

National Native Title Tribunal Registry opens in Perth

Federal Attorney - General Michael Lavarch has opened the Principal Registry of the National Native Title Tribunal on Level Five of the Commonwealth Courts Building in Perth, Western Australia.

The Registry officially began operations on 2 May, as Justice Robert French's appointment as President of the Tribunal took effect.

The acceptance of this important new position by Justice French — a Perth-based Federal Court judge experienced in mediation, land management and Aboriginal issues — was a major factor in the choice of location for the Tribunal headquarters.

Mr Lavarch said the large amount of unalienated Crown land in WA also meant that a significant proportion of the Tribunal's workload was in Perth.

To date 18 applications have been lodged with the Tribunal nationwide, including 3 in WA in the Broome, Kununurra and Kalgoorlie areas. Two applications in New South Wales have been accepted for consideration by the Tribunal — one for native title

and the other seeking a declaration on the existence of native title. In all other cases additional information is still being sought from the applicants, or title and interest searches are yet to be completed. The Tribunal may refuse to accept vexatious or frivolous claims or claims incapable of being made out (although none have so far been rejected on these grounds).

The Tribunal will continue to operate through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal's registries in other States and Territories, including the Northern Territory.

Mr Lavarch said he expected to appoint a permanent Registrar and other Tribunal members soon.

David Schulz will remain the Registrar of the National Native Title Tribunal until the permanent Native Title Registrar is appointed. The Tribunal is at Level 5, Commonwealth Law Courts Building, 1 Victoria Avenue, Perth WA 6000 or GPO Box 9955, Perth WA 6001. Phone: (09) 268 7272. Facsimile: (09) 268 7299. Applications can still be lodged — and searches of the Tribunal's Registers can still be done — at any Registry of the Administrative

Appeals Tribunal, which will also be Registries of the National Native Title Tribunal.

In other news, most company registers will be scrapped under a proposal released for public comment recently by Mr Lavarch.

"The proposal will cut paperwork and reduce obligations for companies and their officers, while still giving public access to essential information," he said.

This proposal has been prepared by the Attorney-General's Corporations Law Simplification Task Force, which was set up last year to progressively make the Corporations Law more accessible and user friendly.

It ensures that adequate information for investors and creditors is readily available through access to the Australian Securities Commission (ASC) database. The proposal also eliminates unnecessary requirements to maintain registers and avoids duplication of information held by the company and the ASC. Comments should be sent to Ian Govey, Corporations Law Simplification Task Force, Attorney-General's Department, Barton, ACT 2600.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS — PLANNING APPEALS TRIBUNAL

Lands, Housing and Local Government Minister Steve Hatton has announced the appointment of the members of the Northern Territory Planning Appeals Tribunal.

They are: John George, Hugh Bradley, James Noonan, Robert Kennedy, Kim Steinle, Garry Sleeman, Brian Forester, Gary Nairn, Peter Doyle, Jack Wolstencroft and Peter Moffatt.

Mr George has been appointed as President of the Tribunal, while Mr Bradley has been selected as Deputy President.

TRIBUNAL HOPES FOR VIDEO APPEAL

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal has produced a video as part of its continuing program to increase public awareness of its role.

Produced with the aim of helping people understand both how the Tribunal operates and the processes it uses, the 10-minute video can be bought from the Tribunal for \$25.

A brochure is also available with the video at no extra cost.

For information phone (07) 361 3014 or write to Gordon Marshall, Human Resource Operations, Administrative Appeals Tribunal, GPO Box 9955, Brisbane QLD 4001.