

**Select Committee on the Administration of  
Indigenous Affairs**

**Inquiry into the Administration of Indigenous  
Affairs**

**Submission No: 144a**

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**Date Received: 26 November 2004**

**Number of Pages: 2**



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*Worldwide knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present*

Mr Jonathan Curtis  
Senate Select Committee on the  
Administration of Indigenous Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra 260

12 October 2004

Dear Mr Curtis,

We are pleased to have the opportunity to present this supplementary submission of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to the Senate Select Committee on the Administration of Indigenous Affairs.

Since our first submission was accepted by the Inquiry, the Institute's Governing Council has been able to meet and discuss the submission. The following additional comments are offered by way of clarification and elaboration, particularly as further comment may not be possible with the suspension of hearings following announcement of the October 9 election.

The Council wished to emphasise the key points of the submission:

- Development and implementation of new arrangements to replace ATSIC structures should be taken only after full and open consultation with Indigenous peoples. Any new structure will require the free and informed consent of Indigenous people; and
- The reforms proposed by the Government have a number of consequential implications for the capacity, resources and budget of AIATSIS if it is to continue to successfully promote understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the wider Australian and international environment.

Council wished to restate the importance of longitudinal independent research on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that can be drawn upon by policy makers and Indigenous peoples alike. On reflection, references in our submission to the role of research in any new policy environment should be read in a manner which confirms the independent nature of the research. In particular, Council considered the term 'monitoring' may not reflect this distinction adequately and would request that the original submission be read with this in mind. For clarity, Council asks the Committee to note the following reconsideration of the Institute's original submission:

- Recommendation 4, on pages 3 and 10 should be read: 'That the role of research, and AIATSIS in particular, be recognised in the development and funding of evaluation processes in the new policy environment.'
- Also on page 10, the explanatory statement should be read: 'AIATSIS is able to provide policy makers and government agencies delivering services and programs to Indigenous peoples with high quality independent research and advice on policy formulation, implementation and, evaluation'.

Of course, the Institute remains happy to give evidence at any public hearings should they be rescheduled in order to elaborate on issues raised in either this or our first submission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Dodson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Mick Dodson AM  
Chairperson