

**MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
FOR
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS**

The Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Unfinished Business - Indigenous Stolen Wages

I write in my capacity as the Chair of the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) and in relation to the second recommendation of the *Unfinished Business - Indigenous Stolen Wages* report.

MCATSIA read with interest the findings of the *Unfinished Business - Indigenous Stolen Wages* report and took particular note of the recommendation to MCATSIA that it agree on joint funding arrangements for an education and awareness campaign in Indigenous communities in relation to stolen wages issues, and for preliminary legal research on Indigenous stolen wages matters. The substance of this recommendation was the subject of an agenda item at the 3 August 2007 MCATSIA meeting.

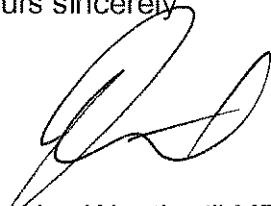
Following consideration of the findings of the report, and of recommendation 2, MCATSIA agreed that the circumstances which applied to the treatment of wages varied quite considerably in each of the jurisdictions. Further, MCATSIA noted that some states have implemented awareness campaigns or have implemented or ceased reparation or compensation schemes and felt that, because of the differing circumstances between jurisdictions, there would be difficulties framing and running a national education and awareness campaign. Similarly, as the legislation varied between the jurisdictions, and jurisdictions have undertaken different amounts of research, MCATSIA agreed that each state and the Commonwealth are best placed to undertake their own legal research.

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Subsequent to this discussion, MCATSIA resolved that educational programs and further legal research into Stolen Wages need to occur at the jurisdictional level and as such are outside MCATSIA's remit. MCATSIA also resolved that further investigation of the relevant recommendations of the ***Unfinished Business – Indigenous stolen wages*** report be undertaken at the jurisdictional level.

Accordingly, and in line with these resolutions, MCATSIA will not be taking any further action in response to Recommendation 2 of the *Unfinished Business - Indigenous Stolen Wages* but will continue to support individual jurisdictions to address this important matter in accordance with their own historical and legislative circumstances.

Yours sincerely



Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Chair

20/8/2007