

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS & RECONCILIATION



INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ISSUE SHEET

The foundation stones for real change within Indigenous communities are education, leadership, cultural and social well-being and structural change to rationalise service delivery. The Australian Democrats are committed to creating the economic, social, cultural and legal framework that will enable Indigenous Australians to determine and manage their own lives and futures. This right of self-determination is critical for a future united Australia that provides justice and equity for all.

Photo: www.kormilda.nt.edu.au



The key points underpinning the Democrats Indigenous Affairs policy are:

CO-ORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY

- recognising Indigenous community organisations and programs as the most appropriate and effective bodies to tackle the social, economic and political disadvantage in Indigenous communities
- improving the efficiency and co-ordination of Government service delivery in Indigenous communities through structural reforms and agreed targets and benchmarks
- supporting regional autonomy where this will enhance Indigenous people's control over decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities
- an elected national voice to provide policy advice and monitor Government performance



COMMUNITY SAFETY AND DEVELOPMENT

- long term programs - especially family violence and substance abuse programs - to deal with intergenerational trauma, stress and grief in recognition of the damaged nature of many Indigenous communities
- a review of the national strategy on Indigenous deaths in custody and the National Indigenous Justice Strategy to reduce the rates at which Indigenous people appear in court and are locked up
- crime prevention programs, sentencing and diversionary alternatives and restorative justice for both Indigenous victims of crime and to make offenders accountable

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS & RECONCILIATION



CULTURAL HERITAGE

- greater recognition and respect for Indigenous cultures, heritage, languages and traditional knowledge-especially in the education system
- encouraging the strengthening of Indigenous cultural identity and customary practice, recognising that this can deter dysfunctional and harmful behaviour
- legislative protection of communal moral rights

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- improving the education and training opportunities for Indigenous Peoples as these are keys to economic and social empowerment
- support Indigenous schools and colleges and cultural awareness within the general education system
- retaining income support for Indigenous higher education students
- encouraging peak organisations in the private sector to establish targets and/or strategies for employing more Indigenous people

- encouraging financial institutions to adopt culturally responsive banking and financing regimes, to assist Indigenous Peoples' access to business capital and financial assistance
- creating economic zones in remote regions to benefit both investors and communities

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Governments, Churches and other bodies that were responsible for the administration and implementation of child removal policies must deliver full and just reparations to the stolen generations, their families and communities, as recommended by the 1997 *Bringing Them Home Report* and establishing a reparations tribunal to deal with this



Photo: www.hreoc.gov.au

- good faith negotiations with representative Indigenous organisations to put in place a formal agreement or treaty to acknowledge and resolve the 'unfinished business' that perpetuates the disproportionate disadvantage of Indigenous peoples
- amending the Constitution to recognise Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders as the first peoples of Australia, so that our legal system can begin to acknowledge and protect the unique civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights and responsibilities associated with that status.
- modifying the Australian legal system to recognise and protect those aspects of Indigenous law and custom that will enhance the delivery of justice to Indigenous Australians
- a native title regime that more effectively meets Indigenous aspirations for land justice and sustainable economic and social development
- all Governments to pass formal motions of support for the 6 recommendations from the final report from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation



Other issue sheets are available online or can be requested via e-mail or telephone:

www.democrats.org.au inquiries@democrats.org.au 02 6273 1059

Printed and authorised by Marianne Dickie, 16 National Circuit, Barton, ACT 2600.