



REFERENCE: 2019-19/CESCR/FU

1 April 2019

Excellency,

In our capacity as Chair and Rapporteur for follow up to concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights respectively, we have the honour to refer to the examination of the fifth report of Australia at the Committee's sixty-first session, held in June 2017. In the concluding observations (E/C.12/AUS/CO/5), the Committee requested Australia to provide, within 18 months, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16(b), 18(b), and 32(c) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report (E/C.12/AUS/CO/5/Add.1) received in December 2018 under its follow-up procedure. The Committee examined the report at its sixty-fifth session, held in March 2019, and wishes to communicate the following assessment:

Paragraph 16 (b): Sufficient progress on the recommendation to “refresh the Closing the Gap Strategy”, noting in particular Government’s commitment to “work collaboratively and in genuine, formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – as these are the essential agents of change”. The Committee requests information on the implementation of the renewed Closing the Gap Strategies in the context of the next periodic report of the State Party.

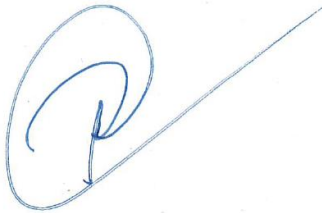
Regarding the recommendation to “implement other programmes to respect, protect and realise the rights of indigenous peoples, in close consultation with indigenous representative bodies and civil society,” the Committee is of the view that it lacks sufficient information to make an assessment, noting submissions received from organizations working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, highlighting the various challenges they continue to face in the enjoyment of their rights under the Covenant.

Paragraph 18 (b): Insufficient progress. The State Party’s follow-up report in respect of this recommendation indicates that it has not made any significant changes to its policy regarding regional processing arrangements for processing asylum claims. The State Party is urged to provide additional information in its next periodic report on steps taken to implement this recommendation.

Paragraph 32 (c): Insufficient progress. The State Party's follow-up report indicates that compulsory income management schemes and welfare conditionality policies remain key features of Australia's social security system. The report does not indicate that significant action has been taken in response to the Committee's recommendations, and requests the State Party to provide additional information on progress made in implementing this recommendation in the context of its next periodic report.

The Committee looks forward to continuing its constructive dialogue with the Government of the Australia, with a view to providing it with assistance in its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Covenant.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.



Renato Zerbini Ribeiro Leão
Chair
Committee on Economic, Social
and Cultural Rights



Sandra Liebenberg
Rapporteur for follow-up
Committee on Economic, Social
and Cultural Rights