



How is a Section 19A Township Lease Different to a Section 19 Lease?

Section 19 Leases and section 19A Township Leases are both ways of granting rights to use Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act:

- Section 19 Leases are individual leases managed by the Land Councils.
- Section 19A Township Leases are over a whole township and are managed by the Executive Director of Township Leasing (Executive Director).

Section 19 Leases Through the Land Council

Section 19 of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act allows for government, businesses, organisations and individual people to apply to a Land Council for leases over specific areas of Aboriginal land. These leases are often referred to as Section 19 leases.

When a Section 19 Lease is applied for, the Land Council consults with Traditional Owners and other affected Aboriginal groups and communities:

- Traditional Owners make a 'yes' or 'no' decision on each lease proposal.
- The Land Council must ensure that Traditional Owners understand each Lease proposal.
- The Lease proposal must be approved by the Full Council of the Land Council or a delegated authority.
- Full Council meetings are usually held a few times each year.

Managing Land in a Township

Traditional Owners can work with their Land Council on Section 19 Leases in townships on a case by case basis. Traditional Owners can also decide to simplify leasing processes by setting the leasing rules upfront, then letting a land administrator manage the township under these rules.

This is the voluntary alternative provided by Township Leasing under Section 19A of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.



Section 19A Township Lease

A Township Lease provides a secure and regular land administration system for the entire township area. The land in the township is still Aboriginal land.

Under a Township Lease, all land in the township is managed by an independent land administrator called the Executive Director of Township Leasing.

When a Section 19A Township Lease is agreed to, the Executive Director manages land on behalf of the Traditional Owners:

- The Executive Director consults about how land is used and developed with Traditional Owners through a Consultative Forum.
- The Consultative Forum gives advice to the Executive Director about land use and new developments in the township area.
- The Executive Director makes decisions about how land is used and developed following rules agreed with the Consultative Forum.
- The Executive Director issues subleases over the blocks or 'Lots' in the township.
- The Executive Director collects rent on behalf of the Traditional Owners.

A Township Lease provides certainty of tenure through long term subleases. This means that government and commercial developers can operate in the township knowing they have secure land under their sublease.

An efficient land administration system with long-term, tradable subleases can attract outside investment in a township. Traditional Owners and community members can use their subleases to obtain a loan from a financial institution to buy their own home or invest in a business.

