

Administration of Aboriginal Affairs (ATSIC Amendment Bill) to Senate Select Committee
2004.4. Administration of Aboriginal Affairs (ATSIC Amendment Bill)

Submitted 28 July 2004 to the Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs, Parliament of Australia.

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To Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs, we made the following points:

- * In absence of an Australian Bill of Rights it is vital that this ATSI Commission Amendment Bill protects the rights of indigenous people.
- * The right to have elected representatives is fundamental. Appointed representation would be a regression into paternalism.
- * On all measures the well-being of indigenous Australians is far below average. Long-term and continuing failure of mainstream service delivery accounts for this inequity. This Inquiry offers an opportunity to redress this situation.
- * Knowledge of cultural values, sensitivities and aspirations is vital in appropriate and successful service delivery. Thus such services should be under the control of the new national indigenous representative body.
- * Good health, education, employability and social cohesion underpin well-being. The many devastated, dysfunctional Aboriginal communities stand as an indictment of our disregard for human rights.
- * Time and resources must be given to the new management. It is not clear whether present assets of ATSIC would be sufficient for this purpose.
- * Enshrining the rights of indigenous Australians in law would aid in reducing the prejudice, and racism many still experience.

[† ATSIC, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Commission.]

[See also 2005.3, ATSIC Amendment Bill, supplementary.]
