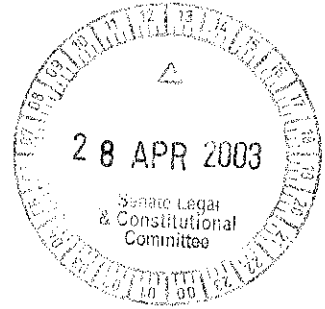


Clifford, Julia (SEN)

From: Aboriginal Catholic Ministry [acmsydney@bigpond.com]
Sent: Monday, 28 April 2003 11:56 AM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Concerns on the abolition of Specialist Commissioner's positions

Mr Peter Hallahan
Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear sir,

I would like to submit my concerns about the Bill introduced into Federal Parliament, that seeks to abolish the positions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social Justice Commissioner, Sex Commissioner and Disability commissioner.

The appointment of three generalist commissioners who would be responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social issues, and those of racial Discrimination, Sex Discrimination and Disability Discrimination would mean that all of these areas would be inadequately dealt with by people who, would seem to have no particular expertise in these demanding and important areas.

As an Aboriginal woman and an Aboriginal Community worker I object to our Indigenous affairs being lumped together under a generalist umbrella. We seem to always be competing for resources and I believe our major human rights concerns have never been properly addressed. Monies may have been spent in the Royal Commission into Deaths and Custody but the recommendations from that report have never been fully endorsed by Government bodies. We still have the highest numbers of persons incarcerated in the prison system, we still have the high rates of unemployment, poor health, housing problems, homelessness and our people are dying at 20-30years younger than non-indigenous.

I urge the Senate Inquiry to recommend that the position of all the specialist Commissioners be maintained and given greater, not less support.

yours sincerely

Brenda McDonnell
Coordinator
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
77 Buckland Street Alexandria. 2015

6/05/2003