

Access and equity inquiry

House of Reps Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs is to examine the Commonwealth's strategy

The 10-member Committee, chaired by Mr Garrie Gibson (MP for Moreton, Qld), will inquire into a report on the implementation of the Commonwealth's Access and Equity Strategy in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It will give particular attention to:

- the comprehensiveness of the Strategy;
- outcomes achieved by the Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to date and expected outcomes to be achieved;
- continuing barriers to access and equity;
- the means of overcoming these barriers; and

- future coordination between Commonwealth Departments and ATSIC especially at a regional level concerning ways in which Commonwealth Departments can contribute through the Access and Equity initiative to the achievement of the goals of the Regional Council Plans.

A first public consultation was held in Cairns in early August. The *Cairns Post* (13 August), reporting this consultation, noted that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders miss out on opportunities in all aspects of life because of lack of communication and coordination between government departments.

The report quoted Peter Dodd, MP, a member of the



Mr Garrie Gibson
(MP for Moreton,
Qld)



Committee, as saying: 'We have found there is a lack of information at a ground level. It is obvious communication problems must be addressed.'

The Chairman, Garrie Gibson, added the Committee had been told that although some government departments had been responsive to the access and equity strategy, many had not. In some cases the situation appeared worse now than it was three years ago.

The Committee's work continues, and will entail visits to a number of centres around Australia.



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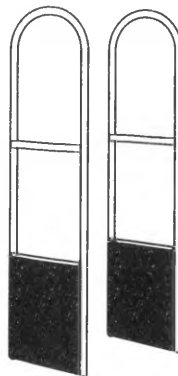
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