

20 July 2004

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



Dear Sir /Madam,

Re ATSIC Amendment Bill 2004

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the bill and proposed changes to the administration of Commonwealth Indigenous Affairs policy.

As a non- indigenous voter, I can see the need for reform of ATSIC. However, I am shocked that the Government is considering replacing it with a nominated body rather than one which clearly has the endorsement of Aboriginal people.

We have learned over the years that services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will not be effective unless delivered in culturally and spiritually sympathetic ways. For example, it is clear now that the simple provision of "sit down" money is destructive rather than supportive. Paternalism is destructive.

Aboriginal people need national elected indigenous representation and greater control at regional level. A nominated body is accountable only to the nominators, not those it supposedly represents.

A useful replacement for ATSIC can only be arrived at in consultation and negotiation with indigenous stakeholders and with their informed consent. I hope the Committee's report will endorse this basic principle.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth Hoadley".

Ruth Hoadley
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