

10th August 2004



Senate Select Committee on the
Administration of Indigenous Affairs
C/- Jonathon Curtis
The Secretary
The Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: Indigenous.Affairs@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir,

My name is Lisa Smith. I am a mature age student of NMIT, Preston, Melbourne, studying Indigenous Welfare. I write to you with deep concern of the decision to abolish Atsic and hope to put forth my submission for your perusal.

During the past fourteen years, we have seen some tremendous achievements in Indigenous affairs, sadly not enough time has elapsed yet to address our core problems. We have been very proud to say we have a voice in our country. We have maintained a national self esteem. Clearly we have made enormous use of our Indigenous resources and have implemented many successful programs and strategies.

Despite Atsic having its problems with which we all acknowledge, they are not all unjustified. Government has its share of issues. However, we don't abolish our government departments or political parties suffering major setbacks. Why are we allowing the abolishment of our voice as the first nation people of this country. We must not return to paternalistic problem solving.

It is blatantly obvious that mainstream services cannot provide for Indigenous people. It would truly be a mistake to take this course yet again. We need to rise with self determination and overcome the difficulties we face with our own actions and strategies. It seems quite bizarre to drop out of the race when we are finally getting somewhere. Our core issues are being addressed by us. It cannot be expected to clear up problems that have taken generations in the making. Government has a responsibility to see this through with us, not fighting us.

Please do not take away our right to voice, enhance it with partnership.
Hold Government accountable to its commitments with us. You must
allow us voice so we can get on with our grass roots.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Lisa Smith
Student
Koori Services, NMIT

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NB: - I write as a student not on
behalf of Koori Services, NMIT.
as may have been presumed
on my email to you on the
13th August 2004.