

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

07/08/04

Dear Sir/Madam

I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide input into the Committee's Inquiry on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Bill 2004 and the mainstreaming of Indigenous Services.

An ATSIC Review that strongly recommended that yes, even though ATSIC did have some issues in certain matters. ATSIC had provided positive programs and projects throughout Australia. Whether it be CDEP, INDIGENOUS SPORTS PROGRAMS, only to name a few. ATSIC had provided great service delivery. Unfortunately, only the negative was portrayed in the media and to the Government. NO Where in the ATSIC review does it say to abolish ATSIC. The PAST AND CURRENT ISSUES that are affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not ATSIC's responsibility. These are HEALTH AND EDUCATION, both of these had been taken away from ATSIC many years ago. The sad state of affairs that they are in now are a JOKE.

An yet those MAIN STREAM DEPARTMENTS ARE STILL CONTINUING TO Blame ATSIC.

The issues facing remote areas are health and education. These two areas are not covered in ATSIC Funding. They are State and Federal Departments, both Health and Education. But are these Departments Abolished NO THEY ARE NOT. But ATSIC GETS THE BLAME AND ABOLISHED.

With the current mainstreaming of Indigenous Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are already feeling the impact. The ELECTED VOICE and I say ELECTED VOICE of Indigenous Australia has been taken and silenced from us. The ATSIC Commissioners are our Indigenous Voice in Canberra. They speak and fight for our political voice in AUSTRALIA. Not the Regional Chairs or Councils and definitely NOT THIS SO CALLED new Appointed Advisory Board to the Government.

Strengthen ATSIC as the ATSIC review had recommended. The Governments mainstreaming of Indigenous Services has already seen the taking away of our Self Determination and our Basic Human Rights and Fundamentals as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Unless you walk in the path of Aboriginal and Torres Strait People or are one of us you will not understand us or know us.

I say again to keep ATSIC, ATSIC IS OUR VOICE. Just refine the service delivery under the original separation of powers. That was working. Why abolish ATSIC and ATSI?

Regards

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