

PETITION REQUESTING THAT INDIGENOUS VOICE TO BE REPRESENTED IN AUSTRALIA

Recent moves by the Federal Government to again betray Indigenous people, this time by demolishing the only representative structure currently available to them, must be stopped. The Federal Government's proposal will not only dissolve ATSIC Nationally; it will dissolve regional councils and is intended to include the "main-streaming" of services to Indigenous people. The truth is that around 85% of the "Aboriginal Budget" is controlled by Governments and/or their agents, yet ATSIC has borne 100% of the blame for the things that have gone wrong.

ANTaR and Reconciliation Victoria are therefore working in solidarity with Indigenous leaders to organise a campaign that aims to prevent this from happening, at State and National levels, and are seeking your support.

We believe that Indigenous people must have a real say on issues to do with land, their future and indeed, on the policy shape of this nation, Australia. They must have the right to speak collectively, be heard and have their views respected at the relevant level of government and about the issues relevant to this nation. Indigenous people must also have the authority (and be properly resourced) to represent themselves and make decisions regarding the policies and services that impact upon them at every level of program design and delivery.

Some form of representative structure is therefore essential; central to this is that Indigenous people must be a part of determining the structures and processes by which such representation is to occur. We must defend, promote and support these rights of Indigenous people as fundamental to a just, civilised and honourable nation. We must work to create the "space" in which Indigenous people have the necessary monetary resources, access to specialist expertise and are allowed the time to develop such structures.

To this end we are working in solidarity with Victorian Indigenous leaders to organise a campaign to maintain Indigenous voice. Essentially, we must not allow the abolition of the only existing representative structure available to Indigenous people, at least until some independent inquiry has investigated the alleged failures and recommended such an action - and then, only after whatever "better" structures and processes intended to replace it have been properly established. The Government's legislation as it is must not be passed.

OUR STRATEGY REGARDING THIS PETITION - WHAT YOU CAN DO: ASAP, PLEASE

We want to see as many parliamentarians as is possible presenting petitions in the Senate, so get completed petitions to a Senator in your State asap. Each petition needs to contain as many signatures as is possible, but send what ever you have off on the 12th of May. More petitions can follow as we have time to collect them.

Copy this petition (every page MUST include the aims and content of the petition) and send completed petitions to a State Senator. Ideally, also try to find out how they view this issue as it will be even better if s/he is willing to speak to it. If you want to target the Lower House local member as well, CHANGE the heading at the top of the petition to read "To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives assembled in parliament". Meanwhile please phone, write, visit AND e-mail your Local, State and Federal Members of ANY Political Parties to express you views on this issue, to make demands and to seek written feedback from that person. Remember, they are there to represent YOU! (See <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/work/petition.htm> for more on how to lodge a petition in the Senate, (or Upper House), and <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/info/infosheets/is11.pdf> for the same regarding the House of Representatives (or Lower House).

WHO THIS IS FROM/CONTACT DETAILS FOR MORE INFO

Frank Hytten at ANTaR Victoria – 9419 3613 (More contacts to follow after the Campaign meeting on 5/5/04, 6pm at the bookshop in Trades Hall in Melbourne)

PLEASE FORMALLY PRESENT THE COMPLETED PETITION TO YOUR LOCAL SENATOR

AND

FORWARD A COPY OF THE COMPLETED PETITION TO: ANTaR Victoria, 67 Brunswick St, Fitzroy 3056. Fx: [03] 9417 2691.

To the Honourable President and members of the Senate in parliament assembled:

The petition of the undersigned shows;

- That the current intention of the Government to abolish the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to exercise their right of self self-determination and self-management, will severely disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Your petitioners request that the Senate;

1. oppose any legislation for the abolition of ATSIC unless and until an alternative elected representative structure, developed and approved by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is put in place and which would, at the same time assume the functions of ATSIC.
2. oppose any move to appoint an Advisory committee as contrary to the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to elect their own representatives
3. oppose any move to Diminish, Dismantle, Destroy and/or Erode the Principles of self-determination and self-management since any such action would turn back the clock on hard won rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
4. strongly defend these rights of self-determination and self-management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people previously supported by the Australian Parliament
5. oppose any move to main-stream services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as this too would severely disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Please Provide Details Below

PRINT YOUR NAME	PRINT YOUR ADDRESS	ELECTORATE OR POST CODE	SIGN HERE	DATE