

Pauline Brown
Inquiry Secretary
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS
PO Box 6021,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT
2600

Dear Pauline

RECEIVED
15 AUG 2008

Submission No.....61.....
Date Received.....

Re: **Public Hearing** BY:.....ATSLA.....
Darwin
Wednesday 6 August
Venue: Savanna Room, Outback Stores
Training Centre, 94 Boulter Road Berrimah

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with the Committee and to offer an alternative point of view from an Aboriginal organisation not focusing purely on Art /Craft and tourism as a source of employment and income independence.

As discussed the major issues facing an urban Aboriginal Group such as the Larrakia is the influx of other Aboriginal people into Darwin (Larrakia Land) from communities where English is not the first language – the problems this creates are enormous, because many of those itinerants cannot read and write they are basically unemployable – the result of not focussing on having all Australians including the first people unable to speak English or read and write prevents these people from getting the benefit from mainstream services and deny them the basic benefits available to ALL Australians.

A cynic could be accused of seeing many well meaning academics and anthropologist keeping these people in the dark which ensures their personal goals and future is not progressed.

Important statistic – over 80% of all current major infrastructure projects in Australia are located north of the Tropic of Capricorn – where the population equates to approx 5% of the Australian population – the majority of this 5% is Aboriginal – therefore there no excuse for not addressing the education and up skilling of Aboriginal people as a major priority.

- 1- One stop shop – for both federal and NT Aboriginal business and employment enquiries.
- 2- Adoption of Board / Directors governance training i.e. Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and IBA.
- 3- Federal and NT Government agency's programs should be designed for accountability and responsibilities and must be able to be monitored monthly and report accurate stats on the number of enquiries, approval s deferrals declined – successes year 1, year 2 etc.
- 4- Long term future employment programs MUST be linked to educational outcomes – if you can't read and write English you cannot be employed.
- 5- Need to address the lack of appreciation to the fact that Aboriginal people are an employment resource in areas where industries currently rely on fly in fly out labour – i.e. mine sites these areas need to be focused on skilling the local Aboriginal people with real skills.
- 6- We don't need some other countries systems (i.e. United States) we just need a system that the is result driven and not pandering to academics who experiment with social ideas and leave when it fails – the lack of education and local employment is critical – stop outsourcing work to receive a short term financial gain to governments as this is offset by long term social welfare and dependency. There are many examples in Australia that work and which relate directly to the needs of local traditional owners there is no need to waste more money on overseas experiments and travel.

7- Any incentive should be linked to outcomes no result no money – There needs to be an emphasis on stopping Aboriginal people being classed as welfare or patronising them by keeping long term bureaucrats in jobs still trying to achieve what they were trying to, 30 years ago , in business they would be sacked.

Many of the government's program support procedures are process orientated and long winded – the only success KPI is the amount of money paid to consultants preparing endless business plans and feasibility studies, which end up gathering dust on a shelf.

Many government agencies should review the reasons why Aboriginal projects can't be done i.e. don't be so risk adverse and when assessing loans say in excess of \$50,000 look at a maximum security level of say 50% anything more and the funding may as well be sourced from a bank.

In the case of home loans IBA should not give an expectation that once the approval is granted, the funds are available; In many cases the funds are not available until the next funding allocation which could be 6 12 months away.

By the time an idea has been processed the opportunity is lost or the person is fed up with no answers.

Stop looking at simple options i.e. aqua culture/ art / tourism get to basic with business in the communities.

Most are only being set up to fail.

If a bank takes more than 2 weeks to give an answer based on their required criteria you would go to another bank but its ok for a govt agency to take up to 12 months to respond to an Aboriginal request – I think not.

The following is in response to your Chairman's request for some examples of the assistance to the Larrakia by the Larrakia Development Corporation Pty Ltd;

The Larrakia Development Corporation has assisted in developing the following business opportunities for Larrakia

- Landscaping maintenance
- Larrakia Cultural Awareness training / presentation
- Darwin Tourism – local Larrakia sites
- Healing and Massage