



Reoccupation of Crimen in 1991. Will ACLA be able to address land restoration or will communities have to take other steps to get back their land?

At first communities working with the NLC refused to accept ACLA. This decision was reviewed at a national meeting of 30 land claiming communities in February 1992. At that meeting communities decided to cooperate with ACLA on the following conditions:

- ACLA would only be one of a number of ways for communities to get back their land and regain their land rights
- ACLA should accept communities' lawyers, experts on land affairs and service structures
- all ACLA hearings should be open and its findings should be made public
- land restoration should not be subject to any conditions

except justice and redressing past wrongs

- if there are delays by ACLA, communities will take other steps to regain their land rights
- ACLA should hear evidence near the areas where the affected community lives, so that the community can have access to the commission
- ACLA should accept submissions only from duly elected community representatives

Communities will begin to test ACLA's limits when they make their first submissions to the commission in the coming months.

## Charlestown Committee Meets ACLA Officials

THE Bambisanani Bathengi Charlestown Association met with officials of the ACLA in March this year at a meeting called by the Development and Services Board.

Two important points were made clear to the ACLA officials. The first was that ACLA should hear representations only from elected representatives of communities that had lost their land through forced removal. The Bambisanani Bathengi Association successfully persuaded two people who accompanied the KwaZulu representative, but who were not part of the Charlestown community who were forcibly removed, to leave the meeting. The reason for asking for them to leave was that they were not part of the claim of the Charlestown community who had lost their land through forced removal.

The second important point was that issues of development should not be an obstacle to restoring land which had been lost through unjust means. The Bambisanani Bathengi set out the conditions upon which they would cooperate with ACLA (those agreed at the national meeting of land claiming communities in February 1992). They added that they would send ACLA a written submission of their land claim.