

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 260

To whom it may concern,

I am an Aboriginal person and I have been involved with the Aboriginal community all of my life. I am taking this opportunity to say some things about the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC).

The TAC has been operating for over 40 years. Prior to the TAC being established, Aboriginal people in Tasmania did not have a voice. It was the TAC that advocated for the Aboriginal people who were being subjected to racism and discrimination. It was the TAC that campaigned and were successful in having Aboriginal lands returned to the Aboriginal community. It was the TAC that lobbied to get funding to support Aboriginal people to overcome the disadvantage they faced in this society.

Not only did the TAC pave the way for the community in the early days, but have continued to do so to this day. The TAC is still the voice of the community and the only organisation that I am aware of that is pursuing a broad range of Aboriginal interests in this state.

I am active in the Aboriginal community and I have witnessed the TAC assisting many, many individuals and families through the services that the TAC provides. The TAC has also been invaluable to my life.

In the past when I have had legal issues, the TACs Aboriginal Legal Service provided me with a lawyer to assist me in court. The lawyer and the legal field officers provided me with a quality service and they understood my needs as an Aboriginal person.

On many occasions I have lived on and visited on Aboriginal lands that the TAC have campaigned to have returned. I have also had the pleasure of going on country with many Aboriginal people over the years, including children, through TAC organised activities. I don't think there are many activities that have had such a profound effect on my sense of identity and belonging to a community, as these trips onto country with my people.

I have used the TACs Aboriginal Health Service countless times over many years. The Aboriginal Health team has always provided me with a confidential and culturally appropriate service. For example, 2 years ago I had my first Child – a son. In the lead up to the birth, the TAC provided us a range of services – I had access to a Doctor, a mid-wife, a pregnancy support worker and Aboriginal health workers. Following the birth, the TAC provided a child health nurse and a Doctor when we needed one. Now my child is 2, he comes into the TAC and knows all the staff and community that are here regularly. He is learning Aboriginal language (palawa kani) thanks to the language team (language revival program) and attends the Community events and meetings that the TAC organise and host. My son will grow up with a strong Aboriginal identity because of the existence of the TAC and I am forever grateful for that.

There are countless stories that I could re-count of how I have seen the TAC assist people in my community, thanks to the funding that has been received by the TAC over the years. I hate to think of how the Aboriginal community would fair without the TAC. I also appreciate how that TAC has retained the authenticity of the community through its position on Aboriginality.

Adam Thompson
Launceston
Tasmania