

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(250) Output 3.1: Whole-of-Government Coordination of Policy Development and Service Delivery for Indigenous Australians

Senator Siewert asked:

DIMIA has emphasised that "...The government does not want to impose structures, but work with structures that are devised locally or regionally and accepted by Indigenous people in the locality or region as their means of engagement with government" [Indigenous Portal]

1. How are proposals concerning representative structures assessed? How many such proposals have been finalised to date?
2. How is it that a proposal for a regional structure is 'finalised' and who is it that signs off on or approves such a structure?
3. What kinds of different structures have been approved in different regions to date?

Answer:

1. As outlined in the preamble to the question, the Government does not wish to impose representative structures on Indigenous people. It is expected that a number of different types of representative bodies will emerge reflecting the diversity of locations and the diversity of Indigenous peoples around the country. Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits. The emphasis will be on engagement with government to work together to improve outcomes generally through setting priorities for joint effort through a Regional Partnership Agreement. Two representative arrangements are finalised.
2. The Indigenous people decide on the representative structure that they consider will best work for them. The Government has indicated that modest financial support is available to support the costs of bringing people together. Representative structures will need to ensure that government can directly engage with local people and funding will not support the cost of elections and sitting fees.
3. There are a number of different models proposed to date, which generally include two or three tiers of engagement. Proposals approved for funding to date are the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly and the Ngaanyatjarra Council (see question 256).