



# KAIWALAGAL

## Aboriginal Corporation

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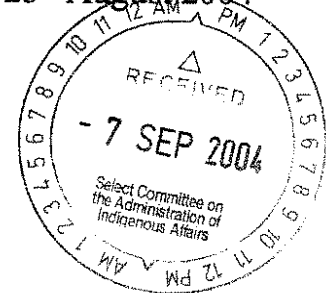
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• Adai • Muri • Mawai • Tuidin • Muralag • Zuna • Terau • Ngurapai • Waibene • Kirririe •  
• Warral • Palilag • Ngiau • Gialag • Tarilag • Durmalag • Ulluil • Wara Migi Lagar •

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The Chairperson  
Senate Select Committee  
On the Administration of Indigenous Affairs  
Canberra  
ACT, 2601.

25<sup>th</sup> August 2004



Dear Members,

Thank you for the invitation for some of the Kaurareg and Executive members from our organisation, to appear before you today on Thursday Island.

The demise of ATSIC and discontinuation of many of its programs is a major disruption to the advancement of many indigenous people; in particular I would like to raise :-

- i) the connection between the Outstation movement, and the return to many disposed groups of their traditional lands, under Native Title. The situation that we are confronted with is that the Kaurareg now have their Islands and land back, but there is no clear way for them to return to and live on them, unless some form of support through Government is made available. It is my personal opinion that this should have been tied to the process of the successful Native Title determination and return of the land and seas (coast).

They are not alone in this disadvantaged position; we understand that this situation is a grievance with most Native Title holders throughout Australia.

ii) The Qld State Government sees this as a Commonwealth responsibility. We go from one agency to another to seek help, to no avail.

iii) ATSIC was a major funding and project avenue for people to return to and live on their homelands. This door is now closed.

iv) Indigenous Land and Sea Management Centres and Programs have been one small way for Qld. Indigenous groups to be able to work with and look after their natural resources (land, sea, water, plants, animals, fish, and culture). The sale of Telstra unfortunately seems the only source of funds and stop-gap measure that was and is currently available, to divert funds into Natural Resource Management on Indigenous Lands (Cape York Natural Heritage Trust in North Qld and the Peninsula and Kaiwalagal Islands).

It does not give them the opportunity to return to and live on their lands, only to conduct activities such as feral animal control, noxious weed eradication etc. if wages can be found.

The Cape York NHT programs are nearing an end, as these funds dry up. Such programs were embraced by Indigenous people as an opportunity to return to country, provide employment, address social problems with young people, teach culture by visiting sacred sites and to gain an identity as an indigenous person. ATSIC did have some Natural Resource Management projects, these are now gone. I do not know of any Agency that can fill this need, Qld. Department of Natural Resources does not see any role for them in this area. The Guidelines for Indigenous Land Corporation support do not fit.

The Kaurareg people were <sup>possessed</sup> disposed for over 100 years, the return of lands and seas under Native Title three years ago, was a milestone in their history, having been removed by Missionaries and the Qld. Government, from those inner Islands which were their traditional social, cultural, fishing and hunting grounds.

This will mean little in their history, if they are not now given the opportunity and resources to return, develop to and live on them.

Alan Keeling

*Alan Keeling*

Coordinator  
Land and Sea Project

25/8/04