



**Australian Government**  
**Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations**

Mr Owen Walsh  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Walsh

**RE Inquiry into the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Bill 2005.**

Please find attached the responses to the two questions taken on notice by the Registrar at the Committee hearing of 4 October 2005.

I hope this further information assists the Committee. ORAC welcomes comments or queries on the Bill or on any elements of ORAC's work from the Committee or from any other interested persons. These can be directed to Toni Matulick, Director, Legislative Reform (02 6212 2261 or [toni.matulick@orac.gov.au](mailto:toni.matulick@orac.gov.au)).

Yours sincerely

Laura Beacroft  
Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations  
19 October 2005

**Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Bill 2005**  
**Public Hearing**  
**4 October 2005**

**Questions taken on notice – Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations**

Question 1 (proof Hansard, p. 22)

**ACTING CHAIR**—Can you tell us the figure you will nominally be allocating to information, education and training about the new bill out of that \$1.5 million?

**Ms Beacroft**—I could take that on notice to give you a more detailed answer, but in general terms the answer is that we are not going to have a separate arm that does just the new bill. The new bill totally changes everything we do, so all our training—everything—will, in a sense, need to be redone. It is in the process of being redone. To some extent we have already started that with the training. Our processes will change internally. So, in a sense, the whole budget gets applied to the new legislative regime. It is a big change for us as well.

Question 2 (proof Hansard, pp 22-23)

**ACTING CHAIR**—You said before, in answer to Senator Evans's questions, that a number of organisations were saying to you, 'Hurry up, we want this bill put in place.' Who is saying that?

**Ms Beacroft**—I would have to take on notice the question of who specifically said that, but the one that springs to my mind was a medical service. I will give you a type: people are attracted by the support we offer—not just the training but all the processes of incorporation, dispute resolution support and that sort of thing. It attracts groups that feel they need that support, but if they want to have non-Indigenous people on the board, for example—and the medical service is the one that most recently comes to mind—they cannot at the moment; they simply cannot incorporate under us.

**ACTING CHAIR**—So there are a couple who are saying, 'Hurry up and get this done'?

**Ms Beacroft**—Yes. I can take that question away and come back to the committee.

## **Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Bill 2005**

### **Questions taken on notice during public hearing 4 October 2005**

#### **Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations (ORAC)**

##### Question 1

ORAC's notional budget is \$9.9 million for 2005-06. Of this, the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination administers \$3.3 million while ORAC administers the remaining balance of \$6.6 million. This includes \$1.46 million which is dedicated to the Enhanced Training for Directors initiative. This initiative includes three day introductory workshops in corporate governance and the Certificate IV in Business (Governance). To date there have been 24 introductory workshops with a total of 632 participants and 101 graduates of the Certificate IV course.

In terms of information, education and training about the new Bill, ORAC envisages that the entire budget in the new year will be applied to the new legislative regime. ORAC has already started to re-gear programs and services to provide information and advice about the Bill. For example, there are a number of publications about the Bill on the ORAC website, many of which have been distributed to corporations and other stakeholders.

##### Question 2

ORAC receives a number of queries about how corporations can best be structured to meet their needs. One strategy that corporations are interested in, especially key service corporations and also trustee corporations holding land, is to have a professional who may be non-Indigenous, like a doctor, professional trustee or key employee, on their board. The Bill gives corporations a choice to make this strategy possible, provided members agree to this when they approve the rules for the corporation. There are no corporations currently with ORAC that have non-Indigenous Board members since this is not permitted under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*.