



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Official Committee Hansard

## SENATE

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENCES COMMITTEE

**Reference: Progress towards national reconciliation**

WEDNESDAY, 18 JUNE 2003

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**SENATE**  
**LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 18 June 2003**

**Members:** Senator Bolkus (*Chair*), Senator Payne (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Greig, Kirk, Scullion and Stephens

**Substitute members:**

Senator Crossin to replace Senator Stephens for the committee's inquiry on progress towards national reconciliation

Senator Ridgeway to replace Senator Greig for matters relating to the Indigenous Affairs portfolio

**Participating members:** Senators Abetz, Brandis, Brown, Carr, Chapman, Crossin, Eggleston, Chris Evans, Faulkner, Ferguson, Ferris, Harradine, Harris, Knowles, Lees, Lightfoot, Ludwig, Mason, McGauran, Murphy, Nettle, Sherry, Stott Despoja, Tchen, Tierney and Watson

Senator Bartlett for matters relating to the Immigration and Multicultural Affairs portfolio

**Senators in attendance:** Senators Bolkus, Ridgeway and Scullion

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

1. Progress towards national reconciliation, including an examination of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commonwealth Government's response to, and implementation of, the recommendations contained in the following documents:
  - (a) Reconciliation: Australia's Challenge: Final Report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Parliament;
  - (b) the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's Roadmap for Reconciliation and the associated National Strategies to Advance Reconciliation; and
  - (c) the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's social justice reports in 2000 and 2001 relating to reconciliation.
2. That, in examining this matter, the committee have regard to the following:
  - (a) whether processes have been developed to enable and require government agencies to review their policies and programs against the documents referred to above;
  - (b) effective ways of implementing the recommendations of the documents referred to above, including an examination of funding arrangements;
  - (c) the adequacy and effectiveness of any targets, benchmarks, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that have been put in place to address Indigenous disadvantage and promote reconciliation, with particular reference to the consistency of these responses with the documents referred to above; and
  - (d) the consistency of the Government's responses to the recommendations contained in the documents referred to above with the needs and aspirations of Indigenous Australians as Australian citizens and First Nation Peoples.

**WITNESSES**

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**Committee met at 6.02 p.m.****HOWSON, Mr Peter (Private capacity)**

**CHAIR**—I declare open this public hearing. I welcome Mr Peter Howson. This is about the seventh public hearing of the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's inquiry into progress towards reconciliation. I am sure Mr Howson knows the attributes of parliamentary privilege and the protection it offers. If you are of a view that you would like to give evidence in private, we can facilitate that. Witnesses are reminded of the notes they received relating to parliamentary privilege and the protection of official witnesses. Witnesses are also reminded that the giving of false or misleading evidence to the committee may constitute a contempt of the parliament. You have lodged a submission with us, submission No. 67. Would you like to make any alterations or amendments to the submission, or would you just like to start with an opening statement?

**Mr Howson**—Because it is so long since I wrote this—six months ago—I do not have any amendments I wish to make to it. However, I wish to speak at a fair amount of length, say seven to eight minutes, if you will grant me that amount of time, because so much has happened since I wrote this report over six months ago. With that, I thank you, Senator Bolkus, and senators for seeing me this evening. I have a number of new things that I would like to table. For instance, since I dealt with the statistics in my paper, there has been a new ABS statistics report, *Australian social trends 2003*. On page 55, there are some very interesting new statistics. I would like to table this document and leave it with you.

**CHAIR**—We will look at it and make a formal decision as to whether it should be accepted. I am sure it will be okay.

**Mr Howson**—It cost me \$49!

**CHAIR**—We may have this already. We can give it back to you.

**Mr Howson**—It is just page 55 that I will bring to your attention.

**CHAIR**—Is that all you want to table, page 55?

**Mr Howson**—Yes, that is the main one. Actually, there are some other statistics in here. I have not had time to look at the whole document, but I think you will find those new trends interesting. I will refer to them during my address.

**CHAIR**—We might table this document, get our own copy for the purposes of our record and give this back to you.

**Mr Howson**—That would be nice, thanks.

**CHAIR**—And you do not have to give us \$49!

**Mr Howson**—No hurry. From there, let me say that my definition of reconciliation is the same as the Prime Minister's. We believe that true reconciliation will be established when

Indigenous Australians enjoy standards of opportunity and treatment which are the equal of their countrymen and women. I should say that this has been my objective for the past 30 years.

The first thing I want to do is to show the difference between the urban Indigenous people and those in the remote communities. I refer to a document in my original submission entitled 'People and Place 2002'. It is an article by Professor Bob Birrell and John Hirst that was originally published in the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* last August. In that, Bob Birrell makes it clear that one of the interesting features of statistics in the last 15 years has been the rate of intermarriage. In 1986, the rate of intermarriage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous spouses was 46 per cent. By 2001, it was 69 per cent. More importantly, in the six capital cities, which includes one-third of the Indigenous population, the rate of intermarriage was 87 per cent. It is interesting that in this article you will see that as intermarriage has occurred, the rate of employment has risen and their income has risen. There has been upward mobility. So there have been more funds to educate the children who have also got to a higher standard of education. Their health also has improved, as can be shown from a recent paper by the Hon. Gary Johns based on the Commonwealth Grants Commission. So I would say that the indicators of opportunity and treatment, trying to get towards that of their countrymen, have shown considerable progress for those Indigenous people living in the cities and, to a certain extent, those in the inner and outer regional areas of Australia. That covers 74 per cent of the Indigenous population.

But I compare that with 26 per cent of the population, 91,000 people, living in 1,139 remote communities. Again, looking at that document I have tabled, you will see how housing and infrastructure in these recent months have shown great improvement. That is not only in housing but in drinking water, electricity, sewerage, roads, airstrips and the like. You will see how the improvement has taken place. But the society in those remote communities has declined. The rate of unemployment has increased. The level of education has got worse. There is an abysmal standard of health. Above all, as has been shown recently, we now have endemic domestic violence. I particularly refer to the paper by Mick Dodson last Wednesday entitled 'Black child abuse at crisis point'.

As shown in my submission, the underlying cause of all this, I believe, is unemployment. When I was minister 30 years ago, we realised that if those Aborigines who are skilled hunters and had been nomadic were to succeed in their new environment, they would need to acquire new skills. In my time, the government provided the relevant training facilities and helped with advisers to create what we used to call cottage industries, cooperatives like sawmills and fishing cooperatives and the building trades. In the words of Richard Trudgen in his book *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*, we provided a bridge which would help these nomadic hunters to enable them to take their place in Australian society.

In 1973, this whole structure was dismantled and replaced by the Whitlam government, on the advice of Nugget Coombs, with dole without strings, so-called sit-down money. This, to my mind, deliberately forced unemployment throughout the north. The result has been that for 30 years they have all been dependent on welfare.

There are now three generations who have been existing on welfare from the cradle to the grave. It is the second generation that has really suffered. Idleness has led to alcohol and alcohol has led to violence. As Judge Forde is reported to have said in the *Australian* on 6 June, talking



about Mornington Island, he said that there is only one safe house in the whole of Mornington Island. There is a spectacle of young children standing in the street watching their parents bash each other senseless every pension night. For these children, concepts such as treaties or apologies have little relevance. Nick Rothwell, again on 12 May, described a community in the East Kimberley and said that most fathers are absent, drunk or dead and the mothers drink the kids' social welfare money. It is in those papers.

This third generation of children are now virtual orphans. They run wild. There is no parental guidance. They are meant to be dependent on their grandmothers, but in fact they are having to fend for themselves. My main recommendation to the committee today is to hope that you will rescue these abandoned children and endeavour to break the cycle of misery and suffering by ensuring their education.

This committee must realise that the whole policy of separatism initiated in 1973 is now being shown to be a failure. As you see in these recent reports, and they are all very recent, there has been a breakdown of a civilisation in many of these remote communities, and Aboriginal culture which was meant to have been preserved is being lost. It is time to consider a new approach to reconciliation and, in my view, to restore the bridge that used to exist when I was minister.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much. Senator Scullion was keen to ask you some questions. We will start with him.

**Senator SCULLION**—Thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you very much, Mr Howson. Throughout my time on this committee in looking into this issue, I think we have heard quite a few times the terminology about the policy of separation and the breakdown of civilisation,. Certainly in your submission you have looked back in history. In terms of reconciliation and benchmarking, you have certainly gone further back than many. I notice you speak about many of the writers of the time, such as Humphrey McQueen, Henry Reynolds and those sorts of people. You have also done some writing yourself. You spoke of Professor Colin Tatz. I think it was in an article published in *Quadrant* in October 2000 that you wrote about Professor Colin Tatz. You actually made a comment in 1990 about the deteriorating state of life in Aboriginal communities. It pretty much reflected what you have told us today. I will read into the record your comment there. It is interesting to note that it is very rare that the Parliamentary Library cannot come up with publications. They assure me it will be available in a few days. It is 30 years old and they do not keep those publications.

**Mr Howson**—This article was in *Quadrant*.

**Senator SCULLION**—Indeed. Your comment was as follows:

In 1971 Professor Colin Tatz, a well known academic and impeccably politically-correct publicist for aboriginal causes, visited 77 Aboriginal communities in the five mainland states and the Northern Territory. In 1991 he revisited these same communities and in a report entitled “Aboriginal Violence: A Return to Pessimism” in *Australian Journal of Social Issues* ... he wrote the following:

“we all must face up to a set of realities for which there is, regrettably, abundant evidence”.

Tatz listed eight such ‘realities’ in the field of law and order:

1. the great deal of personal violence within Aboriginal groups, even within families;
2. the great deal of child neglect, as in hunger and lack of general care;
3. the considerable amount of violence and damage committed in sober states;
4. the marked increase in Aboriginal deaths from non natural causes;
5. much destruction of property, both white supplied and own acquired;
6. increasing numbers of attacks, often violent, on white staff who work with the groups;
7. the vast amount of alcohol consumed, commonly and generally offered as the sole and total explanation of the above;
8. the constancy about the way Aborigines externalise causality and responsibility for all of this.

You went on to write in that report in *Quadrant*:

Professor Tatz has also described the fruits of land rights granted to several substantial communities, including the Strelley in the Pilbara, the Daguragu people on Wave Hill in the Northern Territory. These land grants, under WA legislation and the NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1976) respectively were publicised a few years earlier as trail-blazers of Aboriginal success under self-management. By the time Tatz inquired as to their situation he found they were “staggering, splitting, arguing and barely holding together” (at Strelley) or “have blown it altogether, (are) in debt, and have given away their cattle lease” (at Daguragu).”

It is certainly my experience in the committee that there are some pretty desperate circumstances, particularly in some demographics, particularly with women and children in many of the communities, both in urban and in regional communities in Australia. Given that Tatz actually wrote about this in 1990, and had vast experience since the early 1970s—as early as 1971—why is it that we have not actually heard about this until today, when we hear readings of Richard Trudgen and things like that? Why weren’t we told that those sorts of documents are starting to come out? Why haven’t we got the truth about this?

**Mr Howson**—Well, at least I cannot be blamed for that because I have been, as you know, trying to write these things regularly, particularly after the last three or four years. The major thing is that people have not realised that having the land rights legislation—I know this is different from the Commonwealth one, what we are talking about, with Mabo and so on—did not provide sufficient opportunities for employment. I think the whole issue that has been neglected over the whole time during which I have been taking such an interest in this in the last three or four years and which Tatz did not actually get on to is unemployment. There is no use sitting on a block of land in the middle of the Northern Territory if you cannot do anything with it. One of my recommendations is that we think about freehold opportunities for individuals. There was an interesting report recently in the *Australian* about a Dixon family at Newcastle Waters getting a freehold opportunity for a pastoral lease, which I think is a great step forward. These are the sorts of things that I think came out of the Tatz report and nobody did anything about them. I just hope that by having another opportunity to put my submission tonight we might get the message across. Thank you for asking.

**Senator SCULLION**—Thank you. One of the common threads that I get throughout this inquiry and through some of my own experiences is that ‘inalienable freehold land’ is a term we use normally, be it from native title or the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, that can be conferred on Aboriginal people. Some Aboriginals see it, as I do, as very patronising, special blackfella land. It is a different sort of land. I can understand why they feel that. Others tell me, ‘Look, if that wasn’t there, how would we protect future generations?’ So there is a fairly weighty argument on both sides about how you deal with that. Could you give me some of your views on aspects of the nature of the tenure of the lease?

**Mr Howson**—Yes. I think it has to be a lease. I am not saying freehold. I think leasehold on a fairly long-term lease is probably the answer. It overcomes the argument that once it becomes freehold it can be sold and it is gone forever. No, I think you have a leasehold with certain clauses attached to it so that it can remain Aboriginal land forever but at least an individual can start to make use of it.

As my friend Bob Beadman, who used to be in the Northern Territory for many years, has said, if you start to work and all your friends are still sitting under a palm tree, you do not really feel too keen on working on their behalf. We have to find a *modus operandi* between the difficulty of total alienation, which we do not want, but on the other hand enabling free enterprise to take place. There are a number of Aboriginals who have contacted me in the Alice Springs area who would like to work along these lines.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—Mr Howson, we have met on a few occasions previously.

**Mr Howson**—Last time you asked me about my voting rights committee in 1960.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—That is exactly right. I thought I would ask a few questions about the views you express in your submission. Certainly they are issues that flow from *Australian social trends* and what statistics tend to show these days in terms of Indigenous social and economic decline. What I am trying to understand—this is where my sense of the argument seems to get lost—is that most of what we seem to assess today is based on what we know to have happened in the last perhaps 37 or 40 years as a result of federal government initiatives. Prior to the 1967 referendum, from your experiences, are you aware, if the federal government did not do so, about state and territory governments dealing with the collection of data about Indigenous people, such as their numbers and about the circumstances of disadvantage? How can we say that in the last three or four decades there has been a considerable decline if we do not have anything to compare it to in the previous, say, four decades before the 1967 referendum?

**Mr Howson**—Certainly the Commonwealth had very good statistics in the Northern Territory. It is interesting you should ask me about the states. In an article in the *Australian* this morning, I have been criticised by former senator Chris Puplick for taking too keen an interest in the states and not acting unilaterally on behalf of the Commonwealth. My feeling back in 1970 was that the states had been responsible for Aboriginal affairs and that unless we worked with them, there was no use trying to override them, as Bill Wentworth tried to do. One of the things I was trying to do was to collect statistics in those days from the states so that we could see the background on which we were going to work in the future. But my predecessor, Paul Hasluck, did a fair job in assessing the situations in the states as well as in the Northern Territory.

Most of my experience certainly is based on what I remember of the Northern Territory. That is why I said in my statement today that these communities that I saw during visits in my time, where we did have these cooperatives working satisfactorily, were in a better situation than when the cooperatives were removed and we got self-determination. So I think there is a fair background to my knowledge of the time, even going back to 1960.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—So how do you deal with, for example, the current circumstance, where if you look at the demographics of the existing Indigenous population, it is pretty much the reverse of the broader national population? That is, almost 70 per cent are under the age of 25, so you have a very youthful character. Is it possible that in terms of the demands for employment, educational opportunities and even health it may be brought about as a result of that changing demographic and that what we are seeing as a snapshot in the decades we are living in is more a result of that changing demographic circumstance?

**Mr Howson**—Obviously it is a much younger population. But I believe that the only answer is that while we tried to create cooperatives and cottage industries in the remote communities, the employment there has grown to an extent and that really these communities are no longer viable and we have to find some way, I think, of encouraging mobility amongst the young to go to places where employment is available. This is what is worrying me at the moment. We cannot obviously find employment in 1,139 remote communities. It is this huge number of communities. How are we going to find employment there? There has to be some encouragement of the young to move to places where they can be better employed.

Of course, 74 per cent of the population has moved. It is a tragedy that we still have 26 per cent now finding difficulty in getting employment of any sort. CDEP has not really been the answer. As many of you know, we have to really look at CDEP and try and make it a means of getting them to move on to meaningful employment. It is the young that worry me; that is why I said it is these children who are not getting educated. Former Senator Bob Collins's report on education in the Northern Territory is two years old now, and little has been happening. It worries me so much. I go right back to, as I said, Colin Tatz. There was the report, and what has happened? It is 10 years old. But I have tried to indicate today the need to look at CDEP, the need for mobility, the need for some form of individual leasehold or freehold. These are the sorts of things I think this committee should be looking at.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—No doubt you are aware that some of the recent statistics on social and economic disadvantage show there is very little difference now between Indigenous people living in rural and remote locations as compared to Indigenous people living in urban locations. As you rightly point out, 75 per cent are now living within reach of all of life's opportunities. Do you think that indicates there is something else at play in terms of being able to make the most of the opportunities that are there at the doorstep, essentially, for three-quarters of the Indigenous population at least?

**Mr Howson**—Yet look at them at that awful place, Dareton. It was in the paper a few weeks ago. When they originally built Dareton, which is right out in the bush—it is five kilometres from Dareton and about 20 kilometres from Mildura—there were fruit picking opportunities. Unfortunately, fruit picking has now been mechanised in Mildura. So the chance of those kids getting employment now has gone. How do we get them to get some form of occupation? They would have to move to places like Shepparton, I think. But one place you do not want them to

move to is to Sydney. I think we want to get them in nearer regional bases where they will fit in more quickly. Again, in the Northern Territory, we do not want everybody to move out of these remote communities into the Todd River, or into the long grass in Darwin.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—Yes. One of the things that perplexes me in terms of trying to find solutions is the whole question of land, as you talk about it, and in response to Senator Scullion's questions. Do you believe there has been enough done in relation to integrating federal initiatives with state initiatives and that there has been a cross-sectoral approach to delivering them? That is, will land deliver a health outcome or a job or something of that sort, or has federal policy making ended up being just a stovepipe mentality, where we deal with one thing over here but it has no bearing or relationship to something else as an outcome?

**Mr Howson**—It has always been difficult for the Commonwealth and the states to find agreement. I spent three days going around Queensland with Mr Bjelke-Petersen and going to places like Palm Island, Cherbourg and so on. I was horrified at the time. It took me some time to educate Bjelke.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—That would have been a big task!

**Mr Howson**—These were the sorts of things that I believe state governments did take longer to find some answers to. But we have to do it cooperatively. This is the trouble. We cannot just say that we are going to do this to the states, because it does not work that way. I think there are some states that are now moving very satisfactorily and others that are a bit slower. One of my great endeavours was to try to work as closely as I could with the state ministers. In Victoria, we did succeed very much, I think, but Queensland was a little different. But Queensland has changed a lot since my day. I think Queensland is now probably ahead. I think South Australia has its problems up in the Pitjantjatjara area at the moment, as I see it.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—I guess that leads me to a recent announcement made in the budget that the government have committed themselves to looking at national benchmarks and standards being produced. You are no doubt aware that there have not been any in place since the 1967 referendum. Do you see that as a good thing or a bad thing? How would you see it, particularly in terms of reporting? Should the Productivity Commission be involved? Should the Social Justice Commissioner under the human rights commission have a role as well? Is it a good initiative?

**Mr Howson**—I think the Commonwealth Grants Commission to which I referred has been doing quite a bit of work on that. That is one of the bodies that I would recommend to also look at it. This recent Commonwealth Grants Commission report, which is referred to in Gary Johns's paper, has done quite a bit of work on that sort of thing. I think that it would be one of the avenues that I might suggest.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—I have been a proponent of comprehensive agreements being established and see limited benefit in specific agreements that come out of the native title process, for example, probably for similar reasons to what you have already discussed. Are you aware of the talks that are occurring in South Australia between the state government and the Aboriginal legal rights movement, being the native title rep body, where they are proposing to look at a state-wide agreement that does not just deal with the question of land but also with

social and economic outcomes and taking the integrated approach? Given the views you have expressed, particularly in terms of trying to mainstream or harmonise, is that a suitable or satisfactory way to go?

**Mr Howson**—You have got me there on what is actually happening in South Australia. I suppose I should have done more, knowing the chairman was from South Australia, regarding my South Australian knowledge. But I have been spending more time, I think, in Queensland and Western Australia as well as Victoria. You have got me there.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—I will ask one final question but a very topical one today. You mention ATSI throughout your paper. There has been a discussion paper released this afternoon by the panel looking into the review. Do you want to talk a little about your views in relation to ATSI itself? There are, I believe, four models that have been proposed as alternatives to the one that currently exists through to regional authorities, regional approaches and so on.

**Mr Howson**—I have just received a copy of the paper.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—That is the one.

**Mr Howson**—I have not had time to read it.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—I was going to ask you for any views you might have based on your experiences and what you have already expressed over the years.

**Mr Howson**—Yes. Actually the Bennelong Society put in a submission to the ATSI review committee. I would be interested to see whether they have taken note of what our recommendations were. Certainly there is no doubt that I have talked to the chairman of this committee, who tells me that wherever he went there was a feeling at the grassroots that ATSI was not listening to their needs. I think there needs to be a revision of that committee. I think from what I have heard on the grapevine that what is in this goes a long way towards what Bennelong was recommending. If I am able to read it in a moment, I will let you know.

**Senator RIDGEWAY**—I also read that article in the *Australian* today by former Senator Puplick. There are two things he seems to talk about that stand out in my mind. He talks about the successes over the period from 1963 to the current point and says that two of the three things that were dealt with were the census and Indigenous people being counted and then the Constitution being amended to deal with special laws being passed. One thing he said, though, was that the proposal to look at a prohibition on discrimination was dropped and that the other two were taken up. Given your comments in relation to 75 per cent of the Indigenous population being in urban locations, do you think that if that proposal at the time had been dealt with as part of a constitutional change adopting the principle of non-discrimination, 75 per cent of the population might not be struggling to get work or dealing with health problems? I am finding it a little hard to understand how it is that if you are living in the cities and larger towns you cannot get a job or people are being locked up at a phenomenal rate and that you have the universal things that happen, such as breakdown in the family, domestic violence, substance abuse and the lot. Is it fair to say that there is perhaps institutional discrimination that continues to deny that 75 per cent, at the very least, an opportunity to get a job and get on with life?

**Mr Howson**—Except that I think there are indications that the rate of employment of those in the urban communities is higher than for those out in the remote communities. Certainly if you look at Birrell's report, it says that the employment rate of Indigenous people in the cities is rising. I think there is quite a correlation. Again, you have to look at those figures in greater detail. I have not had time to go through all of them in my submission. However, they show that the employment opportunities, while not good, certainly have been improving in recent years. Certainly it has been going backwards in the remote communities. That is what I wanted to stress. The gap between the urban communities and the remote communities has been widening in terms of not only employment, but education and health. That is where we have to concentrate, out in those 1,139 remote communities, to see whether we cannot bring them up to at least the standard of their colleagues in the cities and the towns.

**Senator SCULLION**—I have a couple of questions. In view of the time, I will give you probably the most important one first. You are in a very unique situation. Thirty years ago, you were the minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs. In that whole process, normally I would ask what you think we did right so we can replicate it. However, in view of the circumstances we find ourselves in, I should probably ask what the worst thing we did was, what the worst mistake we made was.

**Mr Howson**—The worst mistake, I think, was in 1973—the hope that by aiming for self-determination we would preserve Aboriginal culture. I think we need to try to preserve Aboriginal culture, but you cannot preserve Aboriginal culture if you are unemployed and if you are living on welfare and in idleness. It takes you to grog instead of trying to preserve your culture. The problem is that the people who are meant to be passing on the old culture to the young, because they are drinking, are not able to remember the law and the dreaming. So the whole theory on which self-determination was based 30 years ago has not been able to be put into practice. That is the real disaster that we have been seeing in recent weeks. The children are not learning the law and the dreaming. They are just running wild. That is why I say that if we are going to try to achieve reconciliation we have to find some new way of helping these kids who are out on their own. They are not getting the parental guidance that was available to their parents and grandparents. It is a tragedy. It was all done with the best of intentions.

**Senator SCULLION**—Unlike her father, my daughter is a bit of a royal watcher. Possibly it is because Prince Harry is apparently going to visit Australia shortly with the intention, I understand, of putting some positive voluntary work into an Indigenous community. In your experience, Mr Howson, which Indigenous people, from your vast knowledge, do you think he could visit with some capacity of security and with the idea of having some positive outcome? Which one would you recommend?

**Mr Howson**—I should think Warburton.

**Senator SCULLION**—Why Warburton?

**Mr Howson**—Warburton has maintained a white policeman to keep order. It is one of the places where the headmaster of the school goes around in a bus and picks up all the kids in the creeks and so on and takes them to school every day and takes them back again in the evening. There is cooperation, I think, regarding that sort of bridge that I was talking about in Warburton,

where they have been trying it out. There probably are other opportunities, but it is just one that springs to mind. Certainly he would learn about Australia in Warburton.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much, Mr Howson, for your advice this evening.

**Mr Howson**—Thank you.

**CHAIR**—We will now adjourn.

**Committee adjourned at 6.45 p.m.**