

Operational Challenges in the Future

The ILC across Australia will face five distinct challenges. Three of these challenges are not new to the ILC. However, there are two new factors that the ILC must now take into account. The operational challenges can be broadly classified under the following headings:

- **Ownership Disputes** – the number, range and persistence of disputes over the nature, extent and variety of traditional and historical relationships to land has been a major issue for the ILC. While it has sought to recognise these relationships the ILC does not have a tribunal function and will not to arbitrate in such matters.
- **Land Management Functions** - the *ATSIC Act* gives the ILC land management functions that vary quite radically from those discharged under previous programs. This gave rise to major confusion, unrealistic expectations and subsequent criticism that was directed at the ILC rather than at the Act itself.
- **Land Needs Planning** - the Land Needs Planning Process was an invaluable tool in assisting the ILC to make sense of the diversity and extent of land-related needs among Indigenous Australians. However, the ILC has recognised that this planning process will never be complete. New planning will need to be undertaken and existing plans revised. The ILC remains committed to group-based planning at the local level as the basis of its strategic development.
- **The Revised NILS** - land acquisition and management functions have been guided by the inaugural NILS. This document was the basis for all decisions regarding ILC land acquisitions and land management funding grants.

In May 2001 the NILS was significantly revised and differs substantially from its predecessor. As a result it will need time to be fully understood and implemented. It does not however affect proposals lodged under the former NILS and the Board believes it is more focused for the future.

- **Urban and Rural Land Needs** - there was a strong perception, particularly among urban Indigenous people, that the previous NILS