

Senator Aden Ridgeway
Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats
Spokesperson on Reconciliation

8 AUG 2002

MEDIA RELEASE

02/390

Native Title Needs Resolution

The Australian Democrats have repeated their call for fast tracking of all outstanding native title claims following today's High Court decision on the Miriuwung – Gajerrong case.

Reconciliation Spokesperson, Senator Aden Ridgeway, said this type of outcome shows the flaws in the amended *Native Title Act* following the Howard Government's 10-Point Plan.

“This decision shows Howard's vague and emotive concept of “certainty”, as promised in the 10-Point Plan, has provided certainty to no-one,” said Senator Ridgeway.

“The Miriuwung–Gajerrong claim has been bounced around the Australian legal system since 1994 and is still unresolved, with several key issues being referred back to the full bench of the Federal Court.

“Far too much energy and money has been expended trying to contain and restrict the application of native title.

“With a real right to negotiate still retained in the *Act*, it is likely this claim could have already been resolved.”

The Australian Democrats also backed the call from the claimants for a political solution to the current native title situation in this country.

“What has failed Indigenous Australians is the political leadership of this country, which has allowed opportunities, like those opened up by the Mabo decision 10 years ago, to be squandered,” said Senator Ridgeway.

“Today's decision is another example of the inability of native title to deliver indigenous communities a real economic base and the means to address their social and economic disadvantage,” Senator Ridgeway concluded.

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