



**Submission to the Legal and Constitutional  
References [Senate] Committee:  
Inquiry into Indigenous Workers Whose Paid Labour  
Was Controlled by Government [Stolen Wages]**

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns to the Legal and Constitutional References [Senate] Committee announced on the 13 June 2006.

Since May 2002 when the Queensland Government made a capped offer of \$55.4 million to Aboriginal and Islander people whose wages and savings were withheld by previous governments in Queensland, I have listened to community people tell their stories; I have lived to see long time campaigners for wages justice die before justice was achieved for themselves and their families; I have attended many rallies; I have listened to and read material researched by Dr Ros Kidd; I have written letters to the Premier and I cannot understand why any government would not simply pay back what has been owing to Aboriginal people for many years.

My submission relates to clauses b, c, e, f, g in the terms of reference:

Recently, Premier Beattie made a statement to Parliament in relation to the Stolen Wages matter. (See Hansard 51<sup>st</sup> Parliament) saying:

*These funds are not mine; they are taxpayer funds.*

*As with all payments made by governments, there must be accountability and, where possible, proof must be provided.*

*There is a balance required.*

Minister Mickel has also stated that the offer to Aboriginal People is taxpayer's money.

In my correspondence to the Premier on this issue, Rob Whiddon, Chief of Staff to Premier Beattie, confirmed that the money for the offer has come from consolidated revenue.

(See attached letters).

If the \$55.4 million has come from consolidated revenue, public money, could the Inquiry please clarify:

1. If there are any monies still held in trust holding Aboriginal peoples' wages (excluding the Welfare Fund and other associated accounts)?
2. What is the current status of the Wages Trust?

4. Has this balance been static since the National Government were in power?
5. Why is this information not clearly available to claimants and the public?
6. When was the documentation relating to the trust destroyed?
7. Does the current government have a case to answer in relation to its fiduciary duties to the Crime and Misconduct Commission?

I thank you for your considerations on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Catherine A. Boyle

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. a Boyle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

cathy boyle

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Sent: Wednesday, 17 May 2006 8:58 PM  
Subject: MISLEADING STATEMENT HANSARD 51ST PARLIAMENT

Dear Peter

I am very concerned by the misleading statement that you made to Parliament and the general public in relation to the Stolen Wages matter. (see below )

As you know, wages earned by Aboriginal People were held in trust by the Queensland Government. Hence, this money belongs to Aboriginal people. It is not taxpayers money.

I call upon you to issue a public apology and reissue a correct statement.

*These funds are not mine; they are taxpayer funds.*

*As with all payments made by governments, there must be accountability and, where possible, proof must be provided.*

*There is a balance required.*

Regards  
Cathy Boyle

26/07/06



Queensland  
Government

Office of the Premier

For reply please quote: MN106581/KT08/SocPol

- 5 JUN 2006

Ms Cathy Bovle

TARRAGINDI QLD 4121

Dear Cathy

Thank you for your email of 17 May 2006 concerning the Premier's recent statement to Parliament about the Indigenous wages and savings reparations process. I have been requested to reply to you on the Premier's behalf.

The Queensland Government has been, and continues to be, committed to the reparations process. That commitment started in 2002 when the Government set aside \$55.4 million from consolidated funds, which are public monies, for individual reparation payments to those Indigenous Queenslanders who had been inappropriately disadvantaged by past policy and practice.

The Premier's statement to Parliament on 10 May re-emphasised the Government's continuing commitment to address this issue by outlining a process to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders will be involved in working out how the remaining reparations monies should be spent.

Thank you for bringing this matter to the Premier's attention.

Yours sincerely

**Rob Whiddon**  
Chief of Staff

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**cathy boyle**

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**Sent:** Tuesday, 20 June 2006 8:19 PM  
**Subject:** stolen wages inquiry

Dear Rob

Thank you for your letter, Ref MN/106581/KT08/SocPol.  
I will forward this advice on to the Senate Inquiry recently announced.

However, if, as you say, the \$55.4 million has come from consolidated revenue, public money, could you please clarify:

. if there are any monies still held in trust holding Aboriginal peoples wages ( excluding the Welfare Fund and other associated accounts) and if so, what is the current status of these trust,

and

. why was taxpayers money used instead of returning money owed according to the records of these trusts or accounts?

Can you please clarify this matter to parliament and issue a public statement so Aboriginal people are not vilified as greedy for rightfully claiming money that have earned through many years of hard labour.

Yours sincerely  
Cath Boyle

26/07/06

Monday, November 03, 2003

Women's International League of Peace and Freedom  
PO Box 5151  
Victoria Point  
Qld 4165

### *An open letter to Queensland Premier Peter Beattie*

Dear Mr Beattie

The Women's International League of Peace and Freedom has been carefully researching and following the Stolen Wages issue. While we commend the Queensland Government for being the first state to address the Stolen Wages injustice, we are very concerned that a number of issues be addressed.

Firstly, we urge that ALL money owed be repaid. Our organization is horrified by the expectation that Aboriginal people should receive less than what is owing to them on the pretext that this token offer is given in the spirit of reconciliation. The current offer repeats the original injustice, and once again, underpays Aboriginal people. It is discriminatory. It diminishes and discredits the reconciliation process.

The health of any democracy needs honest political leadership and we urge every member of the Beattie government to speak the truth and correct any public perception that the money owing to Aboriginal claimants is taxpayer's money. It is salary - money owed for work carried out and put into the hands of the Government trustees. It therefore cannot be classified as taxpayer money, as has been intimated by the Beattie Government in the media.

We urge the Government to work collaboratively alongside the research of Dr Ros Kidd and the Elders of every local area where there are claimants. We understand there are grave concerns in the Aboriginal communities in relation to the research and consultation already carried out on behalf of the Government. It is our understanding of Aboriginal protocol that one organization cannot speak for all peoples. In addition, the indemnity condition along with an "accept this or nothing" and "we will win if this goes to court"

approach has led to a community consensus to accept the offer but has left residing feelings of resentment and a cry for justice.

We are concerned that Aboriginal workers should not have to prove that they are owed money by the Queensland Government in the lost and stolen wages case. Given the Queensland Government was the trustee for this money, surely, it is the fiduciary duty of the Government to show it has properly accounted for this money.

We believe it is discriminatory and racist not to pass on monies earned in wages to families after the claimants are deceased. This is the case for other Queenslanders; why is there still an expectancy that it should be different for Aboriginal people? It is evident that non-payment of wages is a major contributory factor to the economic disadvantage of Aboriginal people. Wages accrued under State awards would now mean these people could own their own home, be better educated, have better health, even private health insurance, indicators that are the norm for other sectors of the community.

As many of the claimants are now of considerable age, we urge the Government to work promptly, openly and honestly to resolve this underpayment. We believe this should not be a confrontational issue to be resolved through legal action, but rather a cooperative process with the Government, Elders and the extensive research and documentation of Dr Ros Kidd. We commend this task to you.

Yours sincerely



*for*  
Norma Forrest  
Branch Contact  
WILPF Queensland