

21 Everview Avenue
Mosman NSW 2088



19 April 2003

Mr Peter Hallahan
Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Room S1.61 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hallahan

I understand that the Australian Human Rights Commission Legislation Bill 2003 contains certain proposals affecting the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. Although not sufficiently familiar with HREOC to comment on the changes proposed, I note however that the proposed legislation would abolish the existing five specialist Commissioners, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, and replace them with three generalist Commissioners.

I would therefore like to place on record my high regard for the present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Dr William Jonas, with whom I had some dealings in connection with Old Parliament House while I was a member of that institution's History Advisory Committee and he was Director of the National Museum of Australia. I was impressed by both his ability and integrity and hope that HREOC will not be denied those qualities by any changes to its structure resulting from the new legislation.

I realise that this hardly amounts to a submission, and I do not expect a formal acknowledgment.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gavin Souter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gavin Souter AO