



Moreland City Council

26 July 2004

File: 232/005/3
Enq: F. Grindlay
Tel: 9240 1250

Senator Trish Crossin
Chair
Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Senator Crossin

Moreland City Council appreciates the opportunity to make a written submission to the Senate Select Committee's inquiry into the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Bill 2004; the proposed administration of Indigenous programs and services by mainstream departments and agencies and related matters.

Moreland City Council is deeply concerned at the potential impacts on service delivery, and on local governments and local communities generally, of the Federal government's proposed abolition of ATSIC. Moreland City Council is preparing a submission detailing these matters that will be shortly forwarded to the Select Committee.

I understand that the Select Committee has advised it may consider extensions on request and Moreland City Council would like an extension of time to 16th August if that were possible.

At this stage, and on behalf of Moreland City Council, I would also like to register Council's concern that the Senate Select Committee has advertised it will only be holding public hearings for the inquiry in Broome and Alice Springs.

Local government and local communities in major urban centres such as Melbourne have unique challenges in access and delivery of services and programs for Indigenous Australians. The overall characteristics and experience of Victorian and Melbourne Indigenous communities are very different from those in remote areas of northern Australia. While their health and well-being is still much poorer than the non-Indigenous community, health promotion, access and cultural issues are unlike those in remote communities. Our local consultation, planning and service delivery systems and infrastructure are also markedly different. I strongly believe that the Senate Select Committee needs to hear first-hand of the approaches required for achieving equitable socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous Australians in Victoria and Melbourne.

While I understand that the Select Committee has a short time-frame for reporting to Parliament, I strongly urge your committee to reconsider its arrangements and to hold at least one public hearing in regional Victoria and one in Melbourne. For consistency, I would also suggest that public hearings are held in metropolitan and regional areas in all States.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Helou', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

CR ANTHONY HELOU J.P.
Mayor