



Christine Stucley  
1 Holmes Street  
Cairns Qld 4870

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

Dear Madam/Sir

**Re: Inquiry on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission  
Amendment Bill 2004**

I wish to provide comment to the above inquiry in relation to proposed changes to Commonwealth Indigenous policy and programs.

As a nation it is our obligation to respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights, including self-determination.

Elected representatives as determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was a step towards control of the policies and services that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lives.

I have read the review of ATSIC which supported the need for changes and reform of the national elected Indigenous representation however recognised the importance of regional representation and recommended support for regional level policy development.

The current bill and administrative arrangements contradicts the Governments own review and will remove the right of Indigenous people to control in decision-making affecting their lives and communities.

It is well documented that involvement in the design and delivery of services will have improved outcomes and improved well being. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be involved in the decision making processes and be supported to develop strong culturally appropriate governance and organisation. Models that demonstrate this are in place by indigenous peoples around the world.

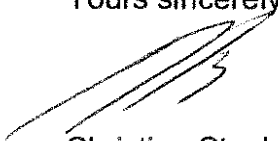
One elected body should have the primary roles of representation and advocacy, be the principal source of Indigenous policy advice to government, and have control over the provision of Indigenous-specific services. Without a formal structure there is too much opportunity for individuals, bureaucracy and

government ministers to manipulate various opinions within the indigenous community. I.e. listen to those that support their view.

Any new representative structure must be determined in consultation and negotiation with Indigenous stakeholders, on the basis of their informed consent. The Committee's report should provide strong endorsement of this principle.

Thankyou again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Christine Stucley', written in a cursive style.

Christine Stucley

22 July 2004