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ATSIC and Indigenous Women: Lessons for the Future

Megan Davis*

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^{*}University of New South Wales

ATSIC and Indigenous Women: Lessons for the Future

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Abstract

After eleven years of a Coalition government there has been a change in government at the Federal level and with the election of Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister there is a renewed sense of hope and optimism about the future of Indigenous affairs in Australia. The Prime Minister has fulfilled one of the key ALP election promises in Indigenous policy by delivering a national apology to the Stolen Generations. Another election promise the Federal government has indicated it is yet to fulfill is to establish a national representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is an important policy because of the representative vacuum that has existed since the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2005. There is much to be learnt from previous bodies and those lessons are crucial to constructing a sustainable representative body that has the trust of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. This paper turns to the question of what lessons can be learnt from ATSIC. More specifically, the paper is concerned with how Indigenous women fared under the representative and policy structure of ATSIC.

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Keywords

Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Indigenous women, Indigenous policy

