



## Native Title: a measured and sensible approach to future reform

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs is inquiring into the Native Title Amendment Bill 2012. The Bill was referred by the Selection Committee on 29 November 2012, with Mr Ken Wyatt MP appointed as a supplementary member for the inquiry. The Chair of the Committee, Mr Shayne Neumann MP, said 'the Government is currently working on a range of measures to improve the Native Title process. The present Bill has been through an extensive consultation process, and the Committee will consider if a progressive and fair balance has been struck'.

The Native Title Amendment Bill 2012 reforms three areas of the Native Title Act:

- it clarifies the meaning of negotiating in 'good faith' and makes associated amendments to the 'right to negotiate' provisions
- it allows parties to agree to set aside the historical extinguishment of native title in areas set aside for the preservation of the natural environment, such as parks and reserves, and
- it broadens the scope and streamlines processes for voluntary Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

Mr Neumann said that 'our primary task as a Committee is to make sure the Bill strikes a good balance. I am proud of this Committee's record of having an open mind and working on progressive recommendations for action in policy areas like Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and in language learning in Indigenous communities'.

'Given that record, as part of this bill inquiry we have the opportunity to have a conversation about how the native title process can be reformed for the future, to improve access to land rights by Indigenous communities, in balance with the interests of other stakeholders', Mr Neumann said.

The Committee will hold a one day roundtable hearing on **Friday 8 February 2013**, at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence in Redfern, Sydney.

The Committee invites submissions to the inquiry by **Thursday 31 January 2013**, addressing:

- whether a sensible balance has been struck in the Bill between the views of various stakeholders, or
- proposals for future reform of the Native Title process.

If you wish to participate at the roundtable hearing, or for details about the inquiry and advice on making submissions, see the Committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/nativetitle](http://www.aph.gov.au/nativetitle) or contact the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 4559**.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Shayne Neumann on (07) 3201 5300. **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)