MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letters of 1 September 2014 and 20 October 2014 about two petitions submitted by the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council (WBACC). The first petition asks for regulations to be enacted under the *Aboriginal Land Grant (Jervis Bay Territory) Act* (Land Grant Act) to empower WBACC to enforce its by-laws by way of penalties. The second petition asks that vacant crown land in the Jervis Bay Territory be granted to WBACC as Aboriginal land.

Your letters seek my response to these petitions, as the Minister responsible for administering the Land Grant Act.

I met with WBACC in March this year to discuss a number of matters, including the Council's request for a further grant of vacant Crown land and a review of the Land Grant Act. At this meeting WBACC agreed to provide me with a list of its concerns and proposed changes to the Land Grant Act. While I offered WBACC financial support to complete this work, no information has yet been provided. I have therefore asked my Department to consult with WBACC on its suggestions for reforming the Land Grant Act, with a view to pursuing possible amendments. I have also asked the Department to consult with relevant Commonwealth agencies regarding the potential for a further grant of land under section 9 of the Land Grant Act.

I will consider the matters raised by WBACC's petitions once the Department's consultations with the Wreck Bay Community have concluded and further advice is received on options for responding to the land grant request.

I have written to advise WBACC of my intentions for dealing with the two matters it has brought to the attention of your committee. I look forward to working further with the Wreck Bay community, to help ensure the full potential of the Aboriginal land in the Jervis Bay Territory is realised.

Yours sincerely

NIGEL SCULLION
November 2014