

1.14<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

The Secretariat,  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee,  
Room S1 61 Parliament House,  
Canberra, ACT 2600.

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Reconciliation Inquiry Submission.

Submitted by:

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2.14<sup>th</sup> NOV, 2002Reconciliation Inquiry Submission - Terms of Reference.

That the following matter be referred to the legal and Constitutional References Committee for inquiry and report by March 2003.

(a) Reconciliation.

I request that the Howard Government attend to and implement the original recommendations in CAR's Documents of Reconciliation and Final Report on reconciliation instead of adopting its own Revised Declaration.

The Document of Reconciliation presented at the end of the ten years was the product of an extensive and lengthy process undertaken by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, a body made up of a wide and representative cross-section of Australian society. It should be taken seriously, not dismissed and revised to suit the Howard Government's agenda.

Some positive signs are the strength of the people's movement for reconciliation and the increase in the number of Indigenous Land Use Agreements and the large body of work being done by local Reconciliation Groups.

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3.Reconciliation Inquiry Submission continued. 14<sup>th</sup> NOV. 20021. (b) Roadmap for Reconciliation.

The National Strategy to Sustain the Reconciliation Process sets out ways to build in progress towards Reconciliation. These measures address practical, cultural and spiritual dimensions of Reconciliation.

The practical reconciliation of the Howard Government has achieved little and I see little evidence of the cultural and spiritual dimensions being considered. This very fundamental and major need should be addressed with compassion and respect for the First Peoples of this land.

(c) What has been done by the Howard Government to address in a practical, compassionate and humanitarian way the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's social justice reports in 2000 and 2001 relating to reconciliation?

Why doesn't the Howard Government accept responsibility to encourage Australians to learn more about the causes and extent of disadvantage and to reject racism and related behaviour?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should have access to the same education, health and housing opportunities as has the white population. These people are entitled to financial independence through education, employment and support.

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1. (c) encouragement and sound guidance in establishing Indigenous small businesses.

2. That in examining this matter, the committee have regard to the following:

(a) What processes are there to enable and require government agencies to review their policies and programs in relation to the Final Report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioners social justice reports in 2000 and 2001 relating to reconciliation and be accountable if not implementing them?

(b) Several effective ways of implementing the recommendations of the documents would be to continue discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who have valuable first-hand awareness of the problems addressed, and to undertake helpful negotiations with them.

Is ATSIC able to do this or is it mainly another white bureaucracy?

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2. (c) Does the Howard Government have any targets, benchmarks, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms operating at this time or has it ever had any to implement the recommendations of the reports already referred to?

(d) The Howard Government's dismissal of the recommendation for a treaty or agreements process is an attempt to shut down debate on this issue. Why doesn't the Howard Government recognize the groundswell of the people's movement for humanitarian measures to be implemented in relation to the First People of this nation?

Can the Howard Government be accountable for dismissing so many recommendations so thoughtfully, logically and sensibly reached by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the 2000 and 2001 Social Justice reports?

As an Australian citizen of British descent it is with great sadness that I perceive the divisive steps this nation appears to be taking under our present government in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

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