

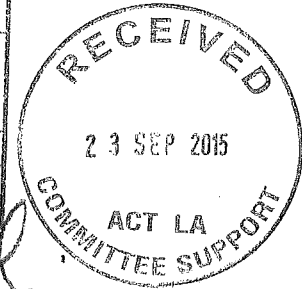


# ACT TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS CORPORATION



Steve Doszpot MLA  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety  
Legislative Assembly for the ACT  
GPO Box 10202  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
SUBMISSION NUMBER	4
DATE AUTH'D FOR PUBLICATION	23.09.15



Dear Mr Doszpot

## Human Rights Amendment Bill 2015

Thank you for your recent letter inviting the ACT Torres Strait Islanders Corporation to consider making a contribution to the Committee's current inquiry into the above.

The ACT Torres Strait Islanders Corporation (the Corporation), was incorporated in 1996 under the Corporations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006. We are a not for profit, volunteer community organisation with the following aims and objectives:

- (a) To promote and encourage the Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture to the members of the Corporation; and
- (b) To maintain the objects of the Corporation through economic, social and educational activities.

Membership of the Corporation comprises of Torres Strait Islander people living in the Canberra and surrounding regions. Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous people, who support Torres Strait Islander people and culture are also welcome as Associate members.

The Corporation each year celebrates Mabo Day, July 1 and NAIDOC Week. Mabo Day falls on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June and we honour the achievements of Eddie Mabo and the Mer (Murray) Island plaintiffs through feasting and dancing. July 1 is the *Coming of the Light*, or the coming of Christianity to the Torres Strait and this is celebrated with a church service, island hymns, feasting and dancing. During NAIDOC Week, we often engage with the wider community to showcase Torres Strait Islander culture. In 2015, the Corporation held a food stall during the ACT NAIDOC Family day and we also participated during the formal proceedings of the ACT NAIDOC Ball.

We do receive Federal and ACT Government funding to celebrate these cultural days. Furthermore, our activities are varied as we have also developed and published a Torres Strait Islander cookbook "Kai kai blo mepla."

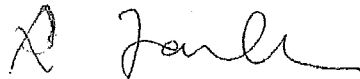
Address: 36 Chippindall Circuit  
Theodore ACT, 2905  
ABN: 19 198 784 219

The above activities are examples of the Corporation practicing *Ailan Kastom*, the body of customs, traditions, observances and beliefs of some or all of the Torres Strait Islanders living in the Torres Strait area, and includes any such customs, traditions, observances and beliefs relating to particular persons, areas, objects or relationships. (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACT 2005 – Section 4).

The Corporation supports the proposed Amendment Bill.

If you have any queries, I can be reached via mobile on 0419 648 404.

Yours sincerely



Samantha Faulkner  
Chairperson  
ACT Torres Strait Islanders Corporation

23 September 2015