

ILC REPORT from the Board

The Board is pleased that the Corporation has managed to continue to fulfil its statutory obligations while pursuing new and significant initiatives.

The ILC continues to deal with its primary responsibility to assist Indigenous Australians to purchase land and to assist in the management of Indigenous-held land. Since its inception and to 30 June 2001, the ILC has purchased 143 properties, of which 92 have been divested to Indigenous corporations.

After six years of existence, the ILC conducted the first major strategic review of its land acquisition and land management activities. The review included an inaugural joint workshop of ILC Board members and ATSIC Commissioners, as well as extensive consultations with a range of stakeholders including ATSIC Regional Councils, Native Title Representative Bodies and Indigenous communities. The review resulted in the development of the National Indigenous Land Strategy 2001 to 2006 (NILS) as well as seven Regional Indigenous Land Strategies (one for each State and the Northern Territory). These documents describe the policies of the ILC and the support the ILC can provide to Indigenous communities.

The ILC believes that it must not only provide land but also help to acquire the skills and knowledge to effectively manage that land. The ILC's Extension, Education and Training Strategy seeks to assist Indigenous communities with these skills. Six levels of training are provided, from base level Induction Training, through a further five levels culminating in Company Directors Training.

The Board also reaffirmed its position to endeavour to increase employment

Report from the ILC Board

for Indigenous people through the ILC's purchasing and contracting activities. In future, contractors tendering for ILC work will be asked to identify the employment benefits that will result for Indigenous people through each contract and what could be done to increase the same.

During the year Mr Skehill delivered his report commissioned by the then Minister, John Herron, into the behaviour of Directors of the ILC. The Skehill Report is now before the Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the Hon Philip Ruddock. At the time of preparing this Annual Report, the Skehill Report had not been provided to the ILC or released publicly. The ILC has not been advised of any action taken by the Minister as a result of commissioning the report.

The ILC Board commissioned Mr Andrew Rogers QC to conduct an investigation into the ILC's purchase and management of two pastoral stations in Western Australia – Cardabia and Roebuck Plains Stations. Mr Rogers finalised his report in June 2001 and has briefed the Board saying he found no evidence of illegality, criminal behaviour or serious misconduct. In accordance with his advice, the Board asked Mr Rogers to seek indemnity from any claims for defamation for the ILC, its Directors and officers, prior to providing his report to the ILC Board and its publication.

The Board has also commenced an audit of previous acquisitions and divestments in order to understand the correlation between the proposals and their ultimate results. This will enable the development of more practical conditions of approvals in the future.

The ILC's General Manager, Mr John Wilson resigned in early 2001 to pursue interests in the private sector. At the time of preparing this report, the ILC Board was close to appointing his successor.

The ILC Board is acutely conscious of the special relationship Indigenous Australians have with their land, and is pleased that many Indigenous Australians have already benefited from the properties purchased by the ILC in addition to the many Indigenous-held properties that have received its land management support.

Report from the **ILC Board**

The ILC has a very busy programme responding to proposals for acquisition and management. However, there needs to be a clear understanding of the financial limits of the ILC so that unrealistic expectations are not created.

The board believes that the new NILS and RILS will create a sharper focus and a clearer understanding of the issues and challenges ahead

ILC Board Directors