



Tasmania

PREMIER



- 3 AUG 2004

Senator Trish Crossin
Chair
Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Crossin

I refer to the Senate Select Committee inquiry into the administration of Indigenous affairs following the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

The abolition of ATSIC represents a fundamental change in the provision and administration of indigenous-specific services and programs. In this regard, the Tasmanian Government believes engaging Indigenous Australians, particularly regional Aboriginal communities, is fundamental to the success of providing effective Indigenous services.

The Tasmanian Government appreciates the commitment of the Commonwealth Government to consider these issues on a jurisdiction basis to recognise the significant differences in issues faced by Indigenous Australians throughout the country.

The Tasmanian Government is happy to participate in discussions with the Commonwealth Government to:

- ⇒ Identify the most effective mechanisms for engaging the Tasmanian Aboriginal community; and
- ⇒ Ensure that Commonwealth and State programs and service delivery arrangements are complimentary.

However, the Tasmanian Government is strongly of the view that ultimate responsibility for funding and administering Commonwealth Government Indigenous services to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community should not shift to the State.

Further, mainstreaming Indigenous service delivery through Commonwealth Government agencies and department should not be used as a mechanism to cut programs or reduce services for the Indigenous Australians in urban, rural or regional areas.

In Tasmania, Aboriginal organisations have been effective in the delivery of services such as health and legal services to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. In contracting these and other services in the future, it is essential that the Commonwealth recognise this and engage providers that are culturally aware and can maintain the service standards that these organisations have achieved.

It is essential that the arrangements implemented by the Commonwealth are sufficiently flexible to enable mainstream agencies and departments to target their programs and service delivery to address the specific issues faced at the regional and local level. Importantly, the arrangements introduced should be acceptable to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Paul Lennon', written in dark ink.

Paul Lennon
Premier