

***The Australian*, 6 October 1994. Native Title Isolates Urban Blacks:  
Activist**



**Jaqui Katona**

The great contemporary Aboriginal milestones of land rights and native title had effectively established Aborigines in the bush as the "real Aborigines" while urban blacks remained ignored, impoverished and culturally isolated, an Aboriginal activist claimed yesterday. And Aboriginal land councils, so often the political vanguard of indigenous causes, had reinforced the injustices by placing barriers in the way of urban Aborigines trying to regain their cultural inheritance. The claims were made by Aboriginal consultant Ms .

Ms Katona, the conference convener, said there was an overwhelming concern among delegates that land rights and the recognition of native title had left them out of the equation. "What people here are talking about is their birthright." Ms Katona said yesterday. "They were born on country, can prove genealogy, but because of the prescribed legal definitions of traditional ownership they have been excluded from making land claims. It is the same situation for both the native title and the land rights legislation. They rely on spiritual affiliation and knowledge of sacred sites and their boundaries as the test for traditional ownership of country. But when you have been taken away as a child, you just do not have that knowledge anymore."

The result had been the creation of a "separate class of Aboriginal citizen", confined to live in towns without culturally appropriate administrative measures to deal with their needs. It also meant urban Aborigines had been denied a share of the economic benefits that sometimes accrued to "traditional" Aborigines through land claim processes

"People out bush are classified as the real Aborigines, the bona fide ones, while for us there is no fair process to go back to our country. We want a fair process."