

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Fr. Dalton Bon
PO Box 129
Thursday Island
QLD 4875

Phone: (07) 4069 16061

17th July 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Increasing Indigenous Business Opportunities

My name is Father Dalton Bon. I was born and raised on Mer Island and I am a proud member of the Zenadth Kes nation in the Torres Strait.

I wish to expand upon the ideas outlined in my recent letter to you regarding the above government initiative.

I would like to initiate a number of businesses that are not only *small* businesses but that are large enough to employ other Torres Strait Islanders to build skills, allow people to work together and to provide sustainable employment for my people.

There are three main ideas which I have been considering and which I will outline for you now:

MER ISLAND

I have land on Mer and I would like to see a resort on this land (similar to the resort on Poruma) for use by exclusive, high-paying clients. This resort would be run and maintained by those currently living on Mer.

SUMMER STREET – THURSDAY ISLAND

There are three adjoining blocks of land for sale through Torres Strait Real Estate. The cost of the land is approximately \$950,000, which includes a currently rented property. I would like to purchase this land, furnish it with accommodation to be used for short-term tourist accommodation, with some accommodation rented to government bodies to ensure constant rental returns. Again, these properties would be managed and maintained by Torres Strait Islander people.

‘MURA MUD’ SITE – DOUGLAS STREET, THURSDAY ISLAND

Recently purchased by Queensland Health, this site has great potential for short-term accommodation. During meetings with Queensland Health management representatives I have discussed purchasing a lease for this site to develop it for short-term accommodation to be utilised by people travelling to Thursday Island from the Outer Islands for festivals, sporting carnivals, family events, hospital visits and the like.

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Date Received <u>28 JUL 2008</u>

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BY: ATSIA

It is important to understand that Torres Strait Island people are much more likely to respond to employment opportunities presented to them by Elders known to them and trusted by them, rather than from Government bodies or outside industries. As an Elder I have traditional knowledge of people, places, customs and our history.

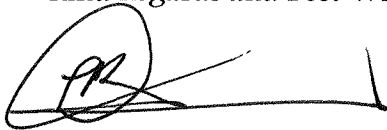
We do, however, need the support of Government to achieve positive outcomes but this must work hand-in-hand with such vital traditional knowledge that I speak of above.

As I mentioned in my previous correspondence the ability to accommodate people is fundamental to the development of many other businesses in our region that rely on visitors for their sustainability. Without the scope to accommodate people it is difficult for other industries to develop and prosper.

I thank you for this opportunity to be able to share my vision with you and I look forward to discussing this with you further.

May God Bless you.

Kind Regards and Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DLB', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.

Father Dalton Bon.

cc David Spriggs
Business Development Manager
TSRA