

AIATSIS Research Seminars

12.30pm, Monday 05th 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

Housing in Bidyadanga: an Indigenous Land Use Agreement

Jess Weir, Joe Edgar & Greg Billycan

In 2007, an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) was initiated in Bidyadanga to facilitate the building of sixteen houses and other community infrastructure. Bidyadanga is an Aboriginal Community about 200 kilometres south of Broome, on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert. It is the largest Aboriginal community in Western Australia, and Karajarri traditional owners live here in the minority. An ILUA was needed to build the houses in Bidyadanga because the community is on Aboriginal Lands Trust lands which, as a land tenure for the benefit of Aboriginal people, has been recognized as Karajarri exclusive possession native title land. The ILUA is between the Bidyadanga Community Council, the Karajarri native title holders and the State government. The agreement making process has provided an opportunity for Karajarri and the Bidyadanga Community Council to work through the tensions and misunderstandings that had arisen since the recognition of Karajarri native title. Since then, 2010 amendments to the Native Title Act have removed the procedural rights of native title holders to be involved in such development projects, thereby removing the trigger for an ILUA. These amendments are said to expedite the provision of housing under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH). The amendments have a sunset clause matched with the 10 year period of the NPARIH, and after this time, the procedural rights of native title holders resume. Joseph Edgar and Greg Billycan will reflect on this recent history, and talk about issues for the future. Jessica Weir will report on her case study research about the experiences of Karajarri native title holders and their corporate body the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association.

Greg Billycan is a Martu man and lives in Bidyadanga. Martu people came into Bidyadanga from the desert during the 1950s and 1960s, when it was the La Grange mission. Greg Billycan is chair of the Bidyadanga Community Council.

Joe Mowandi Edgar is a descendant of the Karajarri people of West Kimberley. Joe is a business graduate of the University of Notre Dame Australia's Broome Campus where he lectures in Indigenous studies, and is also the campus' Indigenous Community Liaison Officer. Joe has been involved with Indigenous organizations and community social groups for over 25 years, and is the deputy chairperson of the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association (RNTBC), a position he has held since 2002. Joe's interests are his family; education; Aboriginal history, culture and the arts; community development; and economic and environmental sustainability for Aboriginal people.

Jessica K Weir is a Research Fellow in the Native Title Research Unit, at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and a Visiting Fellow at the Fenner School of Environment and Society at The Australian National University. Jessica is a lead researcher in the NTRU project on Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC), She has published numerous journal articles and book chapters on water, native title and governance, and is the author of *Murray River Country: An Ecological Dialogue with Traditional Owners*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2009.
