

**Clifford, Julia (SEN)**

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**From:** Georgina Meyer [georginameyer@yahoo.com.au]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 23 April 2003 2:31 PM  
**To:** Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)  
**Subject:** IMPORTANT: HR&EOC proposal

Dear Mr Hallahan,

Re: Proposal to restructure the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

I am writing to you to express my concern over the above-mentioned topic. As I understand it, there is a new Bill to be introduced into federal Parliament which seeks to abolish the position of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Race Discrimination, Sex Discrimination, Disability Discrimination and Human Rights Commissioner and replace these positions with three generalist Human Rights Commissioners.

My concern is that the human rights, discrimination and disadvantage situation in Australia has not dramatically improved to warrant such a merge and therefore needs MORE attention rather than less. For example, in respect to Indigenous Rights in particular, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that was held in Sydney during February 2001 acknowledged that 'the root of discrimination, which has been suffered by Indigenous peoples and which continues to affect the lives of Indigenous people today is racism' and that 'this discrimination is deeply embedded in the social, political and economic fabric of these countries (including Australia)'. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination held during March 2000 'expressed concern at several aspects of Australia's record' and questioned Australian government representatives about the *Native Title Act* and 'the inadequate participation of indigenous people in decisions affecting their land rights'.

Discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of race, religion, sex and disability is rife in Australia and needs all the attention it can. Therefore I am very concerned that the changes proposed will lead to the demise of the effectiveness of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission by reducing the number of commissioners and generalising their work.

Please pass on my concerns to the appropriate parties involved

Regards,

Georgie Meyer  
357B Bamba Road  
Caulfield South, Vic 3162  
9578 5005

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