

The Hon. J.W. Howard
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2060

December 2004

Dear Prime Minister

I would like the opportunity for Paul Briggs, John Cusack, Alan Thorpe, Pat Dodson and myself to meet with you, the Prime Minister of this nation, to discuss some of the problems that continue to trouble the indigenous communities of Australia.

If there's one thing I've learned in my years on the sporting field, it's that Australians believe in fair play. I believe that you now have the opportunity to show good sportsmanship by acknowledging that us Aboriginals are important players in the make up of the national team.

As indigenous Australians, we want nothing more than any other Australian citizen wants: a safe place to live; the fair opportunity to work for a decent living and for our children to be guaranteed health, education and a secure future. We ask you to go back to the scoreboard to look at Aboriginal life expectancy and unemployment and to work with us to kick some goals on these issues.

In football, many different teams make up the code. They each have their own identity and traditions. There will always be differences between clubs and this is celebrated and respected. We share a common bond that unites all Australians.

As the first Australians, however, we are unique on the Australian landscape and wish to preserve our identity as such.

As the leader of this country, Prime Minister, you are the only person who can give permission to the Australian people in communities across Australia to embrace us. We believe that the Australian people will follow your example and embrace our culture and concerns when they are guided by the strong leadership that only you and your government can provide.

We all wish to see the appalling conditions of Aboriginal people improve and we want to play our role in achieving outcomes through self-determination.

Like our walk to Canberra, we are all on a very long and hard journey, but a journey that we are prepared to overcome and achieve. Prime Minister, we'd like to sit down with you to determine a way forward for our people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Long', written in a cursive style.

Michael Long