



## CATHOLICS IN COALITION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

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The Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace (CCJP) is a coalition of individuals and groups, working for the emergence of just social structures in Australia and overseas. Its wide membership works at supporting marginalised people in Australia and beyond.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide this submission to the inquiry into the effects of the ATSIIC Amendment Bill 2004. We have very strong feelings that this is a retrograde step. A number of our members have worked closely with Aborigines and Aboriginal support groups over many years.

We believe that Australia must respect and protect the rights of our Indigenous Peoples. This includes the right to determine who represents them at all levels of decision making -local, national and international. This will ensure free and informed choices for themselves, their families and their communities.

**The current Bill denies them these rights.**

The Government conducted a review of ATSIIC which recommended national elected Indigenous representation and greater regional decision making. **This Bill ignores these recommendations.**

We believe that an open, transparent body, accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People:

- should have the primary role in representation and advocacy;
- should be the principal source of Indigenous advice to Governments; and
- should have control over the provision of Indigenous-specific services.

Mainstreaming service delivery will be a backwards step and is paternalistic and disempowering.

Finally, any changes **must** be determined in close consultation with Indigenous people and decisions made with the informed consent of the various stakeholders. This principle must underpin all decisions of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Hinchey RSM  
Convenor, CCJP Working Group.