



ISLAND CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL

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3rd March 2003

Ms S. Cardell
Inquiry Secretary
House of Representatives Economics Committee

By Fax (02) 6277 4774

Dear Ms Cardell

House of representatives Standing Committee on
Economics, Finance and Public Administration

Submission No:356.....

Date Received:1/4/03.....

Secretary:

Submission On Behalf of Torres Strait Councils

I refer to correspondence between yourself and Mr Chris Foord, Chief Executive Officer of the Bamaga Island Council.

The Island Coordinating Council agrees fully with the comments made so far by Mr Foord and would ask that the Committee look seriously at the work and reports which have been commissioned over many years, examining the shortfall of recurrent funding to indigenous Councils.

Even within the Indigenous Councils there is the longstanding issue of ongoing disparity, with Island Councils being the 'poor cousin'.

You would be fully aware of the outcomes of the 'Morton Report' in this regard.

I am aware that the Torres Strait Regional Authority made a submission to the Federal Government last year for funding under the "New Funding Initiatives" heading for recurrent funding in the amount of \$100,000 per year per Council (\$1.7M in total). This money would have allowed each Island Council to engage and retain a specialist CEO/Finance Expert to assist with ongoing management and accountability. I understand that the proposal had endorsement from Canberra right up until the time of Australia's very firm stance on addressing terrorism.

That funding is now not available.

The Torres Strait Commonwealth and State agencies have put a lot of effort into service delivery and accountability issues and would like to continue in the same vein. Funding is an issue.

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Would you please accept this letter as the ICC's endorsement for submissions made , or to be made by Mr Foord, and as a record of ICC's concern that Government appears to be well aware of the problem but no-one will bite the bullet on a solution.

We have had plenty of reports and consultation, but regrettably, insufficient action.

Yours sincerely



P.W. Anderson
Secretary

Cc Mr M. Fordham
Cc Mr C. Foord

General Manager TSRA
CEO - Bamaga Island Council

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