

Dominic Beckett

Curriculum Vitae – November 2019

Personal Details

Dominic Patrick William Beckett
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Summary

I am a legal and policy professional with more than 25 years' experience. I am also a nationally accredited mediator.

I have a very broad range of experience, knowledge and skills. Much of my career, however, has been spent working on matters particularly relevant to Australian Indigenous people, particularly in relation to land, cultural heritage, community and economic development and corporate governance. This has included:

- native title claim proceedings,
- statutory land claim proceedings and appeals in the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales,
- law reform and policy development projects,
- land and resource agreement negotiations,
- judicial review proceedings in relation to a broad range of issues,
- organisational structuring and governance advice,
- environmental planning and assessment matters, and
- strategic and operational advice.

Employers and clients have included Aboriginal land councils and native title representative bodies, government agencies, regulators, Aboriginal communities and individuals.

I enjoy a good reputation for my:

- ability to quickly and thoroughly grasp and understand essential issues,
- deep understanding of the social, policy and economic context of my work,
- sound and innovative legal and policy advice,
- ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a broad range of people,
- clear and concise documentation,
- effective dispute resolution and litigation skills, and
- common sense.

My experience in mediation began in 1990 when I trained with the NSW Community Justice Centres. I then worked as a mediator for several years, mediating a wide range of disputes including family, commercial and neighbourhood matters and also facilitating meetings. In my work as a native title and land rights lawyer and consultant I have engaged in numerous mediations and have facilitated and



advised at many community meetings. I recently completed retraining as a mediator with the Australian Disputes Centre.

Professional history

Dominic Beckett Legal & Consulting – Director and principal

October 2017 to present

I currently practice as the principal of Dominic Beckett Legal & Consulting, which I established (originally as Melhem & Beckett) in September 2017. This is legal and consulting practice with a particular emphasis on Indigenous land, heritage and resources law, community projects and organisational governance.

Past and current projects include:

- advising and assisting the Registrar, Aboriginal Land Rights Act, in relation to a review of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW), and in relation to a range of matters concerning the administration of that Act and Aboriginal Land Councils,
- advising and representing a number of Local Aboriginal Land Councils in relation to major land-based negotiations with the Minister for Lands and Forestry,
- acting on behalf of Local Aboriginal Land Councils in relation to native title claim proceedings and related land-based negotiations,
- advising the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council in relation to a major project proposal,
- advising several groups of Aboriginal landowners in the Northern Territory in relation to a major resource project affecting their lands, and
- negotiating joint management arrangements under Part 4A of the *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) in relation to a nature reserve listed in Schedule 14 to that Act.

Chalk & Behrendt, Lawyers and Consultants – Director

January to October 2017

Chalk & Behrendt is a nationally recognised provider of legal services to Indigenous peoples and organisations throughout Australia. It also provides general legal services to other clients including numerous not for profit and charitable organisations. I became a Director of this firm upon its establishment as an incorporated legal practice in January 2017.

Chalk & Fitzgerald, Lawyers and Consultants – Partner, consultant and senior solicitor

July 2001 to December 2016

Chalk & Fitzgerald was the predecessor of Chalk & Behrendt. During my long association with the firm I was variously an employed solicitor, a partner and a consultant.

Major projects included:

- native title claim proceedings in north west Queensland, including the large and complex Waanyi peoples claim determined in 2010 and the Mount Isa cluster of claims,
- extensive involvement in several reviews of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW) and other statutory review and law reform projects,
- judicial review proceedings,
- complex advice work in relation to administrative law and statutory interpretation, property law and commercial matters,
- numerous statutory land claim appeals in NSW,

- land claim proceedings under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Qld),
- environmental planning and assessment advice and proceedings,
- mining and other resource development negotiations,
- commercial recovery proceedings,
- organisational structuring and governance advice, and
- community development projects.

Australian Government Solicitor – Principal solicitor
 August 2000 to July 2001

Providing legal services to the Australian Taxation Office in relation to:

- judicial review proceedings, and
- revenue recovery proceedings.

Dominic Beckett, Lawyer – Principal
 September 1999 – July 2000

Based in Darwin and providing legal services to:

- the Aboriginal Justice Advocacy Committee, NT
- the Northern Land Council, and
- the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

as well to individual clients.

My work included:

- conducting and appearing as counsel in judicial review proceedings concerning aspects of the Northern Territory's criminal justice system,
- native title future act advice and negotiations, and
- criminal defence work as a duty solicitor.

North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, Stolen Generations Litigation Project – Solicitor

June – September 1999

Short term engagement in connection with the *Cubillo and Gunner v the Commonwealth* stolen generations test case.

Northern Land Council – Legal Advisor

September 1997 – May 1999

Providing legal services to the Northern Land Council, Aboriginal Land Trusts, traditional Aboriginal owners and native title claimants in relation to:

- major uranium mining project negotiations and related matters,
- judicial review proceedings,
- Aboriginal land claim proceedings under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth), and
- native title claim proceedings.

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission – Barrister and Solicitor

June 1996 to September 1997

Criminal defence work in the Magistrates Courts and Northern Territory Supreme Court.

Australian Government Solicitor – Solicitor and Senior Solicitor

July 1993 to April 1996

Providing legal services to the Australian Customs Service, the Anti-Dumping Authority, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and the Child Support Agency, including:

- complex major revenue recovery proceedings,
- judicial review proceedings,
- criminal and civil customs prosecutions, and
- child support recovery proceedings.

New South Wales Community Justice Centres - Mediator

1991 to 1994

Mediating a broad range of disputes including family, commercial and neighbourhood issues.

Education

University of Sydney – Bachelor of Laws (Hons)

Completed 1992

University of Sydney – Bachelor of Arts

Completed 1989

John S D'Arcy, New South Wales Public Service Association Prize for first in Government III

Registrations, accreditations and professional memberships

Solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW

Legal practitioner of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory

Legal practitioner of the High Court of Australia

Australian Practising Certificate – Law Society of New South Wales

Member of the Law Society of NSW

Member of the Australian Institute of Administrative Lawyers

Nationally accredited mediator – Australian Disputes Centre (an RMAB under the NMAS)