

N W T

Plain Facts

On Land and Self-government



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Canada

Specific Claims

What's it all about?

Historically, the Canadian government made treaties with some Aboriginal peoples. These treaties exchanged Aboriginal title to the land for treaty rights and reserve land. In 1876, the Canadian government passed the Indian Act to formalize its responsibility for Aboriginals and lands reserved for Aboriginal peoples through treaty-making.

However, in the eyes of some Aboriginal groups, the Government of Canada has not always honoured the legal obligations arising from the treaties and the Indian Act. Grievances and claims have arisen. For example, when Treaty First Nations do not receive the full amount of land promised under a treaty, a Treaty Land Entitlement claim may be pursued. Claims of this type, arising from treaty obligations or the Indian Act, are called specific claims. Specific claims also deal with administration of lands and other assets.

Where we're at

A federal policy for the settlement of Aboriginal land claims was established in 1973. The policy divides claims into two broad categories - specific and comprehensive.

Only a few Aboriginal groups in the NWT have pursued specific claims such as Treaty Land Entitlement claims. Instead, most groups in the NWT have pursued comprehensive land claims which include provisions for land, resources, and self-government.

In the NWT, the Salt River First Nation is currently pursuing a Treaty Land Entitlement settlement. The group submitted a settlement proposal in June 1999.

More background

Web pages:

Comprehensive Claims in Canada: www.inac.gc.ca/pubs/information/treaty.html

Comprehensive Claims Policy & Status of Claims: www.inac.gc.ca/subject/claims/comp/briem.html

Specific Claims: www.inac.gc.ca/pubs/information/info121.html

Fact sheets:

Comprehensive Land Claims in the NWT

Status of Land and Self-government Negotiations

Fact sheets are available by contacting

Communications Directorate

Department of Indian and Northern Development, NWT Region

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