



The Hon Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 5 December 2011

DOMINELLO ANNOUNCES WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello MP today announced the composition of a working group to undertake the statutory review of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (ALRA).

“In line with the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government’s commitment to partnership with the Aboriginal community, the working group has been expanded since the last review to include community representatives from the Aboriginal Land Council network,” Minister Dominello said.

“These members will ensure that the diversity of views shared by Aboriginal Land Councils across NSW are represented.

“The inclusion of the Director General from the Department of Primary Industries is an important addition to the group and will assist it in working towards a solution to the backlog of Aboriginal land claims.

The working group will comprise:

- Mr Stephen Wright, Registrar of the ALRA;
- Mr Geoff Scott, CEO of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council;
- Mr Sean Gordon, CEO of Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council;
- Ms Stacey Meredith, a Government- recognised Aboriginal owner from Central Western NSW and member of the Griffith Aboriginal Land Council;
- Dr Richard Sheldrake, Director General of the Department of Primary Industries; and,
- Ms Kristy Masella, Group Manager Social Justice, Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

“I am confident this working group is well placed to effectively review the legislation and provide me with sound proposals to improve it where possible,” Minister Dominello said.

Mr Geoff Scott, CEO of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council said he was encouraged by the composition of the working group.

“By bringing this group to the table, and having a consultation process, the NSW Government is more likely to achieve positive outcomes for the Aboriginal community,” Mr Scott said.



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The terms of reference of the working group are to:

1. Inquire into and make general recommendations as to whether the aims and objectives of the *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (the Act) require expansion or change of the Act in light of developments since 1983.
2. Inquire into and make recommendations as to whether administrative and operational provisions within the Act require any change to facilitate and improve the efficacy of the Act.
3. Report all findings and recommendations by 1 November 2012 incorporating public responses following a period of public consultation.

The working group will conduct public consultations and call for submissions to assist in the development of possible legislative reforms, and will seek to ensure that concerned people have the opportunity to contribute.

“I encourage members and leaders of the Aboriginal Land Council network, industry bodies, and other interested parties to make their suggestions for improvements to the ALRA,” Minister Dominello said.

Section 252A of the ALRA requires that the review determine whether the policy objectives of the ALRA remain valid and whether the terms of the ALRA are appropriate to secure these objectives.

Within the next 12 months, the working group will present a report on the outcome of the review for tabling in Parliament.

ENDS

MEDIA CONTACT: Kristen Cusack 0408 592 793