Module BB: Can the extinguishing effect of the PEPA be relied upon to address native title for my proposed dealing?

Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993: s.47, s.47A and 47B

April 2019
## Version history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Date published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Narrier Full Court Decision re definition of mining lease</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Section 47A</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Narrier High Court Decision re definition of mining lease</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table of contents

Version history ........................................................................................................................................

Part 1: Introduction ................................................................................................................................

Part 2: Summary - two key questions ......................................................................................................
  Question 1 ........................................................................................................................................
  Question 2 ........................................................................................................................................

Part 3: Is the proposed dealing area currently covered by a native title claim? ..................................

Part 4: What was the proposed dealing area when the native title claim was made? ......................

Part 5: Who makes the decision whether this module applies? ............................................................
Part 1: Introduction

In some circumstances, upon a determination that native title exists, the Native Title Act 1993 (NTA) requires that the extinguishing effect of the previous exclusive possession act (PEPA) you identified in Module BA or identified in a non-public work QNTIME conclusion must be ignored or disregarded. This means, at the time of the determination, that native title rights and interests extinguished by the PEPA are in effect revived in relation to the PEPA area. Because of this possible revival, and subject to certain requirements being satisfied, you may now not be able to proceed with your dealing in relation to native title by relying upon the PEPA.

Sections 47, 47A and 47B of the NTA (sometimes called the section 47 suite) are the exception to the general rule that native title once extinguished is always extinguished.

The following diagram provides an example of how section 47B of the NTA can operate to disregard the extinguishing effect of an historical freehold grant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 47B example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freehold estate granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination that native title exists &amp; s47B applies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native title extinguished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2: Summary - two key questions

If you have identified in Module BA that there is a current or historical PEPA or there is a non-public work QNTIME conclusion¹ over your proposed dealing area, there are two key questions you must ask before relying upon the PEPA.

Once you have answered these questions below, use the table below to determine what action you can take based on your answer combination, i.e. whether you can rely upon the extinguishing effect of the PEPA.

**Question 1**

Is the proposed dealing area currently covered by a native title claim? Refer to Part 3 for more detail.

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¹ This means a QNTIME conclusion based upon a PEPA that was the grant of a tenure or a vesting.
**Question 2**

When the native title claim was made was the proposed dealing area at that point in time a particular tenure status? Refer to **Part 3** for more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer to Question 1</th>
<th>Answer to Question 2</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Rely upon your PEPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Forward all details of your proposed dealing to Land and Native Title Services (LNTS) through your Native Title Contact Officer (NTCO). Remember to first enter your research into QNTIME.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Forward all details of your proposed dealing to LNTS through your NTCO. Remember to first enter your research into QNTIME.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Forward all details of your proposed dealing to LNTS through your NTCO. Remember to first enter your research into QNTIME.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 3: Is the proposed dealing area currently covered by a native title claim?**

The first question you need to answer is -

**Is the proposed dealing area currently covered by a native title claim?**

**What is a native title claim for the purposes of this Module?**

This term refers both to a registered native title claim and an unregistered native title claim. It does not include a determined native title claim (ie. there has been a native title determination for the claim).
If there is a determination of native title over your proposed dealing area, go back and consider Module AB. The extinguishing effect of any PEPAs over that area may have already been disregarded and therefore native title exists or the Court may have determined that native title does not exist.

How do I find out if there is a native title claim or determination over the proposed dealing area?
Search QNTIME to see if there is a native title claim or determination covering your proposed dealing area.

Part 4: What was the proposed dealing area when the native title claim was made?

The second question you may need to answer is -

When the native title claim was made, was the proposed dealing area at that point in time …

‘made’
The native title claim was made on the day the claimant application (or pre-combined application for a combined claimant application) was lodged in the National Native Title Tribunal (applications before 30.9.98) or filed in the Federal Court (applications from 30.9.98).

Search QNTIME to find the date the native title claim was made.

‘at that point in time’
This means that the current tenure status may not be relevant in answering this question. It is the tenure status of the area at the time the claim was made that is relevant. Module BB does not apply in Scenario 1 but applies in Scenario 2 below.

- a pastoral lease (s47) held by -
  (a) the native title claimants (ie. the applicants on the claimant application) or other persons claiming to hold native title with those native title claimants
  (b) a trustee, on trust for any of the above persons
  (c) a company whose only shareholders are any of those persons?

Or
- a **freehold estate**, a **lease** or the area is **vested** in any person under legislation that makes provision for such grants or vestings to, in or for the **benefit of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders** or the area is held expressly for the benefit of, or is **held on trust**, or **reserved**, expressly for the **benefit of Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islanders** (s47A)?

### Examples

- a freehold estate granted under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* or the *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991*
- the former Aurukun Shire lease land and former Mornington Island Shire lease land under the *Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978*
- a deed of grant in trust for Aboriginal purposes or Torres Strait Islander purposes under the *Land Act 1962* or the *Land Act 1994*
- an Aboriginal reserve under the *Land Act 1962* or a reserve for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander purposes under the *Land Act 1994*.

### Note

Section 47A does not apply to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander reserve having more than one purpose and which is joined by the word ‘and’ (ie. Aboriginal and recreation purposes). It cannot be assessed as granted solely or primarily for that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander purpose alone unless the other purpose(s) can be shown to be ancillary to the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander purpose.

**Or**

- **unallocated State land** (s47B)?

### 'unallocated State land' for the purposes of section 47B means

that the proposed dealing area was **not** covered by a freehold estate, lease, reservation, proclamation, dedication, condition, permission or authority, made or conferred by the Crown in any capacity, or by the making, amendment or repeal of legislation of the Commonwealth or the State, under which the whole or part of the land or waters in the area is to be used for public purposes or for a particular purpose.

### Examples of where Module BB cannot apply

The whole of the proposed dealing area cannot apply -

- a reserve under land legislation
- a marine park
- an occupation licence
- a permit to occupy
- a mining lease
- the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998*. 
Or

- **Not** subject to a *resumption* process (s47B)?

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**'subject to a resumption process'**

An area is subject to a resumption process when the native title claim was made if:

(a) all interests (including native title interests) last existing in relation to the area before the native title claim was made were acquired, resumed or revoked by, or surrendered to, the Crown in any capacity; and

(b) when that happened, the Crown had a *bona fide* intention of using the area for public purposes or for a particular purpose; and

(c) the Crown still had a *bona fide* intention of that kind in relation to the area at the time the native title claim was made.

**Example**

The Department of Environment and Resource Management wishes to establish a museum of mapping and surveying on Lot 1 and Lot 2 on SP123658. Lot 1 is freehold land and Lot 2 is covered by a permit to occupy for grazing purposes.

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In 2003, to get the museum project underway, the then department compulsorily acquired -

- the freehold interest over Lot 1 under the *Acquisition of Land Act 1967*. Lot 1 reverted to unallocated State land; and

- native title rights and interests over Lot 2 and revoked the permit to occupy. Lot 2 reverted to unallocated State land.

Since the acquisition in 2003, the department has continued with its planning and design of the museum and has gone through a tendering process for its construction. Construction of the museum is scheduled to commence on 1 February 2011.

A native title claim was made over Lot 1 and Lot 2 in 2004.

Module BB would not apply in this case as Lot 1 and Lot 2 were subject to a resumption process (which met the above definition) at the relevant times.
Part 5: Who makes the decision whether this module applies?

There are no actual delegations to make decisions in relation to native title under the Native Title Work Procedures, the NTA or the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993 (NTQA).

The native title assessment process is just one part of your decision-making process when making a decision under legislation, eg. a decision to grant a lease. By carrying out a native title assessment, you are ensuring your decision complies with the NTA. **However, please ensure that, where requested in the table in Part 1 of this Module, you provide all details to LNTS through your NTCO.**

If you are unsure how to proceed, your NTCO must be contacted for advice. If the NTCO is unsure how to proceed, LNTS must be contacted for advice.