

Looking to the Future

The Reeves Report - A Final Assessment

- 10.1 As will be evident from the pages of this report and as was certainly evident to Committee Members during the inquiry, the Reeves Report has stirred considerable controversy in the Northern Territory and beyond. The Reeves Report has faced some harsh critics and, obviously, a number of its recommendations have not been supported by the Committee.
- 10.2 However, the Committee has always wished to focus on the future and has used the Reeves Report to draw out aspects of the Land Rights Act that need examination. The Reeves Report has done a service in suggesting alternative options and, at the very least, for giving people the opportunity to reconsider and reaffirm their support for the existing arrangements.
- 10.3 The Committee has been very sympathetic to many of the good intentions of the Reeves Report, even though Members have differed in their approach to realising those good intentions. The Committee calls on people to focus on the core objective of the Reeves Report - building partnerships to ensure a better future for Northern Territorians – both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal.

The Future of the Act

- 10.4 As has been stressed several times, the Land Rights Act needs to be flexible and adaptable if it is going to stay relevant after the land claims era comes draws to a close. Core principles, such as security of title and respect for traditional processes and land ownership, should remain constant.

- 10.5 However, the Act will be of most benefit if it can provide a framework that helps Aboriginal people enter wider partnerships and integrate into the broader economy. It is the Committee's hope that Aboriginal land ownership, the institutions created by the Land Rights Act and the processes established by the Act itself will help Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to participate as full and equal members of the Australian community and to unlock the future.

The Hon Lou Lieberman MP

Chairman

August 1999