

HARTS RANGE — Wednesday 12 April 1989

PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: -

Committee:

Mr S. Hatton (Chairman)

Mr B. Ede (Deputy Chairman)

Mr C. Firmin

Mr W. Lanhupuy

Mr D. Leo

Mr R. Setter

Officers assisting the committee:

Mr R. Gray (Executive Officer)

Mr G. Nicholson (Legal Adviser)

Appearing before the committee:

Mr Anthony PETRICK (Translating)

Mr Lindsay BOOKLEK

Ms Agnes PETRICK

Mr Alec PETERSON

Mr Toby PAULAR

NOTE: This is a verbatim transcript that has been tape-checked. However, due to poor recording or many people speaking at the same time, some of the recordings were inaudible and unable to be transcribed.

Mr HATTON: Thank you for the chance to meet with you today. My name is Steve Hatton and I am the chairman of this parliamentary committee. You know Brian Ede who is on the committee too. If you look in the back of the books that we sent out, you will see pictures of the people who are members of this committee of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, the Northern Territory parliament. It is different from other committees because it has 3 people from the CLP, the government side, and 3 people from the ALP, the opposition side, both on the same committee. We are working together. You know that, in politics, the government and the opposition, the CLP and the ALP, argue about a lot of things. This time, we are all saying the same thing. We are working together on this one because this job that we are working on is too important. It is the most important job that we can do in the Northern Territory and we do not want to play politics with this one. We want to work with the people and get something for all the people.

Our job is to work with the people to write a special law which we call a constitution. This is a law that comes from the people and, when you make it, it becomes the boss over the parliament, the boss over the government and the boss over the courts. It is a law that comes from the people and the government can't muck around with it. It has to stay there and only the people can change that law. You remember that, last year, you had to vote on a referendum and say yes, no, yes, no. That was for the Australian constitution. The government wanted to do some things and the people had to look at it. They

were not sure about it and so they said no. That stopped the government. This would be the same sort of thing for the Northern Territory. It would be the rules that the people make, the laws that the people make. It would tell the government what it can do and what it can't do. It would be a very strong law.

Many people talk about Aboriginal law and say how it is always there, doesn't change, stays the same. The white man's laws keep changing all the time. A new government comes in and it changes the law. The laws change back again, backwards and forwards all the time. But, this one is more like the Aboriginal law. We write this one and it stays there. The government can't change it, the government can't muck around with it. It doesn't matter who is the Chief Minister, the law will stay the same because it is the people's law.

So you can see that this is a big job. We put in this law those things that are really important to us. We might put in things to protect Aboriginal land rights, sacred sites and Aboriginal culture and language. We can put in this law things to protect your right to vote and the right of people to stand for parliament. What you put in there are the really important things. This law, when it is made, will determine the way the Northern Territory is going to go in the future. There is no mucking around with that one. You just leave it and it keeps going that way.

If you think of a person, he has a skeleton and bones which give him shape. It is inside and it gives the shape for the hands, the arms, the body, the legs. It gives the shape and the strength. Outside the skeleton and outside the bones, you have the flesh, the skin and the blood and all the things that fill it out. This constitution is like the skeleton and gives the shape and tells us how we are going to go. Then, we make other laws which are like the flesh. But, whether you are fat or skinny, strong or weak, black or white, the skeleton is the same and stands up the same. What we are talking to you about now is the shape that we want the Northern Territory to be. How do we want this Northern Territory to go? How are we going to make laws that can bring Aboriginal people, white people and everyone together with some sort of respect and understanding? How are we going to live together and build the future together because we are all people of the Northern Territory whether we are black, white, Chinese or whatever? Somehow we have to work out how we are going to live together for the future for our children and for our grandchildren. This law will do that for us.

I can't write that law for you. He can't write that law for you. The people here, the people at Ti Tree, the people at Uluru, the people in Arnhem Land, the people in Darwin - everyone has got to get together and think about it carefully and say what sort of things they want to put in there. When you make it, you must make sure that it is a good one because, after it has been made, you can't change it. We are going around now asking people to think about this law and the sort of things they want to put in it. What sort of a place do you want the Northern Territory to be like for your children? What sort of rights do you want to protect? Start talking about it because it is only by doing that we can start to all work together for the future, to protect the things that are important to us.

You have heard a lot of talk about the Northern Territory perhaps becoming a state. There has been a bit of talk about it. Some people say that it is a good idea and other people don't like it because they don't think we are ready for it. But, until we do this job and you know what you want, we can't even talk about that. We have got to do this job first so that we know what sort of place this Northern Territory is going to be like. When we know what it is going to be like and what you want, you can make it work that way. Then, you can ask whether we should be a state or not. We can't even ask that question yet. This is the first job that you have to do. All the states have a constitution - Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. There is also a constitution for the federal government and that is the one that we voted on last year.

But, the Northern Territory does not have a constitution. There are no rules. We are sort of wandering around not knowing where to go. This is a chance for you and for all the other people in the Northern Territory, for the first time, to say what you want this Northern Territory to be like and to make something real for your home. It is a job that we must do and we must start doing it now because, without it, we are not going to get anywhere, not going to fix your problems. We want a good place for our children and our grandchildren to grow up in. We want our grandchildren to look back and say that we did the right thing for them because we left a good place for them to live and protected their rights and their future. You fight for land rights, you fight to get your land to live on, you fight for your rights and you protect your rights and your future. You can do it through this. We must do this not only for ourselves but for our children and grandchildren. It is so important because it is going to be so deep, so strong. We have all got to think and talk about it.

I am not here today for you to tell me what you want to go into it. I come here today to tell you that we are going to start doing this job and we would like you to start thinking about it. Ask any questions now, go away and talk about it, ring us up or write to us and ask us to come back and tell you more about this or that. When you are ready, you can tell us what

you want to put in it. When you have done that, when you have thought it through, you can come and tell us what you think. The other people from all around will tell us the same thing or different things and we will put it all together. We will sit down and try to write something up. But, that is only the first try. To make sure that we have got it right, we will call together a special committee of representatives of people from all over the Territory. Those people will look at the work that we have done and perhaps agree with some things and change other things and fix it up to make sure that it is what the people want. When they finish that, they will have this proposed constitution. Then, that will be put to a vote of the people, as was done last year with the federal constitution. The people will look at it and either agree with it or say no. If you are not sure that things are right in it, say no and we will start all over again.

That is how we are going to go about doing it. It will not be quick. It might take 3 years or 5 years or even longer. What is important is that we do it properly and that, for once in the Northern Territory, we all work together to try to get something for the future. All I came here today to do is to tell you about this job. We are asking you to start thinking about it. I will ask Brian to say a few words and, if you have any questions, please ask. We want you to understand what we are trying to do. We want that law for the people. It is a people's law. It is the boss over the government and the courts. It is the people making the rules for the future. That is what we must do.

Mr EDE: When I travel around my electorate, to the north and east and west of here - I don't often get down this far because this is Neil Bell's way - one thing that people keep on saying to me is that the whitefellow law keeps on changing. They say that it is really hard for them because they don't know where they are. They are going along and they think they have it okay and then the government says it is going to change it or somebody in Alice Springs says that the federal government is going to change the law. Everybody gets frightened and says: 'How are we going to get on after that? What's going to happen? Are we going to have to go charging off to Canberra again or are we going to have to go up to Darwin and sing out and make them alter that law? What are we going to do? Is it going to be better or is it going to be worse or what?' Everybody says: 'That is not the way our law is. Aboriginal law goes one way for thousands and thousands of years, just straight. But, you mob, you going like this. You are not straight; you are all over the place'.

That is true for lots of things. When you think about it, this government business is pretty dangerous business because it is really powerful. The government can make a law looking after everybody's sacred sites and come along the next year and finish that law and, if it wants to build a road, can go ahead and bulldoze that sacred site. Governments can do that. They are pretty dangerous business that government. The reason why I am here, why I am part of this one and why I want to stay with this constitutional development is that we have to do something to make that government not so dangerous. The thing that is holding it back now is that we are still a territory. We are underneath Canberra. But, we are not going to be a kid all the time, underneath Canberra. We are going to be grown up some day. We have got to look after it and make sure that it goes properly.

At the moment, you can say that it is a bit like you got a cheeky dog, bull terrier, that is always biting people. What do you do if you have got something like that? You put a rope on him and tie him up. You say: 'Righto, you can run around in that part'. That is what a constitution is like and what it does to the government. It puts a rope on it and says that it can go so far but no further. What we are trying to do is to work out how long a rope we are going to give the government. How much are we going to allow it to do and when are we going to say: 'No, stop! That is enough'? We do that by thinking about what are the really important things that we do not want to change. What are the things that we keep the same all the way in Aboriginal law and that we do not want to change? What things from there could we put into this constitution? We are thinking about things like protection for land rights, sacred sites, culture and language. How are we going to protect those afterwards? Those are the things that we have got to think about. We also have to think about other things. We must make sure that every person who gets into trouble has the right to go to court. We must make sure that people have the right to decide whom they want to be a member of parliament for them. In some countries, people do not have the right to vote. We have it in Australia because the federal constitution comes down to us.

But, we need our own constitution here so that we have got one for the Territory. Other places around Australia, like Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, made their constitutions over 100 years ago. When they did it, a few lawyers and a few politicians got together in a room in Brisbane or Sydney or wherever and they sat down and wrote out the constitution. They said: 'This is what we reckon it should be'. We do not want to do it like that here in the Territory. Here in the Territory, we want to do it properly, from the people, the way it is supposed to be done. That is why we do not have some clever mob of lawyers or whatever from Alice Springs or Darwin sitting in the Chan Building up there and saying: 'Okay, this is the way that we are going to do it'. That is why we are travelling all over. We were at Nyirripi the other day and at Docker and Finke. We were at Ti Tree today and tomorrow we will be at Wallace Rock Hole. Then, we will be heading up to Borroloola, around Arnhem Land and everywhere because we want to open

this one up for everybody. We want to get it open so that everybody knows that this is not something that we are trying to hide. It is not something we are trying to be sneaky about. We want it to be open all the way so that everybody can have his say. What are the important things that we want in a law like this, in a constitution, a law that will not change? What are the things that we are going to tell the government that it cannot muck about with? If there is to be any change, there has to be a special vote on it.

That is what we are really here for now. It is to tell everybody that this is starting off and to ask how we are going to make sure that everybody is involved in it. We have been talking to other places about the idea of sending out tapes with stories on them and putting some songs and things in with the story and having them in language so that people can listen to them that way. Others are talking about different ways that we can do it because it takes about 4 months or so for us to travel right around as a committee. We will travel around, send out all this stuff and then come back again.

I suppose the most important thing to think about is what we are trying to get to. We are trying to get a place where everybody, whether they are Aborigines, whitefellows, Chinese, Vietnamese or whatever, can say: 'This is our Northern Territory and we respect each other and we respect each other's customs and culture and people can live together. It is a place where everybody can have a fair go, a good chance for an education, a good chance for a good job and a good chance to live properly'. We are trying to make that sort of Northern Territory. We can't have 2 sides with Aboriginal people here and non-Aboriginal people here. We are not trying to kick them over like that. What we are trying to do is get them like that so that it is square and everybody has the same fair go.

To do that, everybody has to have their say and work it out. Some people have got to say, 'Righto, we will back off a bit', and other people have got to come forward a bit. Everybody has got to talk about what they are after, what they really want, and explain it properly. They must not say: 'Look, I do not want to be part of this thing. You mob do that. I am not going to get involved. I am not going to talk to you about that'. That is not the way to do this one because it is really important for our kids and for everybody. We want our kids to be able to look back and say: 'We read those stories about how bad things were in 1890s after Barrow Creek. We heard about the Coniston massacres but, in the 1980s and the 1990s everybody got together and worked out a law for us and now we are all really good'. If our children and grandchildren can look back like that, then we can all be proud. We can all say that we put all those bad times behind us and created a Territory where everybody felt right about things, about protection for their sites and culture, and are living a good life here.

It is not going to be easy. Lots of things have to be talked about and argued about. But, if we do not try, we are never going to get anywhere. We have got to keep trying. That is why, when we you see something that you do not agree with, you must say so. Don't say that it is all too hard. You must say: 'No. I don't like that that way. I want to change it'. Everybody has to keep talking about how to change it. It does not matter if it takes 1 year, 2 years, 5 years or 10 years. We will keep on putting it back until we work it up and get it right. What is 10 years? It is nothing when you think that Aboriginal law has being going for thousands of years and that the Northern Territory, this land, will still be here in thousands of years. It does not matter if it takes us 10 years. We have got to get it right.

Mr HATTON: Do people understand what we are saying?

Mr TONY PETRICK: Wale if you mob something atyenge ilerle, wale I'll ask em next time when they come up here, might bring somebody and interpret'em (inaudible), somebody that can read and write, (inaudible).

Well, if you mob can tell me something. Well I'll ask them next time when they come up here. They should bring somebody to interpret, (inaudible), somebody that can read and write, (inaudible).

Mr HATTON: Do people understand what we were saying? Yes.

Mr TONY PETRICK: Arrantherre understand irreke nthakenhe ilekarle? Aye?

Do you all understand what they've been talking about?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Awethe. (Again)

ANOTHER UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Ye. (Yes)

Mr TONY PETRICK: Mwerre arle re ilekaye. (It was good what he said, eh?)

ANOTHER UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Ye. (yes)

Mr TONY PETRICK: There's grandchildren want think about - if they talking about arrantherre understand irreme iwenheke angkeme arle aye?

There's grandchildren to think about - if they are talking about - Do you all understand what they're talking about?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Grandchildren nhenge ingkerne iperre (inaudible) ... ampe arrekatherre renhe ingkerne iperre mape schooleke irrpeme arle. Warlpele way carry'em on iletyeke, ante urrperlekenhe way carry'em on iletyeke.

Our grandchildren, the ones who come after us (inaudible), you mob's kids are going to school. They've got to carry on the white way and the Aboriginal way.

Mr HATTON: The people do not have to tell us today what they think.

Mr PETRICK: Next time when you come back.

Mr HATTON: What we are saying is that this time we merely telling people what we are going to start doing. We have brought this book and other books. We will put stuff on tape in language so that people can think about it and talk about it among themselves. We will come back and then you can tell us what you are thinking. We can tell you what the other mobs are thinking and you can agree or disagree with that and talk about it. It is going to take a few years.

Mr EDE: We are just opening it up now.

Mr HATTON: Here is a job that we have got to do and we have got to take one step first. The first step is to tell people what we are doing. We do not expect people to say to us that they think we should do this or we should do that, unless they want to. If they want to go away and have a think about it first, that is fine.

Mr PETRICK: They don't want to tell you today, but they can think about it and tell you next time when you come back.

Mr EDE: That is the best way because it is too important to do it straight off. The best way is to think about it, talk about it, make a tape of ideas and send them off.

Mr BOOKLEK: Let's get things from town.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: ...Aboriginal person (inaudible) to thing you know, interpret.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Interpreter we want, because they can read and write and interpret (inaudible) talking so this mob understand.

Mr HATTON: We are going to need to do that. What we need to do is work out ...

Mr BOOKLEK: The land council will come out and tell us something different.

Mr HATTON: That is why it is better for us to come straight here and you hear it straight from us.

Mr BOOKLEK: See we are happy that you mob come out today instead of the land council come out and tell us all the time. We are happy to see you people come out and talk to us today.

Mr EDE: We want to have a meeting with the land council too because we think that they do not understand what we are doing. They think that we are tricking them or something. I hope that, if I can really explain it to them, they will agree that they should be doing this too. They should be saying that they will be part of it and we can all work together, land council, Congress, all people from out bush and from town. We are all part of the Territory and we have all got to put in our ideas. You cannot say, 'I don't like what you are doing', and walk away. You have got to be in it.

Mr BOOKLEK: (Inaudible).

Mr HATTON: Well that is all right. They can come out here and tell you, but you can think for yourself. Do you want to

have your say on this or do you want some other mob to talk for you?

Mr BOOKLEK: (Inaudible).

Mr HATTON: That is right. That is what we are saying. We have got to make sure that you know what is going on so that you can have your say.

Mr PETRICK: I would like to tell you a few stories now about the old people. What they don't like is the land council is something that the coloured people have from the city and all that and they do not even know what they are talking about. That is why we are happy to see you people come out and try to talk to us. It is a better way to do it because once some of them coloured people that work for them come, they tell lies and this going to be real hard for you people. Last time they come here ...(Indecipherable).

Mr EDE: We will try to change their way of looking at it. Okay, they are trying to look after land rights and that sort of thing, but they have to realise that, at the moment, they are relying on the federal government. I am talking now from my side. I am from the Labor party and that is the Labor party down there. I believe that the Labor party in Canberra is going to hold on strong for that Land Rights Act, but for how long is the Labor party going to win in Canberra? Some day, if they get chucked out and another mob comes in, it might be somebody who does not like land rights at all and who will scrub it out. Where will we be then? The best way is for us to have it in our constitution up here as well. Then, if they fall down from that side, we can still hold on to it up here. That makes sense to me and I can't see why the land council is not agreeing and saying: 'Okay, let's have it in the constitution and then we have got it tied in 2 ways'.

Mr HATTON: Then, the government can't touch it, no matter who is in government. Only the people can change it and the people are not going to change it. You have got to think about things like that and make sure that the government can't touch this one. It is for you to decide. We are not saying what you can put in there or what you can't put in there. We are asking you to think about it and tell us what you think should go in there. We have not walked in here to say: 'Look, we have written this pretty law. It looks pretty good, don't you think? Don't you like the pictures and the stories? You say yes to this and we will all be happy'. We are not saying that. We are saying that we have got to start work to write that law and you have got to think about it.

It is your law, it is not the government's law. We can give you ideas. You reckon that book has got big words in it, look at this one. We have been working on this now for 3 years and we looked all over the world. We looked in America, Canada, the West Indies, New Guinea, Africa, New Zealand and other parts of Australia to learn about all the different ideas they have for constitutions. We ask all sorts of funny questions in here. Should you have to go for elections every 3 years or every 4 years? Do you write that in here so that the government cannot muck around with that? What can the courts do? Can the Administrator or the Governor sack the government? There are lots of funny questions. There are things in there that I do not like. There are things in there that Brian Ede does not like. There will be things in there that you do not like and there are other things that you will not like. We put them in there whether we liked them or not so that you could see the different things that perhaps you would like to do. You might think of other things that we did not think of. That is part of it too.

Mr EDE: We are going to leave some copies of this book for people to go through.

Mr HATTON: Remember that we talked about that committee. When we have finished our job, it will go to what we call a constitutional convention which is a big committee of people who will look at our work and make a draft constitution. We are not just going to pick these people. We are also asking you to think about who should go on that committee. How should we pick them? It has got to be very much the people's thing, not the government's thing, not the parliament's thing. So we want you to work out how you are going to get this mob together to do the work.

Mr EDE: We are just doing this from the parliament in order to kick it off. This committee, which has equal numbers of government and opposition members, is just to get it started. We will go around, give out ideas and get everybody really talking about it. When things start to come back and some ideas start floating to the top, we will just skim them off and hand them over to this convention of people from all over the Northern Territory. We can then back off because that convention has got to decide whether our work was all right and work it up and balance things. When they have done that, they will have to go back out and ask all the people to vote yes or no. If it loses, we will just start over again and again until we get it right.

We are not going to try to push people into saying yes if they are not happy. What I am saying to everybody is that, if it

has 10 bits in it and you think that 9 bits are all right and 1 bit is not all right, then you should say no to the lot and tell them that it is not yet right. It has got to be all okay. In going through that, everybody will be talking to each other because they will all have to try to work out how they can get something that everybody agrees to. That is what is going to pull all the whitefellows and Aboriginal people and all these other mob together because they are going to have to talk and explain to each other. Aboriginal people will have a chance to explain what they are after and why sacred sites and those lands are so important. That will help a lot of whitefellows to understand and open up their minds a bit and not just grog talk about the place about blackfellows doing this and that. It will make them understand more and help this coming together in other ways.

Like we said, it is not our thing. We are just opening it up and then we will hand it over to the people. It is one for the people to work up.

Mr HATTON: You thought you had just a couple of meetings to make it hard, eh?

Mr BOOKLEK: Do we have to write it on paper or what?

Mr HATTON: We can come here and you just tell us.

Mr EDE: Any way you like. You can put your ideas on tape, somebody talking into a tape recorder.

Mr PETRICK: You will come back?

Mr HATTON: Yes, we will come back.

Mr EDE: We will be coming back anyway. But, even then, if somebody forgets to say something, he can put it on tape or write a letter and send it in. We will be travelling around this time and we will probably be back at the end of this year or early next year. We will be back, but we will be sending out stuff and, if anybody wants to send some back, that is okay too.

Mr HATTON: When you see this stuff coming through, you will know what it is all about and you will not just chuck it in the bin. If you know what we are doing and why we are sending stuff to you, it will mean more to you, won't it? It will not be just another bit of paper from the government. When we come back later this year or next year, rather than us being here for just an hour or 2 hours, maybe we can get people from all around the place to come to one place and we can sit there for a day or two and really talk about it.

Mr PETRICK: We can listen to you mob and ...

Mr HATTON: And go away and think and then come back.

Mr TONY PETRICK: Alakenhe kwenhe anwerne nhenge awetyarte Land Council mape ngkerrerlenge.

That was what we heard the Land Council taking about.

Mr HATTON: That is when we start to talk about the bits and pieces. At the moment we just want to tell you what we are doing so that you can start to think about it.

Mr PETRICK: I was going to ask you a few questions but I leave it until next time. I will ask you next time when you come back.

Mr HATTON: Do you want to ask the questions now? If you don't want to, that is fine.

Mr PETRICK: Is is not only me. These other people want to ask too.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Apmere ameke-ameke apeke arle the aretyenhe aneye, nthakenhe arle meke-meke irreyty. illetyenhe anteme, (inaudible) meke-meke thayete, pmere atywerrenge thayete arlke akaltyre irreytyenhe artwe ilemele ileyewe. Kele arle renhe holdeme ileyewe. Can't you mob warlpele alakenhe apaye uthnerle.

Warlpelekenhe law one thayete ante artwekenhe still one thayete arle keepem going arle iletyenhe, nhenge re ilerne ingkerre.

I'm looking at sacred sites, what's going to happen to them (inaudible). We've got to talk about sacred sites, our sacred country, and making young men and what they'll learn. So we can still keep it. Can't you mob ask the whitefella about that? Whitefella law can stay one side, and we keep our law on the other side.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: What's wrong with that?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Artwekenhe law can't changem nhenge alene ingkerre. Artwekenhe law yanhe renhe inpe arle amangkeke arle re ilerne ingkerre. Pipe, pipe ante akenhe nhenge changem ilemele iweme. Alakenhe arle re nhenge apaye uthn. (inaudible). Yanhe renhe artwe next timeke, artwe ante areye angkerreye arleke?

Aboriginal men's law can't be changed. Aboriginal people have grown up with the law. But, laws that are written on paper can be changed and thrown away. That's what we should ask (inaudible). That will have to be left until next time, until there is a meeting of only men to talk about it.

Mr TONY PETRICK: Aye, if we ask em now, it will be a bit too quick, see. (inaudible) Wale this is one what he been asking now is two law. White people's law, and Aboriginal law. You want to say on that Aboriginal law? Aye?

If we ask them now, it will be a bit too quick, see? (inaudible) This one he's talking about is about having two laws. Whitefella law and Aboriginal law. Do you want to say anything on that?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Atherrele anteye (inaudible) (Both ways)

Mr TONY PETRICK: You want a/to say on two; white side and Aboriginal law side you mob should tell em like that.

You want both; white law side and Aboriginal law side. You should tell them that.

(inaudible: a number of people talking)

Mr EDE: The Aboriginal law goes like that. This one is to try and pull that whitefellow law so that the 2 are going the same way. We do not want them going like this. It is trying to pull them together.

Mr HATTON: You must think about what you write into this constitution so that it says that Aboriginal law must stay there and be strong. In that way, you can strengthen Aboriginal law in the white man's way so that it makes the government recognise the Aboriginal law. That is the sort of thing that you can put in a constitution and make the 2 laws go side by side.

Mr TONY PETRICK: Wale look it this way. I'll maybe talk English. (inaudible). Itelarerlanerraye. Artwekenhe law re anetyeke, ahelhe inpe arle amangkeke, artwekenhe law re anetyeke, kele arle anetyeke Warlpelekenhe pipe yanhe akenhe law lyete changem ileme, next year imerte pipe law yanhe iwemelarle.

Well look at it this way. I'll talk in English (inaudible). Thank about this. Aboriginal men's law has got to stay. It's grown up with the land, and our law stays that way. White man's paper and the laws written on it today can be changed next year and thrown away.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Yewe yewe. (Yes yes)

Mr TONY PETRICK: Kele artwekenhe law akenhe ipmentye anthurre arle, alakenhe. Wale, rareye wanteme irreme warlpelekenhe law ampenge iwetyeke, urrperlekenhe law yanhe uthene lipele akwete anetyeke, nhenge change-em ilerlanetyale, you know.

(inaudible: many people talking)

No, artwele kele law inetnyirretyeke, artwekenhe law anetyeke, artwele still atnyenetyeke law renhe.

What, what he trying to tell us, he's trying to tell you mob is a Artwekenhe law anetyeke, ante warlpelekenhe law anetyeke, no caussem ilemele argument irretyeke warlpele uthene.

And Aboriginal men's laws can never be changed. Well, they want to put it together with whitefella's

law, but its got to be equal to Aboriginal law and you can't change it, you know.

No, men have got to hold on to the law so that men's law will continue. What, what he trying to tell us, he's trying to tell you mob is a... there's got to be Aboriginal men's law and whitefella's law, not starting an argument with the whitefellas.

VARIOUS MEN: No, no.

Mr TONY PETRICK: lipele anetyeke. (They've got to be equal)

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: One law, one law, artwekenhe law mpwaretyeke (inaudible).

One law, one law, men's law (inaudible)

(too many speaking)

Mr PETRICK: They are talking that that is a good idea. Aboriginal people keep their law and white people keep the law with them. Did not want argument with the white people. Didn't want the white man come and arguing with us for our country.

Mr HATTON: And you can get it so that the laws can stand side by side and not fight each other. You do that through your constitution.

Mr PETRICK: We can talk like a bit later, next time you come back.

If anybody wants to talk on tape, somebody have to do it for them?

Mr HATTON: No, they can talk in their own language and there will be somebody else to interpret it.

Mr PETRICK: You lot interpret it?

Mr EDE: This time, we are just talking out like that. Next time, we will be wanting to get stuff back and so we will be bringing proper, professional interpreters from IAD or wherever.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: We don't want ...

Mr HATTON: I can't understand Wenton. He speaks so softly.

Mr EDE: If Wenton wants to talk to someone to get to there, Wenton goes like this.

Laughter.

Mr TONY PETRICK: Arrantherre apeke anything angketyeke wantem irreme itnekenge? Aye, (inaudible), arrantherre apeke arle next year nhenge itelaraye.

(Many talking).

Do you mob want to say anything to them? Hey, (inaudible) you mob might think about it for near.

(inaudible: many talking).

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Argument irreyenhe ware, apetyeke inetyeke. Let us know, that one ever come, ext time (inaudible) argument apeke irreyeke.

There might be an argument. Let us know, if that one ever comes back, next time (inaudible) if there's going to be an argument.

Ms AGNES PETRICK: Nhanhe itne kwele antye neme urrperle mape kenhe lawe kele ampeke arrernetyeke. Itne can helem ileme urrperle mapenhe aye. Artwe nhakwe mape argument irreme itnenhe inetyeke arle, kenhe nhenhe mape antye neme urrperle mape helpem iletayeke arle see, nyente iletayeke anteme itne antye aneme.

These mob want our laws to be put together with their laws. They can help Aboriginal people. Those men want to argue with the, but these people want to help Aboriginal people, they want to make us all one.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Anyente aneme itne aneke?

Stay one together.

Ms AGNES PETRICK: Itne raketye alpetyankenhele, kele itne itelareme arle one law kwete arle Aborigine mapekenhe, see. Only warlpelekenhe unte ame think irreme? Warlpele twerte, urrperle twerte neme nyente irreme kele, nyente kwete nteme neme. Warlpelekenhe law nhakwe iletienhenge kenhe urrperlekenhe lawkele nhang re kwete arle irtnarlanetyenhenge. Arrkwelenye nhang kwete arle.

They can't take away our law. They know Aboriginal people have got one law. Are you only thinking of whitefellas? Whitefella and us, we're all together. Whitefellas can have a law but our law will continue as it has for thousands of years.

Mr PETRICK: You have to think about the early days, you know. People want these law changes when people used to work on the stations. People on the sacred site and country, they used to tell the station not to go there, not to take any kids there. Well, they used to do that. They used to listen that way. Now, it is some other people that have got to go stirring it up. Some come out and say: 'This law is going to be hard for your people and these mob will come out here and tell them ...

Mr TONY PETRICK: Wale impeme next timeke. (Well, leave it for next time).

Mr HATTON: Okay?

Ms AGNES PETRICK: Ye they got go every station. Kele arle itne nhakwe thayete mape alheke arle.

We can talk about it to ourselves then. Yeah they've got to go to every station. They've already gone over the other side.

Mr HATTON: We sent a message to Bonya and Alcoota but I don't know what happened.

Mr EDE: Yes, they are. They are at a school opening today.

Okay, thank you everybody. That is it.

Mr PETRICK: Thanks for coming and nice to see you.

Mr EDE: We will be back.

Mr BOOKLEK: It is good that you people come out and see us anyway. We like to see people come out and talk to us. It is better to see your face than somebody else coming along and telling us.