

**ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ENTERPRISING SERVICES**

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The Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
On Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
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CAPACITY BUILDING INQUIRY Submission No. 38
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**Re: Capacity Building in Indigenous Communities**

If it's not too late we wish to add our thoughts to the deliberations that you are making on the above. We believe that we should put something to you because of the broad implications that the terms of reference have (our input is very brief because we do not have the time to put into a major submission). Also we are extremely concerned at this time with the talk amongst elite Blacks of our area about autonomy, and the implications for our people from moves in that direction.

We have pursued a model of management which attempts to give our clan some control over our lives and make the white bureaucratic systems, that are demanded by government, work in a way that is reflective of how things are done culturally amongst our people. Not allowing 2 or 3 people in each community to dominate as it is now. Our model promotes;

- ⊗ Developing more homogeneous, smaller and better focused groups, not fewer unaccountable and autocratic institutions that disenfranchise our people and culture.
- ⊗ Developing individual and clan strength and opportunity not bestowing power on a few elite in our community who do not communicate and wield their power in a discriminatory way.
- ⊗ Providing greater distribution of responsibility, confidence, equity and sharing of wealth not empowering a few on big salaries and the rest on unemployment/cdep.

However our clan style, which diminishes their power and influence, has been rejected by the black political system (ATSIC and its regional council) and we have never been able to get off the floor in support of our people, and their favoured programs continue to squander opportunities.

A brief but pertinent example is our efforts to develop a community radio station in Walgett over the past 3 years. Our submissions have gone to ATSIC for consideration and been rejected. In the last instance the Regional Manager advised that this was due to the fact that ATSIC already funds a radio service (CUZ FM) in the Murdi Paaki region (this region is about 1/3 of the state). Our difficulty is that this one station is managed by a Regional Councillor and it is located in Bourke 250km west of us. While we do not have a problem with ATSIC supporting this station per se (Cuz-FM, which relays into our area and is very

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Representing our Aboriginal peoples in Collarenebri and Walgett of Gamilaroi and Yularoi country

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popular with our people), we do have a problem with their intentions to stop any other aspirations for broadcasting within the region by denying funding. ATSIC cannot accept or appreciate that our proposal in it's fundamental concept is different, theirs (CUZ) being a mainstream style and ours being Aboriginal. By which we mean that we have a policy of exclusively presenting Aboriginal issues, artists and news utilising Aboriginal volunteer presenters and most importantly promotion of our own Indigenous languages (Gamilaroi and Yularoi). In the Regional Chairpersons own words "I don't understand that sort of s\*\*t". How can we ever expect support from such an organisation?

We categorically reject the Murdi Paaki Regional Councils attempt to seek an autonomous region for Indigenous affairs and management and believe that the grass roots people have spoken by not participating in their consultation (we are simply not interested in another system that will bestow greater power on a small elite group of our people who only think of themselves and are accountable to no one). This way is just another attempt of empire building by this elite few for themselves and cronies.

Good luck in your deliberations,



Barbara Kennedy-Wilson

Chairperson

for and on behalf of the board of directors

21<sup>st</sup> September 2002