

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: INQUIRY INTO INDIGENOUS WORKERS WHOSE PAID LABOUR WAS CONTROLLED BY GOVERNMENT [STOLEN WAGES]

Please accept this submission for the above inquiry.

I request that the wages and savings taken from Indigenous Australians be returned in full, with interest, and compensation; that, for those claimants who are deceased, the same be paid to their heirs; and that the government take whatever other measures are necessary to ensure justice for the victims of this theft and the related abuses of their rights in the workplace.

It has been the government's responsibility to keep accurate records in this matter, and in any individual cases, I feel that the government must pay people the maximum estimation of the amount which they are owed.

With regard to item (i) in the terms of inquiry, I think that yes, there is "a need to 'set the record straight' through a national forum to publicly air the complexity and the consequences of mandatory controls over Indigenous labour and finances during most of the 20th century." *I feel strongly that full disclosure and admission of wrong-doing is an essential part of justice for the victims of crime, and that justice is part of healing, and healing the past brightens the future.* It is my impression that in this case, the original crime has been magnified as stolen wages claimants have been misrepresented in the media and by government sources. (To me, there is a parallel here with churches who have sought to make child molestation cases 'go away' by discrediting and blaming the victim.)

The fraud, theft, slavery and other abuses and crimes committed against Indigenous Australians are a scandal – the biggest Australian workplace scandal of which I am aware in the last century. *And it is still happening*, for as long as justice is denied and claimants are sidelined. If this had happened to any other group of Australians, A Current Affair would have had a field day.

I recently attended a dinner put on by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation. Although I had been aware for a while of the issue of stolen wages, hearing victims' stories first hand (including that of someone I knew) made me begin to realize the awful impact this has had on their lives and the unthinkable extent of the damage.

Please excuse the somewhat disconnected nature of these thoughts. Thank you for accepting them. I wish the committee members all strength, courage and good health in carrying out the task which is before them.

Tanya Moir
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