

Newcastle Family Support Services



20 July 2004

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



Re: Submission on the abolishing of ATSIC

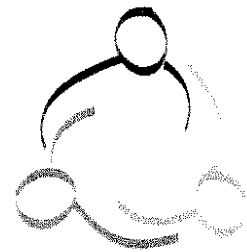
Please find enclosed a copy of a letter from our organisation sent to the Prime Minister on this matter.

We would be happy for it to be used as a submission to the Senate select committee on the administration of Indigenous Affairs.

Yours faithfully

Diane Hines
On behalf of Management and Staff

Newcastle Family Support Services



28th June 2004

The Honorable John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

On behalf of the management and staff of Newcastle Family Support Services and after consultation with the Indigenous staff within our service and with other Indigenous community members, we hereby register our deep concern at the Australian Government's announcement that it intends to abolish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

We believe that this decision and the decision to absorb services for Indigenous people into mainstream services can only mean a reduction both qualitatively and quantitatively of resources, understanding and services to the Indigenous community throughout Australia. In addition, we believe the decision will have serious consequences for already crucial areas such as family well being, health and education.

In particular we wish to register our concern that this decision was made without thorough consultation with the Indigenous community and is in direct contravention of the findings from the review commissioned by your government into ATSIC, a review which cost tax payers in excess of \$1million.

Self-determination has long been a focus and seen as an essential prerequisite for justice and equality for Indigenous people in Australia and this decision in one stroke undoes the years of progress made since the 1967 referendum.

We urge that your next steps be taken in close consultation with the Indigenous communities across the country to ensure that any future developments acknowledge the central place that self-determination holds for the well-being of Indigenous communities and our country.

We request your response as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Hines', written in a cursive style.

Diane Hines
On behalf of Management and Staff