

Subject: Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Submission to Electoral Redistribution Tribunal

Date: Monday, 27 February 2017 at 10:47:12 AM Australian Eastern Daylight Time

From: Annie Reynolds

To: Redistribution Submissions

To the Electoral Redistribution Tribunal

With apologies for the lateness of our submission, we write to express the support of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre for the statement submitted by the Aboriginal Provisional Government on Electoral Redistribution. That is :

1. The current configuration of Tasmanian electorates severely disadvantages Aboriginal people, and proposed resetting of electoral boundaries will do little or nothing to enable fair and equal representation of Aborigines in the Tasmanian Parliament.
2. As part of representative democracy under the 1995 Act, the Electoral Commission must apply a number of criteria in its deliberations on electoral boundaries. The criteria of second priority is 'community of interest'. In every Tasmanian electorate, Aborigines constitute a minority. As a result, Aborigines have no hope of electing their own to Parliament and have little or no incentive to participate in the electoral processes.
3. To attempt to remedy this imbalance, the Commission need to place greater emphasis on 'community of interest' within electorates, rather than simply tinkering with numbers of voters. The more emphasis on number, the more disadvantaged are the minority group of Aboriginal people in the electorate.
4. There is really only one way to guarantee Aboriginal representation in the Tasmanian Parliament. This is through a number of designated Aboriginal seats, which the Parliament can legislate to allow for, and to which Aborigines can vote their own representatives. The success of this model is evident with the Maori in New Zealand.
5. Other proposals to imply Aboriginal approval of the current electoral system, such as renaming of electorates with Aboriginal language names, are well-intentioned but inappropriate and we could not endorse them; such measures would be solely cosmetic, if not tokenistic. Only legislation to make a white parliament more representative will address the current inequitable and unfair Tasmanian electoral system.

Heather Sculthorpe.

CEO

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre