



Hon Desley Boyle MP
Member for Cairns



**Queensland
Government**

Your reference: Petitions
Our reference: C/09/00214
COM 00722-2009

**Minister for Local Government
and Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Partnerships**

12 MAY 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 13 February 2009 to the former Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships concerning petition No. 1090-08 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 12 February 2009, relating to Indigenous wages and savings issues. As this issue now falls within my portfolio responsibilities, your letter has been provided to me for reply.

In 2002, in response to community concerns, the Queensland Government made a historic \$55.4 million reparations offer to Indigenous Queenslanders. This offer was not intended as a 'replacement' amount for any money that persons may believe they are 'owed'. It was instead a reconciliation gesture recognising past injustices and seeking to make reparation for them.

Commencing in July 2003, 8761 reparations claims were received, with 5553 eligible claims paid. When the first round of reparations was finalised, a balance of \$35.87 million remained. In 2008, the Queensland Government offered a second round of payments to previously eligible claimants and also agreed to re-open and extend the scheme to new claimants until 30 April 2009, with the unspent balance of reparations funds used to establish the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Foundation.

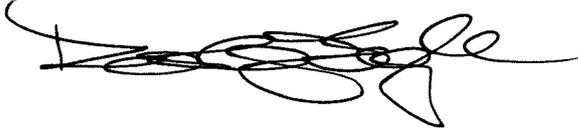
The Queensland Government has allowed for the consideration of oral or affidavit evidence to support equivocal documentary evidence in assessing eligibility for reparations. The Department of Communities will continue to make every possible effort to support and assist people throughout the eligibility assessment process, particularly where people's recollections and supporting records are unclear or ambiguous.

In making these decisions, the Queensland Government has attempted to strike a balance between recognising and responding to historical controls over the wages and savings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and moving towards sustainable benefits for younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander generations through the Foundation's scholarships program.

Level 18 Mineral House
41 George Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15031 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3227 8819
Facsimile +61 7 3221 9964
Email lgatsip@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

If you require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Pauline Peel, Deputy Director-General, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Department of Communities on 3235 9495.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Desley Boyle', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Desley Boyle MP
Minister for Local Government and
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships