

The Dalby Social Justice Circle

Just a group of friends trying to make a difference

"Kilkenny"
MS 192
Dalby Qld 4405

Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
ATTENTION: John Ley

03 May 2003

Thank you for allowing us the extra time to examine the documentation. We hereby submit our concerns about the Bill.

1. Reducing the number of commissioners from five to three is of great concern. This reduction means that the commissioners will have less time to become informed on each of the matters before them. No individual commissioner will have specific responsibility for race discrimination or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice issues. Their work and expertise will become generalised and lessened. This, we think, will eventually lead to the demise of the Commission through its ineffectiveness.
2. The Commission will be converted into a toothless tiger because it will need the Attorney General's permission before it can investigate all issues. The loss of this perceived and real autonomy will render it a puppet of the governing regime. This will effectively make it a political body without the crucial traits requiring it to be seen as an impartial, autonomous body. Justice will not even be seen to be done. Certain issues, put by people with particular unpopular problems, would never receive an airing.
3. This will allow the government to sanction and stifle dissention. There is never progress in society without dissention.

Because we have not had the opportunity to really dissect the bill, and we do thank you for the extension allowed to us for this submission, we really would like the opportunity to speak further, to your committee, to this letter. We thank you once again and request an opportunity to speak to this letter.

Regards,

Patrick John O'Connor
Member

Phone 07 4669 6303

