

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

Submission by Social Justice Group of Inverloch Uniting Church  
Ian Hamilton, Acting Secretary  
52 Chamberlain Drive  
Leongatha VIC 3953 Phone: (03) 5663 3904

### **Indigenous Rights**

The Australian Government, as a member of the United Nations, has an obligation to uphold the rights of Indigenous Australians. The proposed changes to the legislation will not restore the failures to maintain those rights identified by the UN. The right to effective participation in decision making affecting their communities is essential in maintaining the identity of Indigenous people.

### **Representation**

In order to exercise their rights Indigenous people need to determine who represents them at all levels of administration – local, regional and national. The proposed changes will remove their right to elect representatives and will reduce the strength of their involvement in decision making.

### **Culturally Appropriate Services**

A reduction in the provision of culturally appropriate services and a return to mainstream services will not do anything to improve the health and well being of Indigenous people. The proposed changes to legislation will make it more difficult to assess, monitor and make accountable the services provided.

### **Consultation**

We believe changes to or replacement of ATSIC must be done only in consultation with Indigenous people and with their agreement.