

**COCOS CONGRESS-INC:
COCOS (KEELING ISLANDS)
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Joint Standing Committee on the
National Capital and External Territories

Submission No:14.....

Date Received:1 February 2006.....

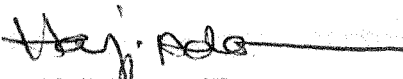
Secretary:Justin Baker.....

Attention: Justin Baker

**COCOS CONGRESS-INC SUBMISSION TO THE
PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA GOVERNANCE INQUIRY.**

Enclosed, is Cocos congress submission to the the Parliament of
Australia Governance Inquiry.

Regards


Haji Adam JP
Chairman
30/1/06

Back ground of Cocos Congress-inc

The Cocos Congress was formed following a meeting of Cocos Malay people on Home Island in March 1995. This meeting was convened to consider the lack of provision for the expression of the Cocos Malay views about developments and future plans for the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

At the time the Cocos Congress was formed there was no elected Shire Council. Although there is now an elected Cocos island Shire Council, its responsibilities are to the whole of the Cocos islands people, and not to the Cocos Malay people of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in particular.

The Cocos Congress is concerned for the interests of the Cocos Malay people embodying all facet of their lives, including religious and cultural needs. It is also concerned about housing, education and training issues in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The Congress provides a voice for the Cocos Malay people of Cocos (Keeling) Islands for the expression of their views on such matters.

Objectives of Cocos Congress

The objectives of the Cocos Congress are as follows:

1. To protect and nurture the interests of the Cocos Malay residents of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
2. To be a voice for the expression of the intersts of the Cocos Malay residents of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
3. To gain a more substantial place fo the Cocos Malay people in the administration and management of the Cocos (keeling) Islands.
4. To develop evolving long term plans to meet the needs of the Cocos Malay residents of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
5. To be a forum for the formation and expression of the views and wishes of the Cocos Malay residents of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Governance Inquiry: Public Hearings on Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands in February

Federal Parliament's External Territories Committee is investigating current and future governance arrangements for the Indian Ocean Territories.

In 1984, the majority of the Cocos Keeling Islands community chose to become part of Australia and at the time were really unaware of the implications that this decision would have on the community in regards to services, laws, politics, economic, social and employment opportunities are concerned as the communities experience on the living standards of Australians was extremely limited.

While the community appreciate and acknowledge the improvement of living conditions and benefits as Australian citizens there are some laws that have been enacted that adversely affect the community due to the lack of consultation and education processes.

With this in mind the Cocos Congress strongly suggest that if there is to be any change into future Governance Arrangements for the islands that there needs to be an extensive education process (in both Malay and English versions) for the whole community explaining the options and their implications prior to the community having a referendum on the preferred option.