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### **Native Title – Enabling not Frustrating**

The recognition of native title rights of traditional owners presents planners with a unique opportunity to engage with communities, culture, tenure, landscapes and (to non-indigenous people) new planning methodologies.

The ability for traditional owners to physically and materially access their rights in the use and enjoyment of their land is an important element in moving from potentially abstract native title determinations to communities growing and prospering.

Rigid and unsophisticated planning has the capacity to frustrate native title rights and communities and thereby their rights and aspirations. Planning can be applied as another layer of regulation which frustrates the rights of native title holders. However the opportunity can be taken by the planning professionals to enable native title holders to exercise their rights and thereby support traditional owners in their aspirations. The role of planning as an enabler is the guiding idea for planning practice in this field.

Starting with land use established and maintained by traditional owners over centuries in accordance with cultural planning processes is essential to the recognition of the role and purpose of land. This in and of itself challenges planning methodologies but presents new and important considerations in planning practice for planners and the entire Australian community.

Having worked with the Quandamooka community off and on for over twenty years it is an area of planning practice which can be difficult to define and approach from standard methodologies and is challenging. However it is engaging and at time deeply satisfying areas of professional practice, which is foundational to traditional owners and ultimately all Australians.