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28 January 2011

Committee Secretary  
 Standing Committee on Economics  
 PO Box 6021  
 Parliament House  
 CANBERRA ACT 2600  
 AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Public Submission – Inquiry into Indigenous economic development in Queensland and review of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into Indigenous Economic Development in Queensland (including Cape York) and review of the Wild Rivers Bill. This submission is focused on Indigenous economic development in the Cairns Region.

More specifically, this submission is made in support of the need to increase sustainable Indigenous economic development in Queensland including the Cape York region. It is important that as part of this process we take real consideration of the aspirations of Indigenous people and the social and cultural context surrounding their participation in the economy.

Given the localised nature of the challenges facing Indigenous communities and their pursuit of growth there is clear need to engage local communities and councils to ensure that individual regions and communities and their subsequent needs and aspirations are taken into full consideration. In particular this should consider the very delicate nature of ensuring that a sensible balance between economic, environmental and social outcomes can be achieved.

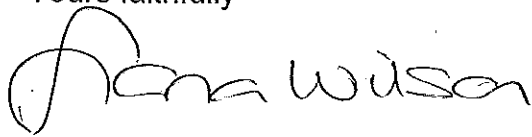
Given that the Indigenous proportion of the population in the Cairns region (7.8%) is more than double the QLD average (3.3%) sustainable Indigenous employment will have a profound impact on this region. It is also well understood and documented that there is a large disparity between non-Indigenous and Indigenous unemployment, with Indigenous unemployment being significantly higher.

Cairns Regional Council is currently increasing its capabilities in responding to economic development challenges and opportunities in this area. In 2009 Cairns Regional Council developed an Indigenous Employment Strategy to provide a three year plan for action for improving Council's performance in recruiting and retaining indigenous employees (endorsed for your reference). More recently Council employed an Indigenous Employment Coordinator to support and continually develop the Indigenous Employment Strategy.

Cairns Regional Council would welcome further engagement with the Committee as it determines what initiatives might be pursued in order to promote economic development while preserving environmental and cultural values.

Thank you for the opportunity for comment.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F'.

FIONA WILSON

**Economic Development Manager**