

21 April 2015

Committee Secretary

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Sir,

I have an association with the Indian Ocean Territories than began in 1982. I lived on Christmas Island from 1991 to 2011 where I ran a licensed surveying practice. As a member of a small group of private business owners I was very active with the Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce over that time, with an unbroken participation in the executive of the Chamber and six years as President.

During that time the issue of governance was raised time and time again. It continues to amaze me that the issue has never been seriously addressed by Parliament. The 'Islands in the Sun' report published in 1991 remains the base document for the discussion of governance in the Territories. The adoption of the West Australian 'Service Delivery Agreements' set up a comprehensive and well balanced bureaucracy in the Territories which provides the frame work for a competent and effective self-determination model.

The Commonwealth's attempts at micro managing communities the size of Christmas and Cocos Islands have manifestly failed and have proved to be detrimental to the political, social and economic development of the Territories. Any further derogation of the communities' involvement in the management of their own affairs will only further erode the very core of these unique communities.

The Commonwealth has a sacred trust to ensure that the people living in the Indian Ocean Territories have the same rights, responsibilities and obligations as their fellow Australians. The position of subordination under which they are currently living is disrespectful to these very special communities and undermines their fundamental human right to self-determination.

I tender the submission I prepared for the NCET inquiry on the same subject in 2005. There is some historical content but most is relevant to an effective self-determination model for the governance of the Indian Ocean Territories. The steps in the document "THE WAY FORWARD" outline a simple and very cost effective system of governance that will satisfy the Commonwealth's obligations in international law.

I would be happy to discuss this submission further with the Committee should the Members be so inclined.

Yours Faithfully,

Russell Payne