

AIATSIS Research Seminars

12.30pm, Monday 5th Sept 2011

The Mabo Room, AIATSIS, Lawson Crescent, Canberra ACT 2601

This seminar will be webcast at www.aiatsis.gov.au

Seminars are free and open to the public. Free parking is available

Township leasing in the Northern Territory

Greg Roche, Executive Director (Acting), Township Leasing, FaHCSIA

Kate Gumley, Group Manager, Office for Remote Indigenous Housing, FaHCSIA

Township leasing has been a relatively recent development in the land rights regime in the Northern Territory. Greg Roche sets out the history that led to the changes in the legislation and examines the initial township agreements. He argues that the primary beneficiary of the innovative approach of township leasing has been the Traditional Owners of the relevant townships, who now receive a fair rental for their land and who have been able to undertake economic development projects utilising rental payments and the opportunities township leasing has created. They have achieved this while retaining a high level of influence over decision-making in relation to their community. Residents have benefited from the ability to choose to buy their own homes, an option that was difficult to exercise under the pre-existing regime.

Greg will be introduced by Kate Gumley, who will outline how the Australian Government investment in social housing is reforming the delivery of housing and homelessness services to Indigenous Australians. Access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing is central to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. Kate will outline how the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing aims to improve living conditions and reduce overcrowding and homelessness in remote communities. She will detail how this reform agenda works with communities and state governments to establish new practices in the delivery of housing and housing services, including property and tenancy management, Indigenous employment targets, and the progressive resolution of land tenure to provide opportunity for private investment, such as home ownership.

Greg Roche holds Bachelors of Laws and Arts degrees from the University of Melbourne, a Masters of Business Administration from Deakin University and a Masters of Laws from the ANU. Greg has been a criminal lawyer, a human rights lawyer and a legal adviser, the latter two roles in the Northern Territory. He has worked for the Australian Government in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australia New Zealand Food Authority and the Department of Health and Ageing before joining the then Office of Indigenous Policy Co-ordination (now FaHCSIA) in 2005.

Since then he has had a number of policy and operational roles at the Senior Executive Service level concerning land rights and native title, Indigenous international issues, the Torres Strait Regional Authority and the Aboriginals Benefit Account. He has been responsible for oversight and co-ordination of the Eight Point Plan to combat petrol sniffing and other forms of volatile substance abuse. Greg has also been responsible for the administration of various Indigenous-specific funding programs and has provided advice to the Minister in relation to funding and governance of the four Northern Territory Land Councils.

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