

12.30pm, Wednesday 23<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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

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## **Aboriginal Hostels: practical service delivery and policy constraints**

### **Kevin Smith**

#### **Abstract**

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) is a not-for-profit company established by the Australian Government in 1973 to provide a national network of hostels. AHL provides affordable, temporary accommodation and meals to Indigenous Australians, particularly in areas which lack suitable accommodation options. At 30 June 2011 AHL operated and administered 54 hostels and 10 Indigenous Youth Mobility Program houses, and provided additional grant funding for 45 community-operated hostels. More than 487,000 person/nights of accommodation were provided in that year. AHL provides accommodation for individuals and families:

- seeking permanent housing or accessing other services
- accessing secondary or tertiary education
- accessing training or employment opportunities, and
- accessing health services, including hospital and renal dialysis services.

AHL's direction over the next decade is service improvement and expansion. AHL employs 560 staff; 77% of them are Indigenous and two-thirds of all staff are women.

In this seminar Russell Lane will discuss:

- examples of AHL hostels and support from around Australia
- the need for flexible and innovative approaches
- best practice success stories

Kevin Smith will consider

- the need for supported accommodation
- the need for partnerships between Australian and state governments, non-government organisations and Indigenous communities
- common obstacles to independent living

AHL's experience in providing temporary supported accommodation and AHL's contribution in responding to residents' needs.

**Kevin Smith** is the Chief Executive Officer of Queensland South Native Title Services. He was formerly Queensland State Manager of the National Native Title Tribunal and Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation for Legal Services in Brisbane. He is the Deputy Chairperson and Director of the National Native Title Council Limited, a member of the Queensland Native Title Liaison Committee, the Indigenous Leaders Dialogue of the Minerals Council of Australia and the Native Title Research Advisory Committee at AIATSIS. He has been a member of the AHL Board since July 2010 and was appointed AHL Chairperson in June 2011. Kevin Smith has a Bachelor of Laws; Certificate of Practice Management and is Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland, Federal Court and High Court of Australia.

**Russell Lane** has been General Manager Operations at AHL since 1996. He has worked for AHL for twenty-two years and has managed hostels in every State and in the Northern Territory.

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