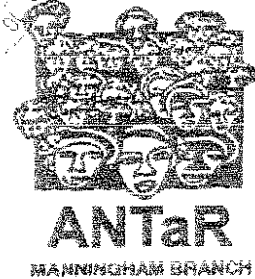
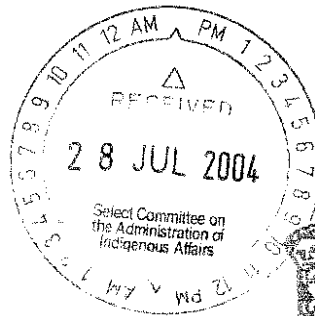
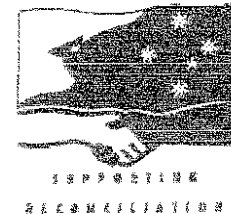


**Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (Vic) Inc.
Manningham Branch**



38 Caringal Av.,
Doncaster,
Vic 3108,
24-7-2004-07-24

To The Secretary
Senate Select Committee on
The Administration of Indigenous Affairs
Parliament House,
Canberra 2600



Dear Sir/Madam,

ANTaR Manningham appreciates this opportunity to provide input on the inquiry on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Bill 2004 and to comment on related changes to the administration of Commonwealth Indigenous affairs policy.

PROTECTION OF RIGHTS:

The Australian people and parliament have an obligation to protect the human rights and self determination of our indigenous people. Respect is essential.

REPRESENTATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION:

It is essential that Indigenous people are able to determine who represents them locally, regionally and nationally. This is an essential aspect of a democratic society.

The current bill with its suggested administrative arrangements will deny these fundamental rights. An advisory role only removes the democratic right of Indigenous people to have input into decisions which affect their lives and well-being.

These changes are indeed contrary to the government's own review of ATSIC which endorsed the need for elected representatives and greater control at a regional level.

NEW INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURE:

Indigenous Australians have endorsed the need for a National Indigenous Representative Body which reflects their values and aspirations and which is open and transparent to all Indigenous people.

The primary role of such a body should be representation and advocacy, provide comment and advocacy to government on Indigenous policy and have control over resources for Indigenous-specific services.

There must be full possibility of understanding of cultural issues for indigenous people. This makes Indigenous choice of their representatives the only possible method.

MAINSTREAMING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

Mainstream service must be responsive to Indigenous culture and need. Mainstream service can appropriately meet some indigenous needs but there must be an informed awareness of what specifics Indigenous people need. Only Indigenous people can correctly supply this information.

We completely agree that all use of all resources should be completely accountable and Indigenous people need to be enabled to work in a framework where accountability can be rigidly enforced.

INDIGENOUS CONSULTATION AND CONSENT:

Any replacement for ATSIC must be determined in consultation and negotiation with Indigenous stakeholders, and on the basis of their informed consent.

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs) Gwyn Roberts
Acting Secretary,
ANTaR Manningham.