

**Question on Notice**

**No. 626**

**Asked on 15 June 2004**

MR MULHERIN asked the Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Policy (MS CLARK) -

**QUESTION:**

With reference to proposed changes to community governance in Aboriginal communities -

Will the proposed changes have an impact on land holdings?

**ANSWER:**

The proposed changes to community governance in Aboriginal communities will have no impact on land holdings. The changes will come about under the *Local Government (Community Government Areas) Bill 2004* (the Bill). The Government is conducting consultations on the Bill. If passed, Aboriginal councils will become shire councils and, for the most part, will be subject to the same laws as other local governments. These changes will be phased in over four years and will be supported by the Government's Community Governance Improvement Strategy.

Aboriginal councils are trustees for Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) land within the boundaries of the councils' area. If the Bill is passed, this trusteeship will transfer from the Aboriginal council to the shire council. The land will continue to be DOGIT land and it will continue to be held by the council in trust for the benefit of the Aboriginal residents of the community. The changes under the Bill are about improving community governance and they have no effect on land holdings.