

**Submission to the Legal and Constitutional References (Senate) Committee:**

**Inquiry into Indigenous Workers Whose Paid Labour Was Controlled by Government  
(Stolen Wages)**

From:

Anne and Bill Byrne  
Enfield NSW

We are non-Indigenous people who strongly support the concept of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Australia has been, for a long, time in the forefront of moves to enshrine equality in the workplace with a range of positive discrimination and equal pay measures.

Alongside these developments through the 20th century, has been the long-term and unaddressed scandal of the stolen wages of Australia's Indigenous peoples. It is essential that this Committee accept that governments throughout Australia have been responsible for withholding wages and other entitlements due to Indigenous people. Where they were not directly responsible they had oversight of missions and other institutions which used Indigenous people as virtually slave labour.

We are aware that redressing the injustice of stolen wages will be a very complex process requiring the co-operation and involvement of the Commonwealth and all State and Territory Governments. It is important that this Senate Committee recommend that this process start without delay and that the necessary infrastructure be put in place as soon as possible.

It is imperative that at all stages in the process, Indigenous people are consulted about their needs and the appropriate ways to handle them, and that they are involved at all levels to redress the injustices done to them.