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Submission 36

Senator the Hon Grant Tambling

Senator for the Northern Territory

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Aged Care

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The Hon.Lou Lieberman W
Chairman
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Lieberman,

I note your committee is conducting an inquiry into The Reeves Report on the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act.

I have held a strong personal and constituents' representative interest in this matter since 1997.

I attach for the information of your committee members:

1. My submission to the Reeves Review of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act dated 11 November 1997.
2. Discussion notes for a meeting with Mr Reeves held 22 December 1997.

Over a long period of time (in fact since my election to the Senate in 1987) I have been critical of many aspects of Land Council administration and costs. The Auditor-Generals report No. 20 of 1993-94 and subsequent reports highlighted many of the continuing issues that have raised my concerns.

Recently a Northern Territory Supreme Court case [Hansen -v- Northern Land Council] has also drawn attention to other concerning issues of administration and political patronage. I strongly believe your committee should pay regard to the transcripts of this case.

[At pages 78-80 of 18 November 1998 Mr Hansen refers to the involvement of the NLC, Warren Snowdon MP and others; and Mr Mick Dodson's evidence of 5 March 1999 relates particularly to the administration of the Northern Land Council.]

It is most important that future structures and management of Land Councils properly reflects the prudential responsibilities to Aborigines of the Northern Territory and do not repeat the mistakes of past neglect and incompetence.

I will be pleased to appear before your committee to expand on these issues if required.

Yours sincerely

(signed)Grant Tambling 24/3/99

GRANT TAMBLING
Senator for the Northern Territory