

Joint management workshop at the 2011 National Native Title Conference: 'What helps? What harms?'

Claire Stacey, Research Assistant, AIATSIS

Joint management involves negotiations between native title holders and Commonwealth, State and Territory governments for agreements over national parks and other conservation or protected areas, and has become a major component of native title agreement-making. The Native Title Research Unit (NTRU) coordinated a joint management workshop, as part of the National Native Title Conference held in Brisbane on 1 to 3 June 2011.

The workshop brought together traditional owners currently engaged in joint management, with their State and Territory government counterparts. One of the key objectives of the workshop was to inform a NTRU Discussion Paper which is being co-written by Toni Bauman and Chris Haynes around a national principled framework for joint management in Australia and the need for a community of joint management practice.

In the first part of the workshop traditional owners and government speakers from southern Queensland, Cape York, the Northern Territory and Victoria shared a range of experiences of joint management, highlighting issues across and within State and Territory jurisdictions. Natasha Stacey and Arturo Izurieta also provided a summary of the Charles Darwin University indicators of joint management they had developed in consultation with native title

holders in the Northern Territory (<http://www.cdu.edu.au/ser/MandEofJointManagement.htm>).

The key point that was reiterated throughout the discussions was the need for a level playing field in negotiating and implementing joint management agreements. Ideas for achieving this included: investing in dedicated resources and long term bipartisan fiscal arrangements to realize the agreements that emerge from joint management; creating a national community of effective practice in joint management ranger training, including applying cultural competency standards in training for non-Indigenous rangers; expanding Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) policy to make it possible to have IPAs in



Workshop panellists, specialist participants and attendees in small group discussions at the 2011 Native Title Conference.
Photo: Matthew O'Rourke

association with joint management over national parks; and support for a national evaluation approach to joint management, allowing for State and Territory differences. The discussion also focused on a greater recognition of the role joint management plays in realizing native title rights, as well as supporting caring for country activities which have known social, health and economic benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, supporting the objectives of programs such as the Federal government's *Closing the Gap* initiative.

In the second part of the workshop small group discussions were held using a talking paper and focused on the themes of 'What harms?' and 'What helps?' in joint management. Discussions also looked at what can be done better and suggestions for what to include in national principles of effective joint management practice. The workshop generated ideas for future joint management workshops, and an email network of workshop participants has been established. A report of workshop outcomes has been circulated and can also be

found on the joint management project page on the NTRU website, along with further workshop papers, publications and project information. (<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/ntru/jointmanagement.html>)

If you wish to join the email network please contact Claire Stacey at the NTRU, claire.stacey@aiatsis.gov.au