

## RESUME

**Name:** Valerie Jane COOMS  
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### **Educational qualifications:**

- Bachelor of Arts Degree Australian National University 1998
- Bachelor of Arts Degree Honours (First Class) University of New England 2001
- Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training Australian Institute of Industry and Training 2005
- Australian Institute of Company Directors 2007
- PhD Australian National University 2013
- Certificate IV in Mediation International College of Education for Sustainability Mediation Institute 2014

### **Referees:**

- Mr Cameron Costello, former CEO, Quandamooka Yoolooburabee Registered Native Title Body Corporate, 0488 499571 – Cameron.Costello73@gmail.com.
- Ms Patricia Turner, CEO, National Community Controlled Health Organisation, 0421 804718 – [pat.turner@naccho.com.au](mailto:pat.turner@naccho.com.au).
- Christine Fewings, NNTT Registrar, Brisbane, 0407 584402  
[Christine.Fewings@nntt.gov.au](mailto:Christine.Fewings@nntt.gov.au).
- Anthony McAvoy, SC, 0409 842356, [mcavoy@fjc.net.au](mailto:mcavoy@fjc.net.au).
- Tim Wishart, Principal Legal Officer, QSNTS, 0408 707147,  
[Tim.Wishart@qsnts.com.au](mailto:Tim.Wishart@qsnts.com.au).
- Ian Kuch, former CEO North Queensland Land Council, 0488 766051,  
[Ian.Kuch@bigpond.net.au](mailto:Ian.Kuch@bigpond.net.au).

### **Employment History:**

- 2020 – Present - Director, Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Director, North Queensland Airport, Member of Native Title Research Advisory Committee, Australian

- Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Adjunct Professor, University of Queensland;**
- **2022 – 2013 Chairperson, Quandamooka Yoolooburabee Registered Native Title Body Corporate (QYRNTBC) and Minjerribah Camping;**
  - **2022 – 2014 Adjunct Professor Griffith University;**
  - **2018 - 2017 Board Member, Australian Indigenous Governance Institute;**
  - **2018 – 2015 Director and Chairperson of Aboriginal and Islander Independent School Brisbane (Murri School);**
  - **2018 - 2013 Member National Native Title Tribunal;**
  - **2018 – 2013 National Native Title Advisory Group;**
  - **2018 – 2013 First Nations Regional Mutual Recognition Indigenous Land Use Agreement;**
  - **2018 – 2013 Indigenous Governance Development Forum;**
  - **2016 – 2014 Adjunct Professor, University of the Sunshine Coast;**
  - **2015 – 2013 Australian Law Reform Commission Review of the Native Title Act;**
  - **2015 COAG Indigenous Land and Administration Use Enquiry;**
  - **2009 – 2012 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS);**

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mediator of the Year 2018

I was awarded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mediator of the Year with the National Dispute Resolution Centre, Sydney. This was in recognition of the dispute resolution and mediation work I have undertaken in Native Title across the country.

#### Chairperson QYAC

The Quandamooka Yoolooburabee Registered Native Title Body Corporate (QYRNTBC) was established in 2011 and began operation on 5 July 2011 following the Quandamooka people's Consent Determination. QYRNTBC is the nominated body which holds the Native Title on behalf of the Quandamooka people. While working as the CEO of Queensland South Native Title Services (QSNTS), after consultation with legal advisors, Federal Court and Traditional Owners, a governance structure was put in place for the Quandamooka Native title Determination Application (NTDA) which reflected the traditional decision making processes. Once the NTDA was finalised, the same governance structure was applied to the Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC).

Being involved with QYRNTBC from its inception, I was responsible for accessing funding, negotiating with State Government departments and agencies, stakeholders, advertising and recruiting staff, devising policies and procedures, acquiring office space and setting up bank accounts. I have also been instrumental in structuring various sub-committees to provide professional advice to the QYAC board. In particular, the Investment Committee is

Chaired by an independent expert economist and also provides advice to the Board in relation to the mining royalties and other investments.

I continue to work as the Chair of QYNTBC which now has more members than any Prescribed Body Corporate in the country. QYNTBC has received awards for Healthy Waterways and Land Care. Chairing this board requires not only being familiar with the traditional decision making processes of Quandamooka people, but with governance matters and various forms of legislation including the *Native Title Act 1993*, *Cultural Heritage Act 2003*, as well as the *Corporations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Act 2006*, to name a few. QYAC was also a finalist in the Reconciliation Australia Indigenous Governance Award in 2018.

#### Chairperson Aboriginal and Islander Independent School, Brisbane

From 2015 to 2018, I served as both a Director and Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Islander Independent School (Murri School) in Brisbane. The Murri School was established in 1986 and currently has 250 students from prep to year 12. The Murri School is committed to improving Indigenous literacy and numeracy, education outcomes and increasing the involvement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and families. Murri School has been running programs for Aboriginal and Islander families with assistance from the Indigenous Healing Foundation. Murri School also works in partnership with University of Queensland and the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health to provide strong outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

#### Director Australian Indigenous Governance Institute

Since 2017 to 2018, I served as a Director of the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) at Australian National University (ANU). This involved working with National Indigenous Congress, the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at ANU together with Professor Mick Dodson. The AIGI is committed to working with Indigenous nations to pursue and exercise rights to self-determination and economic development through strong self-governance. AIGI is committed to working with Indigenous groups across the country to strengthen sustainable systems of self governance.

#### Adjunct Professor - Griffith University

Since 2014, I have been working with Professor Ciaran O'Faircheigh in the School of Government and International Relations and have participated in the Indigenous Public Sector Leadership Project. In 2019 I will be working with PhD students and overseas visitors in relation to post-mining economic development for Indigenous peoples.

#### Member of the National Native Title Tribunal

### Appointment

In February 2013 I was appointed by the Governor General to the position of Member of the National Native Title Tribunal. Under Section 110 of the Native Title Act, provision is made for the appointment of a member who in the opinion of the Governor General, has special knowledge in relation to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander societies, land management, dispute resolution or other duties. I believe my previous experience in Aboriginal affairs and particularly in Native Title as the Manager of the Native Title Unit in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in Western Australia, CEO of Queensland South Native Title Services (QSNTS) and the former Queensland South Representative Body Aboriginal Corporation, as well as my PhD assisted me in this appointment.

### Mediation

I represent the Tribunal at various fora and conducted complex mediations under Section 203BK of the Native Title Act. I was the first Member to undertake mediation under this Section of the Native Title Act in 2013. Section 203BK involves formal requests for assistance from the Native Title Representative Bodies or Native Title Service Providers. On all occasions where my assistance was sought it has been in relation to resolving complex Native Title intra-Indigenous disputes.

As well as being successful with intra-Indigenous dispute resolution, I also presided over mineral and petroleum exploration applications with traditional owner groups particularly in relation to areas where either Native Title has been determined, or an Application is currently in the Federal Court. I am also required to mediate following requests from state governments for compulsory acquisitions over Native Title lands. Mediation conferences are conducted between the State Governments, Native Title parties and mineral or petroleum exploration or extraction interests.

### Australian Law Reform Commission Review of the Native Title Act

In 2013, I was invited by the Attorney-General's Department to participate in the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of the Native Title Act in my capacity as the Chair of QYRNTBC and NNTT Indigenous Member. This is co-ordinated by the Federal Attorney-General's Department and included Federal Court Judges, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Professor Mick Dodson, Dr David Martin, the President of the National Native Title Tribunal and many others.

### COAG Indigenous Land and Administration Use Enquiry

In January 2015, I was invited by the Senator Scullion who was Chairing the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Enquiry into Indigenous Land and Administration Use, to join as a member of the Expert Indigenous Working Group. This involved working closely with not only Lands Councils but state and territory government representatives and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in relation to Indigenous Land Use and Native Title matters with the view of providing a report and recommendations to COAG.

### National Native Title Advisory Group

In consultation with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Senator Scullion, I was chosen to serve on the Commonwealth Government's Native Title Advisory Group. This involved working closely with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Attorney-General's Department. NNTT's involvement in the nation building concept and PBC resource sharing were issues discussed at this forum.

- **2009-2012 – Indigenous Visiting Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Native Title Research Unit and Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator and, Director, Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)**
- **2008-2009 – Lecturer, Oodgeroo Unit, Queensland University of Technology**
- **2003-2008 – Chief Executive Officer, Queensland South Native Title Services (QSNTS) and former Queensland South Representative Body Aboriginal Corporation (QSRBAC).**
- **2001-2003 – Teacher, Access Division, Inverell and Tamworth TAFE colleges NSW**
- **2001 – 1999 Lecturer and Director of Oorala Aboriginal Centre University of New England NSW**
- **1999 - 1998 Chief Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer ATSIC and Manager of Native Title Unit ATSIC Western Australia**
- **1998 – 1993 Assistant Manager, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) Monitoring Unit, ATSIC Canberra**
- **1992 – 1991 Senior Project Officer and Acting Deputy Regional Manager, Brisbane Regional Office ATSIC**
- **1992 – 1989 Senior Vocational Officer and Manager of Aboriginal Programs, Department of Employment Education and Training**
- **1989 - 1988 Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit, Department of Social Security Queensland and Northern Territory Areas**

- **1988 – 1986 State Women’s Co-ordinator and Executive Officer Ministerial Parliamentary Liaison and Community Development sections, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Queensland State Office**
- **1985 – 1981 Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra – Health Policy Section**