



How Can We Get a Township Lease?

Traditional Owners who are interested in a Township Lease for their community can talk to the Australian Government with the help of their Land Council. If Traditional Owners want to have a Township Lease and the Australian Government believes that a lease would be good for the community, then together they can start to negotiate the details of the lease.

Negotiating the Township Lease

Traditional Owners, the Land Trust and the Land Council hold talks about details of the Township Lease with the Australian Government. A Township Lease is an agreement for a long time into the future so Traditional Owners need to be sure of their decision. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act says Aboriginal people cannot sign any agreement unless they are fully informed. So the Traditional Owners making the decision will have enough time and can hold as many meetings as needed to discuss all the details of the agreement. Negotiating a Township Lease can take more than a year to negotiate.

When everyone has agreed, the Township Lease, or 'Head Lease', is signed by the Land Council, the Land Trust and the Executive Director of Township Leasing (Executive Director). Most Township Leases are for 99 years.

What Would We Be Talking About?

Some of the important terms of the Township Lease to be decided would include:

- How many years the Township Lease will operate. Most Township Leases are granted to the Executive Director for 99 years.
- The boundary of the Township Lease. The area covered should include the whole area of the township and some vacant land which can be used for new housing and other development as the town grows.
- An Advance Payment to Traditional Owners. This payment will be repaid from income generated by rent from subleases in the first years of the Township Lease.

- A Community Benefits Package or Economic Development Fund.
- The membership of the Consultative Forum of Traditional Owners who will work with and advise the Executive Director.

Getting To Agreement 'In Principle'

Once Traditional Owners and the Australian Government agree to the main points of a proposed Township Lease they may sign an Agreement in Principle to mark an important step towards the Township Lease. Negotiations on the other details of the Township Lease will continue.

Making Sure Everyone is Consulted

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act says that Land Councils must make sure Traditional Owners are properly consulted about the use of their land and make fully informed decisions.

Before a Township Lease is signed, the Land Council must make sure that Traditional Owners agree to the Township Lease and that all Aboriginal people in the community who are affected by a Township Lease have been consulted.

The Township Lease will not start until the Land Trust, the Land Council and the Executive Director all sign the lease.

Who To Talk To?

If you are a Traditional Owner and you are interested in a township lease you can:

- talk with your Government Engagement Coordinator or Indigenous Engagement Officer;
- talk with your Land Council; or
- call the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on 1800 152 259

