

Indigenous Affairs & Reconciliation

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS & RECONCILIATION INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Australia's Indigenous people face significant disadvantage and inequality in their own land. Many lack the opportunity and basic rights most Australians take for granted. Dispossession, disruption, discrimination and dislocation continue to harm Indigenous children and adults, kinship groups and entire communities

*“Australia's
Indigenous people
face significant
disadvantage and
inequality in their own
land.”*

**Senator Andrew Bartlett
Spokesperson on
Indigenous**

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.

The Democrats believe that the following key points must be given top priority if Australia is serious about closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and if we are to achieve equality:

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



Other ACTION PLANS are available online at
www.democrats.org.au

Last updated 24/08/2007

Indigenous Affairs & Reconciliation

- crime prevention programs, sentencing and diversionary alternatives and restorative justice for both Indigenous victims of crime and to make offenders accountable

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. Senator Bartlett has tabled an exposure draft bill on this issue
- 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



CONTACT US

(03) 9416 1880

Lv 1, 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002

inquiries@democrats.org.au

Authorised by Jack Evans, 5 Poinciana Place, Wanneroo WA 6065
Printed by Senator Lyn Allison, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Indigenous Affairs & Reconciliation

- 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
- there have been more than 200 Aboriginal deaths in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody. The public outcry over Mulrunji Doomadgee's death, and the inadequacies on the responses that followed, served as a tragic reminder with the Coroner's inquest handing down a 40-page report confirming that the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody had been widely ignored
- a native title regime that more effectively meets Indigenous aspirations for land justice and sustainable economic and social development
- the stolen wages issue is a major workplace injustice and it must be resolved by all governments involved. Six unanimous recommendations aimed at resolving this scandal were contained in the report from a Senate Committee Inquiry into stolen wages which was initiated by Democrats' Senator Andrew Bartlett
- all Governments to pass formal motions of support for the 6 recommendations from the final report from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation



CONTACT US

(03) 9416 1880

Lv 1, 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002
inquiries@democrats.org.au

Authorised by Jack Evans, 5 Poinciana Place, Wanneroo WA 6065
Printed by Senator Lyn Allison, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600