

Inquiry Into the Administration of Indigenous Affairs - Submission

- References:
1. Letter - Committee Secretary to CEO, Mount Isa City Council, 2 July 2004
 2. Leaflet "Working Together" by Amanda Vanstone, Minister for Indigenous Affairs
 3. Advertisement "Senior Leadership Roles, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination" The Weekend Australian – July 10 – 11, 2004
 4. ATSIC Gulf and West Queensland Regional Council - Regional Plan 2004 – 2006

This submission reflects a personal view and does not purport to be the views of the Mount Isa City Council.

The Local Scene: Mount Isa is a remote centre with a population of some 20,000 including approximately 3,000 indigenous people (15%). Our current Corporate Plan (2003 – 2006) includes in the vision statement, "A strong local economy" and in support of that vision, a key objective is to be a "Nationally recognised indigenous centre". We recognise the importance of providing necessary services to indigenous people in our community and the importance of the quality of life of all our community.

Working Together: Reference 2 expresses a desire for "local communities to have a real say" in how money allocated for indigenous people gets to ground level and for government departments to work together as one with local communities".

Whole of Government: Reference 3 introduces the important issue of "building partnerships at the local and regional level", and a whole-of-government approach.

Proposal:

Local Government, particularly in rural and/or remote regions, can play a significant role in assisting indigenous people by ensuring the special needs of this sector of the local community are recognised and serviced. Local Government can work with and support Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) in their role of coordinating programs and handling services to indigenous people.

There is merit in the strategy put forward in Reference 4 (page 51) and consideration should be given to funding rural and/or remote Local Governments to establish Indigenous Advisory Committees in partnership with ICCs,, to ensure appropriate indigenous representation at ground level. The role of the Committee would be to identify, with Local Government, local quality of life concerns of the indigenous sector of the community for resolution through mainstream departments and agencies under the new administrative arrangements.

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