

ATSIC Amendment Bill (supplementary)

2005.3. ATSIC Amendment Bill (supplementary)

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### **1. Indigenous Affairs**

Following our submission [2004.4] on the **ATSIC Amendment Bill 2004** we were invited to augment our comments and answer questions before the Senate Select Committee dealing with this matter. The meeting was, however, cancelled and a written supplementary submission invited. We made the following points:

- Humanists regard a nation's laws as a reflection on the degree of civilisation it has reached. Positive discrimination towards the disadvantaged is one of the marks of a civilised society.
- By all measures the indigenous Australians are greatly disadvantaged. We submit that the ATSIC Amendment Bill should state our commitment to eliminate this disadvantage. This would be of importance in the absence of an Australian Bill of Rights.
- Humanists value greatly the ideal of liberal democracy and human rights. Imposition of appointed representatives, in place of elected ones, violates these principles.
- We quote the former Liberal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Fred Chaney) in favour of having elected representatives.
- We regard health and education as the crucial social areas and urge that special rather than mainstream approach be adopted to alleviate disadvantage.
- Adequate funding is essential to deal with these problems.

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