1/12/2015	NSW	Gamilaraay opposed to Coal Seam Gas	Gamilaraay people have travelled to Narrabri to protest against Coal Seam Gas (CSG) in Moree. Concerned Gamilaraay member, Paul Spearim said CSG and coal mining was not welcomed because 'levels of uranium leaked in the Pilliga four years ago, and it is still a barren waste land today.' The following day Gamilaraay people travelled to Tamworth. Mr Spearim said 'we attended and protested the signing off to address the Goomeroi Native Title Group about their transparency and why they had not communicated the larger picture with surrounding communities'.	<a href="#">More Champion</a> , Australia, 1 December 2015

## Northern Territory (NT)

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
17/12/2015	NT	Northern Land Council told to work faster on native title applications	Federal Court Judge Justice Mansfield has told the Northern Land Council (NLC) to get their act together with regards to the lack of progress made with native title claims. Mansfield described NLC's efforts as a disgrace in relation to outstanding claims including 'Mary River, Middle Arm, Weddell and Larrimah'. Joe Morrison, NLC CEO responded and said 'the council greatly respected Justice Mansfield and accepted his concerns. We are proud of our record ... we have achieved more native title settlements than anywhere else in the country, and despite extra money from the commonwealth our native title workload remains heavy.'	<a href="#">NT News</a> , Australia, 17 December 2015

## Queensland (QLD)

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
23/12/2015	QLD	Indigenous activist holds out against Carmichael mine	Adrian Burragubba, who recently lost the support of his fellow native title claimants in the fight against Adani's \$16 billion Carmichael mine in Queensland's Galilee Basin, has delayed approval for the mine to go ahead through an appeal's process. Burragubba's appeal is financially backed by green lobby groups; however, other native title claimants are in the process of negotiating a land use agreement with Adani. A spokesman for Minister for State Development, Natural Resources and Mines, Anthony Lynham, said 'he could not provide a mining lease to Adani until Mr Burragubba's case was resolved'.	<a href="#">The Australian</a> , Australia, 23 December 2015
22/12/2015	QLD	Abbot Point gets green light	Whilst the Federal Government has approved the 'Abbot Point development for the third time' resulting in the development of the Adani coal mine in central Queensland, the rail, port and mine project is yet to get court approval due to 'a native title issue and Federal court appeals'.	<a href="#">Courier Mail</a> , Australia, 22 December 2015
22/12/2015	QLD	\$530,000 in grants slated for Indigenous projects	Approximately \$530,000 from the Queensland Government's Indigenous Land and Sea Grants Program will be shared amongst Indigenous projects, to support communities in 'protecting the environmental and cultural resources of their country'. One grant in particular \$62,315 will be provided to Mullen Bun Goon Pty Ltd to assist in managing three culturally significant sites, on Mamu's native title land in Wooroonooran National Park. The sites include a ceremony ground, carved trees and rock art sites.	<a href="#">Daily Mercury</a> , Australia, 22 December 2015

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
14/12/2015	QLD	Traditional owners locked in bitter stoush over Cape York mining royalty deal	On Cape York Peninsula traditional owners are in disagreement 'over a multi-million-dollar deal' in relation to mining royalties. This dispute is related to the 'first Ankamuthi native title claim lodged over north-western Cape York Peninsula.' Despite Larry Woosup (an Ankamuthi descendant) making a deal with Gulf Alumina, a group of 75 Ankamuthi people have voiced their concerns suggesting 'that they were not aware of the deal, nor have they benefited from it.'	<a href="#">ABC News</a> , Australia, 14 December 2015
7/12/2015	QLD	Land rich but 'dirt poor' Indigenous groups get investment ready	Aak Puul Ngantam (APN) Director Bruce Martin from Cape York Peninsula is seeking investors for a new prawn farm. Martin hopes that signing up to a new set of investment standards for 'Indigenous groups backed by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and David Murray will help attract the right financing partners' for his project. Investment opportunities will be discussed at an event on Monday at KPMG's offices in Sydney to 'launch the Indigenous Investment Principles - a voluntary best-practice framework designed to lift governance standards and investment skills within native title organisations'. Mr Turnbull, Robynne Quiggin the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute chairwoman, and Mr Martin 'representing the interests of 20 native title groups' will attend.	<a href="#">The Sydney Morning Herald</a> , Australia, 7 December 2015 <a href="#">Farm Weekly</a> , Australia, 7 December 2015
2/12/2015	QLD	Vow to fight mine	Wangan and Jagalingou (W&J) traditional owners are concerned about the Queensland's Co-ordinator General's proposal to extinguish native title on areas of traditional lands in the Galilee Basin. This deal will enable Indian company Adani to develop infrastructure for its \$16.5 billion Carmichael coal mine. Adrian Burragubba, a traditional owner from the W&J group said that 'the proposal won't stand, not here, not now, not this time. We will fight this all the way to the High Court if need be'.	The Koori Mail, pg. 5, Australia, 2 December 2015 <a href="#">The Morning Bulletin</a> , Australia, 2 December 2015 <a href="#">Green Left Weekly</a> , Australia, 4 December 2015 <a href="#">The Guardian</a> , Australia, 9 December 2015

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
2/12/2015	QLD	Native title group now to support Adani coal mine	The Wangan and Jagalingou people who have been fighting in the Federal Court to block the Adani's \$16 million Carmichael mine in Central Queensland have reversed their decision and voted to support the proposal, overthrowing the green lobby who has 'driven the fight to stop Australia's largest coalmine' over the last 6 years. Irene White, 'one of the 12 registered native title applicants said 'the vote was a reflection of widespread support for the mine and the potential jobs, business opportunities and training being offered by the Indian resource giant'.	<a href="#">The Australian</a> , Australia, 2 December 2015 <a href="#">Watt Electrical News</a> , Australia, 2 December 2015 <a href="#">The Australian</a> , Australia, 3 December 2015
2/12/2015	QLD	New gold plan for old workings near Gympie	In the Gympie Times the Queensland Natural Resources and Mines Department has published a public notice that states 'Native Title parties should make themselves known to the Federal Court in order to protect their rights'. This notice is part of the legal requirements in which an exploration permit is later granted to allow for gold diggings to occur, in and around the hills situated in both the west and north-west of Gympie. This notice is important for native title claimants because the area covered by the permit application suggests that they and 'the company - VGE Pty Ltd are required by the <i>Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth)</i> to enter into 'Expedited Procedures and negotiations to resolve any native title and cultural heritage issues.'	<a href="#">The Gympie Times</a> , Australia, 2 December 2015

## South Australia (SA)

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
28/12/2015	SA	Proclamation Day almost forgotten and many South Australians don't know why we have a public holiday for it	According to the Advertiser, 'two out of three south Australians do not know why we celebrate Proclamation Day'. A recent poll revealed that 'only 36 out of the 111 people surveyed knew why Proclamation Day is celebrated.' More than 200 people commemorated the 179 <sup>th</sup> Proclamation on Monday the 28 of December 2015 at an official ceremony that was held at Old Gum Tree reserve in Glenelg, where Governor Hindmarsh's secretary George Stevenson read the 'Proclamation' describing South Australia's inauguration as a British province in 1836. Throughout this ceremony Australian Native Title and Reconciliation members protested against British incursion 'calling for the protection of Aboriginal land and acknowledging Aboriginal people through advisory committees.'	<a href="#">The Advertiser</a> , Australia, 28 December 2015
16/12/2015	SA	Native title granted by Federal Court for Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka people	Descendants of families who helped Burke and Wills on their journey through Central Australia have gathered near the community of Innamincka in South Australia for their Federal court hearing. Lawyer Michael Pagsanjan said 'that the Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka have fought for decades for recognition, after filing their native title claim back in 1998.' Today is a really momentous occasion where they can sit back, take a deep breath, and a sigh of relief'.	<a href="#">ABC News</a> , Australia, 16 December 2015 <a href="#">SBS</a> , Australia, 17 December 2015 <a href="#">In Daily</a> , Australia, 17 December 2015
10/12/2015	SA	Native title claim for Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka people close to being rubber stamped	The Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka will be formally recognised in the federal court as the traditional owners of 40,000 square kilometres situated in the South Australia's far north-east. The claim covers seven pastoral leases and towns including Innamincka. Yawarrawarrka elder Theresa Bottrell said 'the ruling would be a great achievement'. The lawyer representing the group, Michael Pagsanjan, said the 'claim had taken so long because of the notoriously slow process and rigorous conditions that must be met for native title to be established.'	<a href="#">ABC News</a> , Australia, 10 December 2015 <a href="#">The Wire</a> , Australia, 10 December 2015 <a href="#">9 news</a> , Australia, 16 December 2015

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
1/12/2015	SA	Seal death inquiry team targets Aboriginal elder	Government officers have invaded the home of Ngarrindjeri man Darrell Sumner after he allegedly killed a number of long-nosed fur seals. Mr Sumner had previously invaded the Coorong region killing native animals. This coincides with the issues related to the current South Australian government, who has recently been challenged by the Liberal opposition, fishing industry and traditional owners with the proposal of a cull. Liberal opposition agriculture spokesman Adrian Pederick, said 'authorities should caution Mr Sumner rather than prosecute him. If the state government tried to prosecute Mr Sumner, he might win on native title grounds, which could cost the state hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees'.	<a href="#">The Murray Valley Standard</a> , Australia, 1 December 2015 <a href="#">The Australian</a> , Australia, 15 December 2015

## Western Australia (WA)

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
23/12/2015	WA	High Court challenge to \$1.3b native title deal	In the High Court, Noongar native title claimants are attempting to stop a native title deal that is worth approximately \$1.3 billion. In return for compensation from the Western Australian government claimants 'would give up their native title over the south west of the state including Perth city'. Margaret Culbong, a Noongar claimant said the consultation process was 'flawed and those opposed to the deal weren't given the opportunity to object.'	<a href="#">SBS</a> , Australia, 24 December 2015
23/12/2015	WA	Ngarluma native title rights in Wickham, Port Samson, Karratha recognised in Federal Court ruling	Ngarluma people are celebrating their native title win over country in the Pilbara area covering the towns of Wickham, Port Samson and Karratha. Simon Hawkins, the chief executive of the Yamatji Marlpa Corporation, said the 'Federal court ruling was a great outcome for the Ngarluma people'.	<a href="#">ABC News</a> , Australia, 23 December 2015

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
22/12/2015	WA	Kimberley Agricultural Investment and TFS Corporations named for Ord	The Miriuwung Gajerrong people have surrendered their native title lands under the Ord Final Agreement to make the West Australian Government's proposed Ord-East Kimberley expansion possible. 'China's Kimberley Agricultural Investment and ASX-listed sandalwood grower TFS Corporation' have been selected as a proponent for this project which is worth \$517 million, with \$322.5 million 'invested from the State Government's Royalties for Regions program'.	<a href="#">The West Australian</a> , Australia, 22 December 2015 <a href="#">BN Western Australia</a> , Australia, 22 December 2015
21/12/2015	WA	Native title holders to get more say in parks	Changes to government policies in Western Australia will allow native-title holders to own national parks and nature reserves jointly with the State Government. Environment Minister, Albert Jacob said that 'these arrangements would immediately be put into place in Broome, in the Roebuck bay marine park and also in the south west, as part of a settlement with Noongar people.	<a href="#">The West Australian</a> , Australia, 21 December 2015
21/12/2015	WA	Native title threat to leases	The Federal Court is challenging the Western Australian Government due to incompetency in renewal processes related to pastoral leases in 'Leinster and parts of the shires of Wiluna, Leonora and Sandstone'. The Tjwarl people, represented by Central Desert Native Title Services, said 'the government did not meet its obligations in accordance to the <i>Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth)</i> . Malcolm O'Dell Central Desert principal legal officer said 'that the Futures Act processes in the Native Title Act were not followed.	<a href="#">The West Australian</a> , Australia, 21 December 2015
18/12/2015	WA	WPG signs Tarcoola native title agreement	A native title agreement has been granted with Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation for WPG's Resource's Tarcoola Project in South Australia. The execution of native title was the final prerequisite for the granting of a mineral lease over the Tarcoola Project site.	<a href="#">Mining Weekly</a> , Australia, 18 December 2015



DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
2/12/2015	WA	Court fight over mining	A battle between the Yindibarndi Aboriginal Corporation (YAC) - the registered native title body and the Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) in relation to access to country for mining, is set to go ahead, regardless of the Federal court favouring YAC and opposing other claimants who are connected to FMG. The YAC won their native title back in 2005, and the company was subsequently formed. In July 2015, Justice Stephen Rares found that FMG had convened a meeting with opponents - Wirlu-Murra Yinjibarndi Aboriginal corporation and FMG's mining interests were given preference.	The Koori mail, pg. 9, Australia, 2 December 2015 <a href="#">Business News</a> , Australia, 11 December 2015

## Australia

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
16/12/2015	Australia	Assembly of First Nations	A group of Aboriginal people have been working on a draft plan charter for the Assembly of First Nations. In June 2013, Barrister, Tony Ac Avoy presented a paper at the National Native Conference in Alice Springs, and a working group was then established. At Port Douglas, in June 2015 a decision was made to hold the First nation's meeting in June 2016 coinciding with the National Native Title Conference in Darwin. It is envisaged that the 'Assembly for the First Nations' will be discussed with the first general assembly being held in 2017.	The Koori mail, pg. 31, Australia, 16 December 2015
7/12/2015	Australia	Government contribution to native title rights development	Attorney-General George Brandis has announced to a group of Indigenous leaders at Sydney in a roundtable discussion including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda and Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson that more needs to be done 'when it comes to native title – to ensure that property rights are protected and capable of being enjoyed to their fullest'. Brandis said 'the government will be contributing \$250,000 to the Human Rights Commission for development of Indigenous property rights.'	<a href="#">The Australian</a> , Australia, 7 December 2015 <a href="#">National Indigenous Radio Service</a> , Australia, 9 December 2015

## International

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
14/12/2015	International	No way so long as I'm District Officer: Luvita	District Officer Luvita Koisun is concerned that several padi areas in the 'Kodundungan plain in Malaysia – one of the last remaining tracts of padi lands left in Penampang' have been acquired by non-natives regardless of 'the lands' native title status'. Koisun is concerned that non-natives are applying to the government for the purposes of rezoning and sub-division for commercial reasons. She said 'as the chairperson of the local council, I will not agree to the padi conservation zone being changed to a commercial zone.'	<a href="#">Daily Express</a> , Malaysia, 14 December 2015
1/12/2015	International	Peru ethnic group wants native title	The Wampis from Peru's Amazon basin region have united and formed Peru's first self-ruling native area in an effort to protect 'traditional lands from settlers, mining, oil drilling and illegal loggers'. This area has not been officially recognised by the government but it provides the Wampis with a 'higher authority' to assist in their negotiations with the government. Wrays Perez Ramirez, said 'we are trying to protect our ancestral lands and ask the government to give us title to 1.3 million hectares where more than 100 Wampis' communities are living.'	<a href="#">Sky News</a> , South America, 1 December 2015

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed in the articles linked to and mentioned in this document do not necessarily reflect those of AIATSIS, and the Institute accepts no responsibility for them. Some of the links in this resource may lead to subscription only news items.