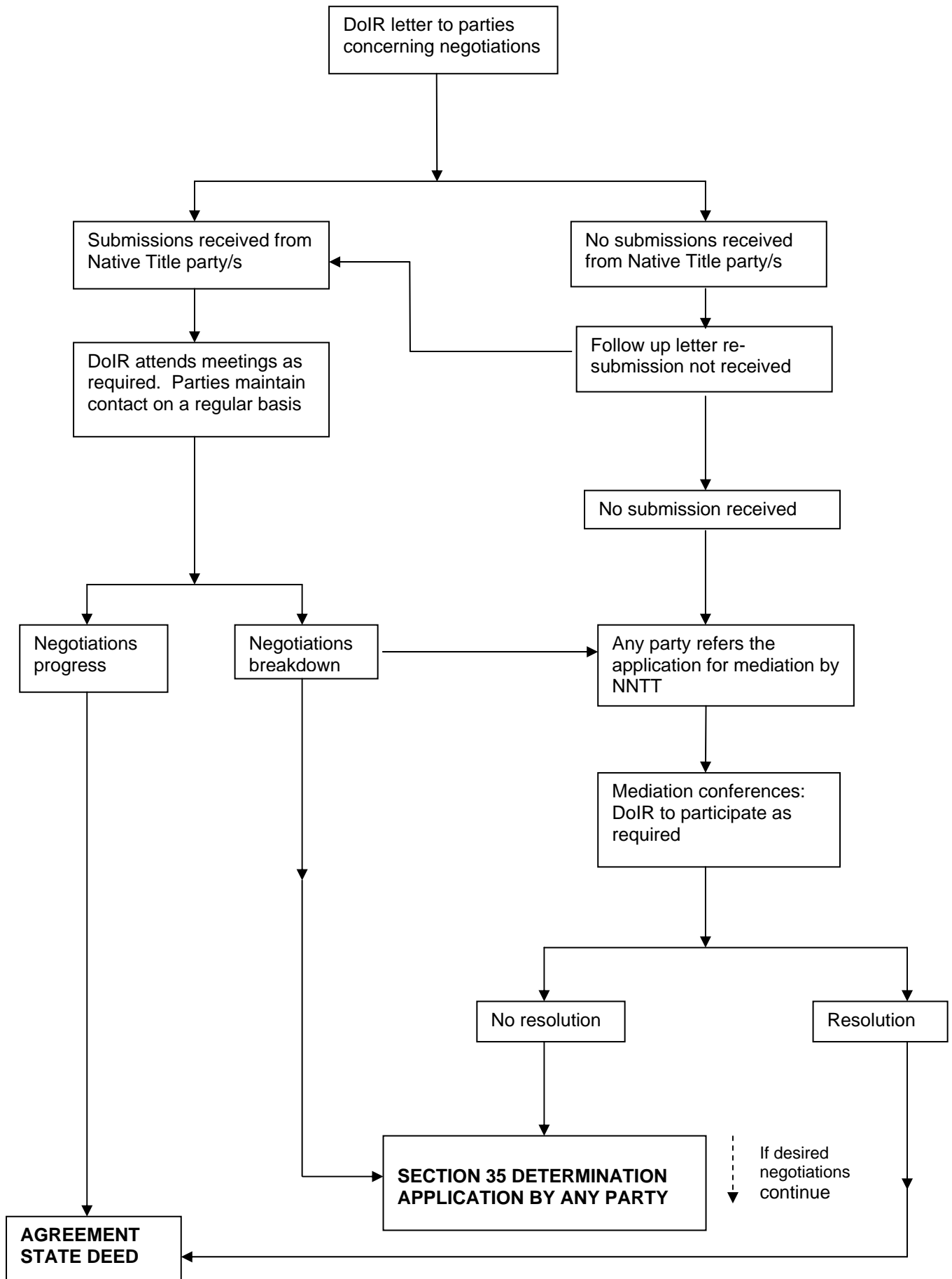


NEGOTIATION PROTOCOL FOR GEOTHERMAL TITLES IN THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE PROCESS





Department of Industry and Resources

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This negotiation protocol contains an explanation of the process shown in the attached flow chart.

The Government party is represented in all of these procedures by the Petroleum and Royalties Division of the Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR).

DoIR letter to parties concerning negotiations

A letter will be issued by DoIR to grantee and native title party/s once a title has been identified as being subject to the right to negotiate.

The letter will contain:

- Advice as to who the native title party/s with a “right to negotiate” are and DoIR Case Numbers.
- A copy of the exploration permit/drilling reservation/production licence application.
- A plan showing the area applied for.
- An outline of the proposed work programme as applied for.
- A copy of information from the Register of Aboriginal Sites.
- An extract of section 39(1) of the Native Title Act 1993.
- Advice stating that all of the negotiation parties have an equal obligation to negotiate in good faith with each other.
- DoIR’s proposals in relation to the title.
- A request that the native title party/s provide a submission to the DoIR in accordance with section 31(1)(a) of the Native Title Act. Parties are requested that any correspondence to be copied to all parties.
- A summary of how to negotiate in good faith.
- A copy of the State’s Negotiation Protocol.
- Confirmation of contact details for each of the parties.

The grantee party (title applicant) will be asked to provide the following information to assist the native title party/s in making their submission by registered mail within two weeks. A copy will be sent to DoIR.

- Annual Report (if available).
- Information regarding any completed or proposed Aboriginal heritage surveys within the title area.
- Any company policies or information which might be relevant to native title claimants.

DoIR receives submissions from native title party/s

Within **7 weeks** of the DoIR’s initial letter concerning negotiations, the Department will expect a submission from the native title party/s, with a copy provided to the grantee party.

No submissions received from native title party/s

DoIR does not receive any submissions from one or more of the native title parties.

Follow up letter re-submission

Where no submission is received from a native title party within **7 weeks** of the DoIR’s initial letter concerning negotiations, the Department will forward a reminder letter to that native title party, copied to the grantee party. The letter will advise that if no submission is received within 2 weeks of the date of that letter, any party may refer the case to the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) for mediation assistance.

Any party refers the application for mediation by the NNTT

If, at any stage, one or more of the parties is unwilling to negotiate, or difficulties are being experienced in negotiations, then any party may request the NNTT to mediate in relation to those parties.

Submission received

DoIR receives submission/s from the native title party/s relating to issues they would like addressed in the context of negotiations, with a copy provided to the grantee party.

DoIR attends meetings as required. Parties maintain contact on a regular basis

Where meetings are organised (by the other parties or where required by DoIR) and parties wish for DoIR representatives to attend we will do so. It may not be necessary for the Department to attend all meetings. Parties should continue to copy all correspondence to all other parties. It would be desirable that regular contact be maintained by the negotiation parties as agreed by those parties.

Negotiations progress

Regular negotiation meetings/discussions continue between the parties as required. DoIR either attends as required or monitors.

Negotiations breakdown

If any of the parties believe that negotiations are not proceeding toward agreement or have broken down, then they have the option of referring the matter to the NNTT for mediation assistance or submitting a section 35 application (see below)

Mediation conferences. DoIR to participate as required

The NNTT will arrange mediation conferences between all of the parties referred. DoIR will participate unless the other mediation parties deem it to be unnecessary.

No resolution

Mediation fails to resolve differences. Parties do not reach agreement.

Resolution

Parties reach agreement that the title may be granted.

Section 35 Determination application by any party

Any party may refer the case to the NNTT for Determination under section 35 of the Native Title Act 1993. An application can be made any time after the statutory six month period from the date of the s29 notice. The "negotiations in good faith" requirements of the Act need to be recognised.

Agreement - State Deed

At any stage during the process, even up to the point of a determination by the NNTT, the parties may reach agreement. The title cannot be granted unless all the parties sign a tripartite agreement, which must be lodged with the Tribunal. An ancillary agreement may be reached between the grantee party and the native title party/s. The ancillary agreement may include other matters not dealt with in the tripartite agreement and this document will not be signed by the DoIR.