

hand delivered 15 May 2001

His Excellency the Governor  
Sir Guy Green

Dear Sir

As per the letter from your secretary and after consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders of the Lia Pootah Community, our response:

We were hoping for an appointment with your Excellency, so we could make a formal deputation to share information and rectify the existing problem. As this is now precluded, we would like to discuss our problem with your ministers at a meeting. The Elders hope that you will bear in mind that your ministers will have been dealing with people who have no desire to acknowledge, or even take on board any complaint or request that we make. It is from experience at attempting to solve the problem by meeting with various ministers, their advisers, including the Premier Mr Jim Bacon, that our request falls "on deaf ears". It is a problem that is considered too political and too hard for any one to take a stance and allow recognition of more than one Tasmanian Aboriginal Kinship Group (tribe).

As noted in our past letter since 1996 a state of ethnic cleansing has been in progress within the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and this has been sanctioned by the Bacon Government and now by Mr David Farrell in the Election Office. Irrespective how impartial Mr Farrell wants to be it is impossible for him to be so, owing to his mandate, the biased way the electoral office has structured the election, the compulsory advisers that Mr Farrell is compelled to utilise are those acceptable to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

As a community we have found that politically it is considered an Aboriginal problem to be solved within the Aboriginal community, when in fact it is now a political matter, where the second genocide of Tasmania's Aboriginal people is sanctioned by both government inactivity, government approval, and biased legislation and parliamentary acts. Never, anywhere else in Australia, has one line of Aboriginal descent been accepted by any other government or Aboriginal community as the sole line of descent for that Nation of people, or that they are entitled to determine Aboriginality for the entire Aboriginal community, especially when the line of descent is different from their own.

When discussing our problem with your ministers please bear in mind that we have the right to be who we are and the democratic right for our community to be represented on all Aboriginal committees, government advisory boards, panels and where ever else Aboriginal representation is required. This is our democratic right in this multicultural country that we now live in, as is *Natural Justice* that the representative descendants of the original owners have the right to a fair and democratic representation on all panels and advisory committees where

Tasmanian Aboriginality is discussed. That each Aboriginal Community Kinship Group (tribe) be allowed to represent their own Community Kinship Group (tribe).

We, the Lia Pootah people, want fair and equal representation on the Lands Council Committee and the right to vote at this and all other elections. We are requesting your intervention to ensure that we have representation on all advisory committees and panels. Our Aboriginality is historically documented in journals, papers and government records of the invaders. We are accepted and defined by the Commonwealth Government definition of Aboriginality approved by ATSIC and the Federal Court cases. We should have full recognition of who we are in our own right. We should not be forced to have our Aboriginality determined by people who have no cultural link to us, have different Ancestry to ours and have broken ties to the land which is ours by birth and descent. Tasmania needs the whole of its Aboriginal Community working together as it did prior to 1996, and not the unrepresentative same few dictating on matters they are not qualified to determine.

Of the approximately 16,000 Aboriginal people registered with the ABS, only 216 chose to register to vote in the up coming election. Of these ABS registered, approximately 250 Palawa descent people from the Bass Strait islands, Fanny Cochran Smith and Dolly Dalrymple are determining Aboriginality. We the Lia Pootah people have never claimed descent from this lineage and have no Aboriginal ties to this line of descent, so why are we being excluded on the basis of Palawa lineage.

As it stands with the Aboriginal Lands Council elections being held in Tasmania, the broad Aboriginal committee being chosen as an impartial and representative committee is a farce. The intended impartiality is not happening, and while Mr Farrell is developing a committee to define who can vote it is becoming a farce for democracy and Aboriginality. I am enclosing a letter from Mr Farrell showing the type of objections accepted. Objection 2 is a form statement on almost every letter of objection that Lia Pootah people have received. Objection 1 is a conundrum. The objections contravene a lucid argument. I have n idea where the objector resides

While we have the right to lodge an appeal, and will be doing so, we will be judged by Palawa descendants and the TAC definition of Aboriginality as is accepted by Mr Farrell. Irrespective how he crouches his definition of the determination of Aboriginality it is the documented 1996 TAC definition.

One can only ask why we must be accepted by the TAC to be able to vote. On a personal level I went to the precursor of the TAC in 1973, when it was on the Glebe, and spoke to Michael Mansel about tracing my Aboriginal Ancestry. If this makes my Aboriginality a recent invention what does it make those who are now TAC accepted as Aboriginal, where documentation shows they were loudly claiming not to be Aboriginal as late as 1993 but are now accepted.

Our Aboriginality is not in question within our own Nation or 'tribe'. We have never claimed to be part of the Palawa Nation or 'tribe'. We have only ever claimed to be Tasmanian Aboriginal and as such were accepted until 1996.

We hope that you can arrange a meeting so our problems can be discussed and a solution found to our right to be who we are.

Yours sincerely

Kaye McPherson