

In reply please quote: aboriginal affairs\Aboriginal Advisory Group\acs 20040825 draft letter to the Senate Select Com on ATSIC.doc

Our ref:

Contact: Siu Chan 9205 5726

10 September 2004

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



Dear Sir or Madam:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Bill 2004 Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs Committee on this matter, and the proposed related changes to the administration of Commonwealth Indigenous affairs policy.

Yarra Council opposes the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). To this aim, Council has:

- Co-signed a letter (May 2004) to the Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard, in association with Darebin and Moreland Councils in opposition to the abolition of ATSIC, (see attached); and
- Passed a Council Resolution on 8 June 2004 in opposition to the Commonwealth Government's proposal to abolish ATSIC, and supporting the continuation of a national Indigenous body that is representative of Indigenous people and principles of self-determination and community control (see attached).

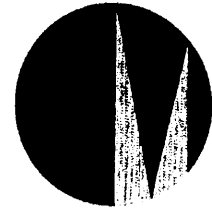
Yarra Council is strongly engaged with Aboriginal affairs, including the recent development of the *Yarra Indigenous Partnerships Plan Wurundjeri Reconciliation and Social Justice 2004-2008*. Throughout this process, ATSIC has played an important link between Council and local Aboriginal organizations, including liaison, advocacy, support and advice on a range of specific local Aboriginal issues.

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as traditional owners of the land within this municipality. A fair and just Reconciliation with traditional owners and true social justice for all Aboriginal people is fundamental to our nation's well being.

We encourage your Committee to consider the importance of Aboriginal self-determination and community control as integral to any changes to Indigenous affairs administration.

Sincerely,

Kate McCaughey
Coordinator, Arts and Cultural Services



Moreland City Council

In reply please quote:
Our ref: acs 20040421 Yarra

20 May 2004

The Hon. John Howard, MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to inform you of our opposition to the manner in which your government proposes to abolish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

We urge your government to support continuation of an indigenous national body that is representative of indigenous people and the principles of self determination and community control.

The Tumbukka ATSIC Council has played a crucial leadership role at the grassroots, regional and state level.

The Tumbukka ATSIC Council has facilitated the delivery of practical and beneficial outcomes for our local indigenous communities, particularly in the areas of business development, housing and community strengthening. It has also provided advice and representation on local government indigenous advisory groups, such as the Yarra Aboriginal Advisory Group, Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council and Moreland Steering Committee on Reconciliation.

Most importantly, ATSIC has been instrumental in improving relations between non-indigenous and indigenous communities and service providers. To this end, the Tumbukka ATSIC Council has assisted in the creation of linkages and forged valuable partnerships that have served to identify culturally sensitive local solutions to indigenous issues.

ATSIC's advocacy on local initiatives has been instrumental in helping our communities identify local Indigenous issues and opportunities, and find locally relevant solutions.

Yours sincerely

Cr Kay Meadows
Mayor - City of Yarra

Cr Anthony Helou, JP
Mayor - City of Moreland

Cr Rae Perry
Mayor - City of Darebin

cc. The Hon. Amanda Vanstone, Senator
The Hon. Mark Latham, MP
Lindsay Tanner, MP
Martin Ferguson, MP

Jenny Macklin, MP
Kelvin Thompson, MP
Aiden Ridgeway, Senator

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL MINUTES

held on Tuesday 8 June 2004 at 7.00pm
at the Richmond Town Hall

I. ATTENDANCE

Councillor Greg Barber
Councillor Sue Corby
Councillor Deborah Di Natale
Councillor Jenny Farrar
Councillor Jackie Fristacky
Councillor Li Lai
Councillor Kay Meadows (Mayor)
Councillor Judy Morton
Councillor Gurm Sekhon

II. APOLOGIES AND REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

III. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Nil.

IV. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Councillor Fristacky **Seconded:** Councillor Farrar

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council held on 11 May 2004 be confirmed.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Fitzroy and Richmond Centrelink Offices - Proposed Closures

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Councillor Sekhon

Seconded: Councillor Di Natale

That Council:

- (a) reaffirms its opposition against the Commonwealth Government's proposal to close the Fitzroy and Richmond Centrelink offices.
- (b) supports the "Action Against Centrelink Closure" (AACC) group in its campaign to retain the Fitzroy and Richmond Centrelink offices.
- (c) endorses the community meeting organised by the AACC for Friday 11 June 2004.

CARRIED

6.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Councillor Sekhon

Seconded: Councillor Di Natale

That Council:

- (a) opposes the Commonwealth Government's proposal to abolish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).
- (b) urges the Commonwealth Government to support continuation of a national indigenous body that is representative of indigenous people and principles of self-determination and community control.

CARRIED