

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

2.54 The Committee recommends that the OIPC develop comparative data, based on a range of key performance indicators, to assess the relative effectiveness of NTRBs in meeting their statutory obligations and that this data be published annually.

Recommendation 2

2.77 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth establish an independent advisory panel to advise the Minister on the re-recognition of NTRBs once their recognition period has expired.

Recommendation 3

2.81 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth provide further details of the proposed transitional arrangements that will apply when the recognition period for NTRBs expires in order to avoid uncertainty for claimants.

Recommendation 4

2.83 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth address the issue of native title claims that overlap the boundaries of different representative bodies to avoid uncertainty for claimants.

Recommendation 5

3.74 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth immediately review the adequacy of the level of funding provided by the OIPC to NTRBs for capacity building activities including management and staff development, and information technology.

Recommendation 6

3.75 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth, in conjunction with industry groups, consider providing additional pooled funding for emergency and unforeseen situations, such as future act matters, litigation or court proceedings; and that the OIPC develop guidelines and procedures that will enable funding to be available in these situations in a timely fashion.

Recommendation 7

3.76 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth ensures that the level of funding available to the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations provides NTRBs with adequate training and support to meet the requirements of the introduction of the new corporate governance regime under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Bill 2005.

Recommendation 8

3.77 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth immediately review the level of operational funding provided to NTRBs to ensure that they are adequately resourced and reasonably able to meet their performance standards and fulfil their statutory functions.

Recommendation 9

3.116 The Committee recommends that the OIPC, in close consultation with NTRBs, develop standardised criteria for use in the recruitment of representative body staff; and that these criteria be used nationally to provide consistency in standards of recruitment.

Recommendation 10

3.117 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth investigate the feasibility of:

- the secondment of expert government staff to NTRBs;
- the establishment of a centre of excellence to develop the legal capacity of NTRB lawyers and from which NTRBs could draw expertise as required; and
- the provision of scholarships for post-graduate study to further enhance skills in areas of relevance to the work of NTRBs.

Recommendation 11

3.118 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth implement a national recruitment strategy to address the professional staffing needs of NTRBs and that this strategy:

- promote the status and positive image of work in NTRBs;
- focus on promotion of careers in NTRBs to the professions;
- introduce an ongoing NTRB student placement program; and
- promote the employment of Indigenous people to positions in NTRBs.

Recommendation 12

3.119 The Committee recommends that representative bodies focus on the professional development needs of NTRB professionals and enhance the support structures and programs available to them, including:

- developing a formal induction training program for new recruits;
- establishing ongoing training programs to further enhance skills in particular areas;
- creating a mentoring system; and
- implementing performance evaluation systems to assist in the identification of professional development needs.

Recommendation 13

3.120 The Committee recommends that the OIPC continue to monitor the salary differentials provided to senior professional staff of NTRBs; and introduce a scale of salaries to provide consistency across the system if significant differentials continue to apply.

Recommendation 14

3.121 The Committee recommends that representative bodies investigate the feasibility of implementing a system of 'pooling' of professional staff in situations where an NTRB may lack a full complement of particular professional staff.

Recommendation 15

4.23 The Committee recommends that the OIPC continue to support NTRBs in improving the quality of their strategic planning processes and especially in integrating strategic plans, operational plans and performance based budgeting and reporting.

Recommendation 16

4.24 The Committee recommends that the OIPC, in consultation with representative bodies, review the current compliance and accountability requirements placed on NTRBs with a view to reducing unnecessary duplication of reporting and streamlining reporting procedures.

Recommendation 17

5.61 The Committee recommends that the amended *Guidelines on the Provision of Financial Assistance by the Attorney-General under the Native Title Act 1993* due to come into effect in June 2006 provide:

- provisions to encourage agreement-making rather than litigation to resolve native title disputes; and
- that eligibility for assistance be subject to means testing along similar lines to those applying for grants of legal aid.

Recommendation 18

5.84 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth examine appropriate means for resourcing the core responsibilities of Prescribed Bodies Corporate.

Recommendation 19

5.85 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments widely publicise the availability to Prescribed Bodies Corporate of different funding sources, particularly in relation to the PBCs' land management functions.

