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## **AMBIT CLAIMS**

Judging from the number of letters to newspaper editors and the number of callers to radio programs around Australia, it is obvious that the majority of Australians ARE concerned about the ramifications of the Native Title Act.

The September 1997 edition of the Delta Electricity and Access Economics Investment Monitor shows that 21 projects worth \$13.7 billion are subject to aboriginal land claims. This will have major effects on all Australians, whether they live in urban city areas, are farmers, graziers or miners in rural Australia. The uncertainty of land tenure will stifle development and will have a devastating effect on Australia's economy.

Aboriginal activist Noel Pearson, of the Cape York Land Council, stated on the ABC's 7.30 Report (24/11/97);

"...that all aboriginal people wanted was access to land for traditional purposes."

He put it in terms of collecting some wood to make didgeridoos. When challenged on that and asked about ambit claims - the claims that seek EXCLUSIVE possession to the exclusion of all others - he said that these claims were:

"...not very intelligent and not helpful to the native title process."

Yet, in claim \* C0065 lodged (October 1997) in Cape York, a parcel of land was claimed in an ambit claim, which has this clause attached. No matter that, they are leases in transition where the pastoral leaseholders are still on the leases involved, this is the first clause of claim C0065 lodged and signed by Noel Pearson and other signatures:

*"...the right to possession of the land, the waters and the resources and attributes of the lands and waters to the EXCLUSION of all others."*

It is an area 1.5 times the size of the ACT, an area of 4000 square kilometres.

So much for Pearson's credibility!

(\* Refer to Federal Hansard on 26/11/97 - by then Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Tim Fischer.)