

Submission No.
Date Received 8-4-05



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06 APR 2005

5th April, 2005

BY: ATISA

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

As a labour economist who has undertaken a considerable amount of research relating to unemployment in Australia, and in particular the evaluation of labour market programs for the unemployed, I have recently turned my attention to employment policies for Indigenous persons as an area of research focus. For the purposes of the Committee's Inquiry into Indigenous Employment I would like to express my view that, given the ongoing degree of disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians in the labour market and with respect to almost all other socio-economic indicators, the effort put into improving Indigenous labour market outcomes in this country has been woefully inadequate.

This may not be as evident in terms of 'input' measures such as budgetary commitment as it is in the lack of political will to resolve critical questions on the broader objectives of Indigenous policy and thus the ability for policy makers to remain unaccountable for the lack of progress in addressing Indigenous disadvantage. Most importantly, this is manifest in a lack of transparency and rigour in the evaluation of Indigenous labour market programs and Indigenous economic policy more generally. These views are best set out in the enclosed working paper by myself and Nicola Milsom, which I would like considered as a submission to the Inquiry.

I am also currently undertaking a review of Indigenous employment programs through a grant from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), and hope that some of the outcomes of that research can be made available to the Committee in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Mike Dockery
Research Fellow