

Sue Collins

11 Rossingham Drive
Mount Barker 5251
SA - Australia

26 JUL 2004

The Secretary,
Senate Select Committee on
the Administration of Indigenous Affairs,
Parliament House,
Canberra 2600

19th July 2004

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to take the offered opportunity to have input to the Committee's Inquiry on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Bill 2004 and the proposed changes to the Commonwealth Indigenous Affairs policy.

We, as Australians have an obligation to respect and protect the rights of our Indigenous peoples to self determination and human rights related to being of 'first People's' status.

The only way to truly respect this and carry it through is to allow these peoples to determine who represent them on local, regional, national and international levels, so that they can make choices and decisions for their own people.

The current bill does not respect these rights and the changes contradict the Government's own review of ATSI which endorsed the need for national elected Indigenous representation and greater control at a regional level.

Indigenous Australians have endorsed the need for a National Indigenous Representative Body which reflects their values and aspirations, which is open, transparent and accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This body should be the one to have primary roles in representation and advocacy and be the principal source of Indigenous policy advice to government and have control over provision of Indigenous-specific services.

To implement and respect these rights are critical factors in improving the well-being of Indigenous Australians.

It is imperative that our Indigenous Peoples are consulted and involved in making decisions for themselves and this must be supported by 'mainstream' governing and values but not solely determined by. This is patronising and ignorant of us.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Collins

