

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet/Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations

Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous

Topic: 157: Financial Status of Indigenous Corporations

Senator: Dodson, Patrick

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Type of question: Written

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Question:

What measures have been taken in response to recent scandals in relation to financial troubles facing Indigenous Corporations such as those reported on 4-Corners in June 2016 & 2013?

Answer:

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations takes all allegations of wrongdoing seriously and has a strong track record of enforcing the law.

Three of the four corporations in the 4-Corners report of 6 June 2016 are registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act).

Garnduwa Amboorny Wirnan Aboriginal Corporation's (ICN 1466) – after an investigation by the Registrar thirty-eight charges were laid against Mr Alan Bishop in May 2016 under section 265-25(3)(a) of the CATSI Act. The matter is currently before the courts in Western Australia.

Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation (ICN 104) – the matters raised were reviewed by an independent examiner appointed by the Registrar in 2013. Following the examination the Registrar issued the corporation with a compliance notice in February 2014 under section 439-20 of the CATSI Act. The notice required the corporation to obtain independent legal and accounting advice on certain transactions and provide that advice to the members of the corporation at a general meeting. The members ratified the transactions at the general meeting.

Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation (ICN 868) – the matters were reviewed by independent examiners appointed by the Registrar in 2013 and September 2016. Neither examination had any findings of criminal breaches of the CATSI Act.

The corporation in the 4-Corners report of 14 October 2013 was the Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation (ICN 373). The Registrar conducted a thorough investigation of the matters in the first half of 2013. The findings of the investigation were provided to a leading criminal barrister for review. The barrister advised the Registrar that there was insufficient evidence to support a referral to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP).

On 16 August 2013 the Registrar issued a compliance notice to the corporation under section 439-20 of the CATSI Act. The notice required the corporation to take action to address certain transactions. The corporation fully complied with the requirements of the notice.