

Notre Dame

Nulungu Talking Heads Seminar Series



A New Partnership, William Roe, 1994

Aboriginal people in Australia and government decision making: a story that needs rewriting

Thursday 14 July 2016

12:30pm – 2:00pm

40 minutes presentation, 20 minutes questions

30 minutes informal discussion – bring your lunch!

Laura Beacroft

While governments in Australia and globally attempt to embrace demands from citizens for participative democracy, successive federal Governments in Australia over the last decade have often adopted an authoritarian approach to initiatives targeting Aboriginal people.

Literature about effective social policy and programs points to the wisdom of ‘co-production’ of solutions with Aboriginal people. This wisdom about success being linked to meaningful and genuine consultation, indeed ‘Free, Prior and Informed Consent’ (FPIC), is also consistent with international treaties and declarations which Australia has ratified.

However, consultation and FPIC are not the norms for government decision-making about Aboriginal people in Australia. Whether Aboriginal people should be consulted at all in major government decision-making is the question that federal governments ask.

How can this happen in Australia? Is it legal? What are the schemes in Canada and elsewhere that might guide Australia? How can this exceptional situation in Australia be fixed?

Laura Beacroft is co-author of the impending fifth edition of *Indigenous Legal Issues*. She is a social scientist and lawyer who has worked in a variety of roles for the Australian Institute of Criminology, Legal Aid Commission of NSW, and the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. She assisted a Review Board, chaired by Peter Yu, to evaluate the NT Emergency Response and has done significant pro-bono work for the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre. She is a member of the Sentence Administration Board in the ACT and also the Civil and Administrative Tribunal ACT.

Venue: The University of Notre Dame Australia

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