

A partnership agreement was established with Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture, a Registered Training Organisation, which delivered accredited corporate governance training at Certificate 4 and Diploma level.

Five Yappala Board and community members are expected to graduate in April 2004 with Certificate 4 in Business Governance. They will be the first in Australia to achieve this.

The training at Yappala is a first in the development of the capacity of the corporation members and is a positive example of a whole-of-community, whole-of-government approach to the development of Indigenous capacity to manage Indigenous-owned land. During 2002-2003, AFFA granted just over \$84,000 to the EETS program with remaining funds being granted according to the contract schedule.

The EETS Strategy will be finalised in September 2003 and a final report will make recommendations in regard to training that will be incorporated into ILC policy. An independent external evaluation report will also be completed.

The Capacity Development Unit provides the resource base to implement the outcomes of the Extension, Education and Training Strategy across the ILC.

POLICY AND RESEARCH UNIT

The Policy and Research Unit supports the land acquisition and management functions by providing services in policy advice and research support to Divisional land acquisition and management staff, the Corporate Management Team, the Deputy General Manager, the General Manager and the Board. The following areas define the unit's operations.

POLICY REVIEW AND ADVICE

Significant effort went into the review and development of the organisation's major policy documents. The National Indigenous Land Strategy 2001-2006 was revised. The revision articulated a new approach

to land acquisition with a four-stream program – the ILC now has cultural, social, economic and environmental land acquisition programs. Land acquisition and land management program guidelines were outlined in the document *Land Acquisition and Land Management Programs Guide 2002-2006*.

The unit undertook a considerable amount of work to establish an operational framework for national consistency. A key component of the process was the development of application assessment manuals, which include standard letters and memoranda to provide a guide for staff. The unit supported the introduction of new assessment procedures by conducting training on the revised NILS, Programs Guide and assessment manuals for Divisional staff.

Most recently, the unit held a workshop for Divisional Managers and Operational Managers nationally to consider issues that arose during the first six months of operating under the new NILS.

COORDINATION

Coordinating the delivery of services with other agencies remains major policy under the revised NILS. The unit continued to work closely with other key natural resource management agencies such as Environment Australia and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia. The unit developed close links with CSIRO in order to develop natural resource management research opportunities that will provide benefits to both parties and, most importantly, Indigenous land holders. Discussions were also held with the Australian Bush Heritage Fund to identify ways of cooperatively working together to further Indigenous interests under the ILC's environmental acquisition program.

The unit continued developing the Coordination Database, providing staff with a resource that identifies agency (government and non-governmental) services, funding programs and contacts relevant to the needs of Indigenous landholders.

RESEARCH

Major investigations undertaken during the year were:

- carbon banking
- analysis of the policies, programs and application forms of other agencies
- review of property management planning and business planning guides.

The unit also conducted substantial background research into capacity development as a precursor to the ILC developing its capacity development initiative.

SUBMISSIONS

As part of its policy and research role the unit made several submissions to key organisations relevant to the ILC's functions. These submissions included:

- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs - Capacity Building in Indigenous Communities
- Environment Australia - draft conservation agreements
- Focus on the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy - consultation draft
- AFFA - water rights.

NATIVE TITLE SEARCHES

The ILC requested 11 Native Title Claim activity searches through the National Native Title Tribunal in compliance with section 191D(4) of the ATSIC Act. The ILC continues to take a general interest in the progress of many of the current Native Title claims, but is not a party to any such claims.