

# MONTHS IN REVIEW

## MAY / JUNE

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01/03

- The Western Australian State Government releases a discussion paper outlining proposed reforms of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*—WA's principal legislation enabling the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The discussion paper sets out seven proposals intended to improve protection, certainty and compliance under the Act.

08/05

- As part of the 2012/13 Federal Budget reforms, the Government announces that from 1 July, 2012, the Federal Court will be responsible for the mediation of native title claims and claims related to Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)—relieving the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) of this responsibility. The NNTT will continue assisting the negotiation of non-claim related Indigenous land use agreements.

22/05

- The Australian Federal Court recognises the Arabana Peoples' non-exclusive native title rights and interests over an area of land in South Australia covering approximately 68, 823 square kilometres. The majority of the area is covered by pastoral lease, including Anna Creek Station, the largest cattle property in the world. It also includes three reserves, Elliot Price Conservation Park, Lake Eyre National Park and Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park.

22/05

- The Queensland State Government announces that it will hand-back the 381,560 hectare Mungkan Kandju National Park, in central Cape York Peninsula, to its Traditional Owners the Wik Mungkan, Southern Kaanju and Ayapathu People. The Government also announces that an additional 75,074 hectares of land previously revoked from the Archer Bend section of the park will also be transferred back to its traditional owners.

23/05

- Australia's first ever National Indigenous Youth Parliament meets in Canberra. 48 future Indigenous leaders aged 16 to

25 years participate in the six-day program to learn how the parliamentary system works and to debate issues affecting them and their communities.

26/05

- 26 May, 2012, marks the 15th National Sorry Day, a day of commemoration and remembrance for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children forcibly removed from their families, communities and culture between the 1800s and the 1970s—known as the Stolen Generations. National Sorry Day commemorates the anniversary of the *Bringing Them Home Report* being tabled in Federal Parliament on May 26, 1997.

03/06

- 3 June, 2012, marks the 20th anniversary of the High Court of Australia's historic decision in *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)*. The judgments of the High Court in the Mabo case inserted the legal doctrine of native title into Australian law, replacing the 17th century doctrine of *terra nullius* on which British claims to possession of Australia were based. Following the High Court decision in the Mabo case, the Commonwealth Parliament passed the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), enabling Indigenous people throughout Australia to claim traditional rights to unalienated land.

06/06

- The Federal Government announces a package of legislative reforms to the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). The reforms include requirements for greater flexibility and 'good faith' in native title negotiations and greater clarity around income tax and capital gains tax in relation to payments from native title agreements.

25/06

- The Federal Government's Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory draft laws remain before the Senate. They are expected to be passed as drafted.