

# PRESS RELEASE: MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

*Senator the Hon. Peter Baume*

## QUEENSLAND ABORIGINAL LAND

"While the Commonwealth Government still has some reservations about the Queensland legislation under which reserves will be granted to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, it recognises that significant advances have in fact been made. These include:

- . Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities will now have title to their reserves
- . this is perpetual title which will be held directly by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- . it will be secured by Parliamentary review of any action to revoke the title
- . the Queensland Government has promised the communities increased responsibility for their own affairs.

The Commonwealth, however, has some particular concerns. It welcomes the provision that any revocation of a land grant could ultimately be disallowed by the Queensland Parliament but, as the Queensland law is drafted, land could be resumed before the Parliament had a chance to exercise its judgment. This may be the normal procedure in Queensland, but it is a procedure which, in this instance, could give rise to considerable uncertainty. There could be similar concern about the scope for reducing the area granted.

Because of these concerns, the Commonwealth now gives an unequivocal guarantee

- . that it will stand behind the stated intent of the Queensland Government to provide security of tenure and integrity of the reserve land
- . that, if there were actions which transgressed these principles, or which indicated an unreasonable use of the discretions in the legislation, the Commonwealth would act accordingly.

The Commonwealth believes that the Queensland Government has acted in good faith in the changes to the Land Act, which have now passed the Queensland Parliament, and that the Queensland Government intends to administer the legislation in the spirit of its statement of March 1, 1982"

1 April 1982