



Thursday 7 May 2009

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Registrations open for 10<sup>th</sup> Native Title Conference

The 10th Annual National Native Title Conference will be hosted by the Wurundjeri people in Melbourne from 3-5 June and all interested parties are urged to register to attend by 22 May.

Convened jointly by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and Native Title Services Victoria (NTSV), the conference will emphasise the first principles of Native Title through workshops, speeches and discussions under theme *Spirit of Country, Land, Water, Life*.

“Native Title is not just a piece of legislation, it is about Traditional Ownership of land and waters by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – and we want to reassert that message through this conference,” AIATSIS Chairperson Professor Mick Dodson said today.

“This conference promotes public debate about native title and Indigenous peoples’ interests in land and waters; fosters knowledge in this dynamic area of law and agreement making and gives native title parties a chance to share information and experiences. It is also the leading annual professional development event for staff of native title representative bodies, service providers and relevant government agencies, as well as independent native title practitioners and academics.”

Professor Dodson urged those people interested in native title to register to attend the conference before 22 May, when registrations close. The conference would be relevant to legal practitioners, Indigenous people, private and corporate sectors involved in native title, land, natural resource and water management, native title representative bodies/service providers, academics, NGO service providers and federal and state government departments and agencies.

Conference highlights include a keynote address by Commonwealth Attorney General, The Honourable, Robert McClelland, a Traditional Welcome from Wurundjeri Elders, performances by Torres Strait Islander dancers and Keynote speeches by NTSV Chairperson Graham Atkinson, Victorian Attorney General, The Honourable, Robert Hulls, Justice Tony North and Marcia Langton. Chairperson of the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA) and winner of the 2008 Human Rights Medal Les Malezer will deliver the annual Mabo Lecture on Friday 5 June.

Conference registration closes on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The conference registration form and program can be found at: <http://ntru.aiatsis.gov.au/> and should be emailed to: [ntru@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:ntru@aiatsis.gov.au)

Media interested in attending the conference should contact: AIATSIS Director of Public Affairs, Suzi Clark, on (02) 6261 4254 or 0419 978 035 or [suzi.clark@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:suzi.clark@aiatsis.gov.au) or Chris Ryan on 0408 688 026.