

## **INQUIRY INTO OVERCOMING INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE**

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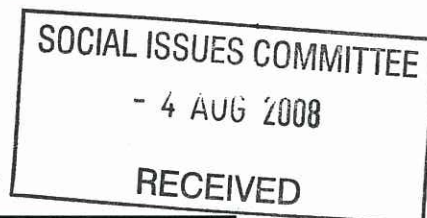
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<b>Date received:</b>	4/08/2008

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Many feet joining to walk together on Mother Earth

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Monday, August 04, 2008

To: The Honourable Mr Ian West MLC and Committee Members

**Inquiry Into Closing The Gap – Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage.**

Dear Mr West

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with additional information relating to the issues you outline in your correspondence. After reading the contents we decided that rather than answer in point form under the provided subheadings, we would submit a combination of answers of our own findings on these same matters, as well as meet the criteria set out for this purpose.

**ATSIC**

There is a desperate need for the return of ATSIC.

- I (Marjorie Woodrow) am one of the oldest surviving elders from the stolen generation and as such I feel insulted that I was never informed of the impending closure of ATSIC.
- I (Marjorie Woodrow) feel that historically evidence shows that the current Land Councils are not representing our people.
- We need qualified professional people to become employees of a newly established ATSIC
- Where Aboriginal peoples used to be able to go to ATSIC for funding, they now are often uninformed or confused by the grants and funding bodies; where they are located and how to find out about them. Many felt at least in the past it was a one-stop funding body.

**WATCHDOG**

- An independent financial watchdog needs to be established to monitor the relationships and transactions between local councils and land councils.

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- A similar watchdog is required to establish, monitor and evaluate the re-introduction of ATSIC
- An independent housing watchdog be put in place to assess, monitor and evaluate a rent-to-buy housing program for Aboriginal people
- A specialist independent financial watchdog be an integral component of auditing and accountability checks within any organization/service/agency that accepts financial funding, especially NGO's.

## HOUSING

- Where there is a history of bad renting; introduce automatic and mandatory rental deductions to be taken from Centrelink benefits/wages.
- More Aboriginal (Department of Housing) homes needed desperately. On the central Coast it would appear that many New Zealanders are occupying homes that it is believed were originally earmarked for Aboriginal people.

## EDUCATION INOVATIONS

- Teach young Aboriginals budgeting – financial management
- Give all Australian students (or at the very least Aboriginal children) the opportunity to learn Aboriginal language.
- Introduce more effective programs on alcohol and drug abuse e.g take members of AA, NA (and others) to the people.
- Establish education programs for young mothers
- Establish pro-active for young fathers to be... or that have bawked at the responsibility.

## EMPLOYMENT, MENTORING, & TRAINING OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

- Implement strategies to prevent the *dumbing-down* of Indigenous Tertiary students by Indigenous faculty members, thus preventing educational genocide.
- Re-introduce initiatives and ceremony to popularize 'rites of passage' for the youth culture.
- Alert local elders immediately of Aboriginal peoples being arrested or hospitalized – have a roster system implemented so that elders can be mobilized to the location in the shortest time possible.
- Promote prisoner visitor schemes for Indigenous Australians.

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- Encourage cultural development programs that would highlight:
  - Initiation by elders
  - Women's business
  - Men's business
- Complete unfinished business with the people of the stolen generation – stolen wages/slave labour etc before the new generations expose the barbaric old and faulty new systems.

## COORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY

- The mortality rate of Indigenous Australians has been in question for a long time. Changes could be made by:
  - Having trained nurses live-in when there are severely incapacitated people in the home
  - Having trained and qualified medical professionals (nurses, counselors, podiatrists etc) visit them rather than volunteers from such organizations as 'meals on wheels'. This is neither fair on the volunteer nor good work practices.
  - Examining old 'extended family' models and rebuilding and assisting with this support base.
  - Establishing Aboriginal care homes for the elderly – group living or semi-detached with support systems.

## MEASURING OUTCOMES

- With an introduction of a new revised and revolutionized ATSIC and the promotion of internal and external watchdogs, the aforementioned objectives could be assessed and thus the outcomes measured and if necessary revised when and where applicable.
- If Government Officials directed their representatives out into the field, not just the *urban field* but regional, rural and remote areas, they would find out what the people really want and need. It so often appears that the people are told (second hand) what it is they want and need and what will be provided rather than having a meeting of the ways. It is time for open of honest collaboration.

## SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- Although we have briefly touched on some specific strategies that we feel confident about, we would be more than happy to continue communicating on of this subject or meet with government ministers at a time suitable to us all.

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We would again like to thank you for contacting us and look forward to further discussions on these matters.

Respectfully Yours

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**Marjorie Woodrow**

Senior Female Elder  
Founder National Elders Council  
2008 citizen of the Year Nominee  
Member of the Stolen Generation

**Shauna P. Norman**

BSW (MAASW) M.Soc Sc

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