

Good questions to ask your lawyer

Money questions

- What would be the cost? (what is your hourly rate and what do you think the total cost to us will be?)
- Who's paying the legal fee (is any of the fee pro bono (for free), are other parties helping with paying the fee)?

The lawyer's experience of this type of work

- Are you familiar/experienced with native title? What is your experience in native title?
- Have you spent much time working with Indigenous groups? What is the extent of your cultural competence? (ask for examples)
- Have you worked for other PBCs? (you might want to talk to those PBCs)
- Have you worked in this region?
- What are the limitations of what you can give advice about?
- Who should we go to for other advice/what other advice should we get?

What kind of commitment can the lawyer give to your PBC?

- How can/will you meet our needs?
- How much time to you have to give us?
- Are you prepared to stay in the community for longer periods? (more than a day at a time)
- Are you going to be with us all the way through to completion?

Questions about our matter (eg the future act notice we want help with)

- How does the future act affect the PBC or our native title rights?
- What rights (procedural) do we have?
- Can the government compulsorily acquire our native title?
- How can we achieve what we want? (your group needs to decide what it wants)
- How can we protect our cultural issues in this process? How much cultural knowledge do we need to give away?
- Can we protect our elders in this process? How can we do this?
- How long do you think this will take? How far might we have to go in fighting this in court? Do you think we will have to appeal?