The Legacy of the Mabo Decision

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Aboriginal ways of understanding – Aboriginal ways of doing things, involve multiple knowledge systems.

We work across dialogues, across ideas and we weave things together.

In a more traditional Western approach, knowledge is often broken down into sections.

What we are trying to do is put people at the table to talk together (again) and re-imagine a history that we have lost.

Jonathan Jones
MAAS believes in and works to uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples to own and control their ICIP.

MAAS recognises Indigenous peoples as the primary guardians and interpreters of their culture.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is both tangible and intangible and is built on continuing practices.
In the context of the MAAS Australian ICIP Protocol the peoples of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are recognised as the primary guardians, interpreters and decision makers with deep cultural connections and authoritative values and perspectives.
Continuity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is built on enduring rights that relate to the ownership of context and interpretation; and the rights to protect, control, benefit from and to maintain, revitalise and advance on-going practice.
Connection to community is built on principles of respect and exchange fostering meaningful dialogue and consideration of their perspectives and values in a way that is respectful, informed, ethical and timely and where their cultural integrity is honoured and upheld.
Guiding Principles

Principle 1: Recognition and respect
Principle 2: Self-determination
Principle 3: Consultation
Principle 4: Free, prior and informed consent
Principle 5: Interpretation and Cultural Integrity
Principle 6: Secret, Sacred and Private
Principle 7: Attribution
Principle 8: Benefit sharing
Principle 9: Maintaining Indigenous culture
Principle 10: Recognition of ongoing rights
EAST NORTHEAST
Shoreline of Murray Island,
Looking WEST SOUTHWEST.

Territorial District of Zagareb
Showing property immediately off the road.

Legend:
- Rainforest
- Boundary separating different Place Names.

Eddie Mabo's portions.
The Stars

On Mabo Day 2015, a star in the Sydney Southern Star Catalogue (SSSC) was dedicated to Eddie Koiki Mabo as a tribute to his legacy. Known as ‘Koiki’, the star can be found in the Crux constellation, or the Southern Cross. It is also part of a much bigger constellation known by Torres Strait Islanders as Tagai. Tagai has deep significance to the people of Torres Strait, who have a very close relationship to the night sky. Tagai embodies knowledge that is passed between generations through story, song and dance, and is also a tool for navigation and timekeeping. It connects the people of Torres Strait to their origins and lore.

Dance machine: this is used by dancers during performance. Many dance machines mimic the movements of celestial bodies, sustaining knowledge and tradition.

Glass plate: this replica captures a section of the night sky that includes the star in the SSSC now called Koiki.

Illustration: the Tagai constellation situates the Southern Cross as the left hand of a warrior holding a spear.

Photo: ‘Koiki’ to the west of Acrux, at the bottom of Crux.

Photo courtesy of Geoff Wyatt. Dance machine on loan from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association.
Mabo Decision
25th Anniversary

Each year we celebrate Mabo Day to remember Eddie Koiki Mabo and his contribution to Australian history. His efforts led to the decision by the High Court of Australia on 3 June 1992 to overturn the concept of terra nullius, which had been the basis for the determination of land ownership in Australia since 1835. Terra nullius is used to describe land that was not owned and is therefore open to claims of sovereignty by occupation. As a result of the ruling, the Native Title Act, which legally recognised the land rights of Indigenous people, was introduced in Australian law in 1993.

This showcase displays the important connection between Eddie Koiki Mabo the man, the stars and the land.