

Our ref:

20 April 2007



Mrs Dianne Reilly MP  
Chairperson  
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Mrs Reilly

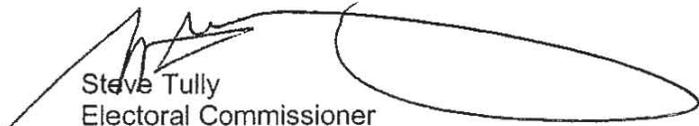
Thank you for your invitation to participate in the interim evaluation of the *Hands on Parliament* recommendations.

Whilst it would not be appropriate for the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to take a role in this evaluation, we applaud your investigation of meaningful ways to engage the Aboriginal community and Torres Strait islanders in the democratic process.

The VEC is actively working on this area itself – we have employed a full-time staff member to concentrate on developing long-term relationships with under-represented groups and specifically, Indigenous Victorians. During the State election in November last year, we also designed a recruitment program to try to recruit Indigenous persons to work in voting centres and had some 10 individuals do so.

Although the election is now well and truly over, we had committed ourselves to ongoing communication with this stakeholder group and have conducted several enrolment sessions in targeted locations. We have also run a focus group with agencies supporting Indigenous communities to attempt to better understand the barriers this group faces in the context of enrolment and voting. This information will be important for our strategy development over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

  
Steve Tully  
Electoral Commissioner