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Parliamentary Committee breaches own Act

A State Parliamentary Committee tasked with building stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities has been in breach of its own Act for more than six months.

The Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee has a statutory requirement to report on its work before 31 December each year.

The Committee has not yet reported for the 2007/2008 financial year. Nor has it provided Parliament with any explanation for its failure to do so.

UnitingCare Wesley is concerned that while Aboriginal organisations are often publicly criticised for failing to meet reporting requirements, no one holds parliamentary committees to account.

“Just last month, [the ABC reported](#) on Aboriginal organisations operating in breach of federal laws for having failed to lodge reports for the 2007/2008 financial year. Nothing was said about non-Aboriginal organisations,” Mr Jonathan Nicholls, Manager Indigenous Policy and Advocacy observed.

“It seems unfair that a spotlight can be shone on the activities of a tiny, cash-strapped Aboriginal organisation while the workings of a well-resourced Parliamentary Committee go unchecked and unnoticed,” he continued.

“Let’s be clear, we’re not saying Aboriginal organisations shouldn’t be accountable. We’re highlighting obvious inconsistencies and calling on those who make our laws to lead by example,” Mr Nicholls commented.

The Aboriginal Lands Standing Committee is chaired by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon Jay Weatherill MP). Its core functions include reviewing the operation of the *APY Land Rights Act*. The Committee last reported to Parliament in February 2008.

UnitingCare Wesley is calling on the Standing Committee to table its 2007/08 report as a matter of priority.

Further comment

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