



The Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr MP
Member for Mundingburra

Your reference: Petitions
Our reference: C/08/01770
COM 06362-2008

15 DEC 2008

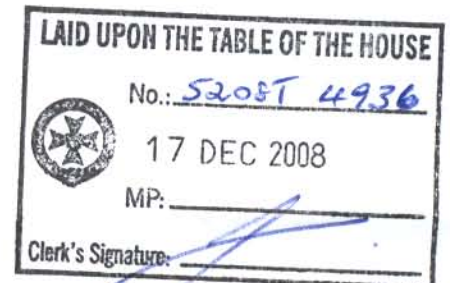
Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Neil



Minister for Communities
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Minister for Multicultural Affairs,
Seniors and Youth



Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2008 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 1153-08 relating to Indigenous wages and savings issues.

In response to the community concerns which are reflected in this petition, regarding the Queensland Government's decision for second round payments under the Indigenous Wages and Savings Reparations (IWSR) Scheme and the establishment of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation, the Queensland Government agreed to reopen and extend the IWSR Scheme to new claimants until 31 January 2009 for Australian claimants and to 30 April 2009 for claimants in Papua New Guinea. This is intended to provide a further opportunity for otherwise eligible people who did not apply in the first round, lodged their application late or refused to accept the original offer, to receive reparations payments.

In light of the revised increased amounts of reparations funding, it is only fair that people who may have been eligible for funding in the first round are given the opportunity to apply for the full amount of funding now on offer. However, the amounts of reparations funding on offer under the scheme will remain unchanged.

Further, the process for determining eligibility will be the same as the first round. While I understand that this will disappoint some Indigenous people, it is important to note that I am assured that there is sufficient confidence in government records to establish, either directly or indirectly, that a person had their wages or savings controlled by the state under a 'Protection Act', warranting payment under the IWSR Scheme.

The Department of Communities will continue to make every effort possible in supporting and assisting people throughout the eligibility assessment process, particularly where people's recollections and supporting records are unclear or ambiguous.

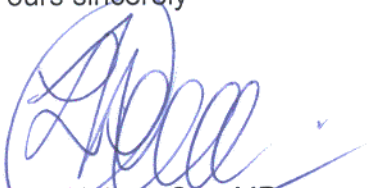
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To allow for the reopening of the IWSR Scheme, the Queensland Government has also agreed to reduce the overall contribution into the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation, setting aside \$6.2 million for extending the IWSR Scheme. Any unspent balance of that amount will go to the Foundation. Importantly, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation funds will remain for the agreed purpose, to assist young Indigenous Queenslanders in providing the best possible pathways to study and pursue careers through the Foundation's scholarships program.

I understand that many Elders and members of the Indigenous community are disappointed with the Queensland Government's decision not to pay out the full amount of unspent funds. However, it is important to note that the Queensland Government has attempted to strike a balance between recognising the historical controls over Indigenous people's wages and moving towards a future that provides sustainable benefits for younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander generations.

If you require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Mr Michael Hogan, Assistant Director-General, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Department of Communities on 3227 7455.

Yours sincerely



Lindy Nelson-Carr MP

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships