

# WA Govt looks to eliminate native title on public works land

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The Western Australian Government has foreshadowed a push to extinguish native title on land needed for public works.

Currently the Government must negotiate an Indigenous land use agreement with traditional owners before building things like police stations, sporting facilities and rubbish tips.

The Housing and Works Minister, Troy Buswell, says the process can delay projects by years and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, even when the community wants construction to go ahead.

He says the Government will have to spend almost \$500,000 and wait 16 months to build urgently needed houses and cyclone shelters in Bidyadanga.

The Minister is considering a number of options to streamline the process, including appealing to the Commonwealth to extinguish native title on land needed for public works and the use of umbrella agreements rather than case-by-case negotiations.

Aboriginal groups have rejected Mr Buswell's suggestion, saying it would be a blow for Indigenous land rights.

The Kimberley Land Council's (KLC) Nolan Hunter acknowledges the need for land use negotiations to be more efficient but says Mr Buswell's proposal is not the solution.

"Obviously it's not in the interest of the KLC or the traditional owners we represent. We would invite the Government to look hard at its own processes rather than the predictable attempt to erode native title