

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the bi-partisan support for the abolition of ATSIC, Indigenous people have had aspiration for a new representative model. This desire has come from the acute need to have a voice at the national level that can represent the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and offer alternative advice to government on matters that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The ALP has had a policy of supporting a national representative body since it supported the abolition of ATSIC. Now that they are in power, the issue remains on the table.

Moving forward to develop a new model will require analysis of representative bodies in the past, looking at the strengths and weaknesses of different bodies that sought to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or to act as an interface between governments and communities.

This collection of materials seeks to inform the debate about a new representative body – what it will look like, what functions it will take on, whether it will be an elective or appointed body, how it will build on the lessons from the past.

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