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FAX IN

Dear Mr Foley

I feel that I should respond personally to your letter to Ms Wildermuth of 15 August.

I trust that your comments were meant humourously and I would be concerned if they were not.

As you will recall, Ms Wildermuth spoke to you by phone on 8 and 9 July. She had just returned to work after two months absence and had been told of your concerns about the Review's consultations in Victoria and your 26 May fax to me. On both 8 and 9 July Ms Wildermuth offered to arrange an additional meeting in Victoria with you and others nominated by you, and to bring me down from Yirrkala to attend. Given the very tight timetable for the Review's consultations, and difficulties with my availability because I was consulting for the Review in the Northern Territory and had other commitments, I think Ms Wildermuth was right to respond to your fax by phone, rather than by mail, so that things could happen quickly if you wished.

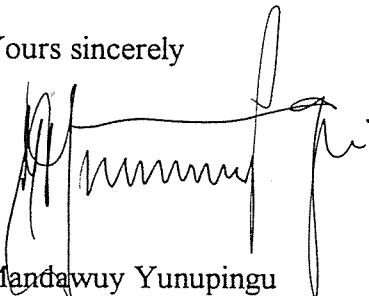
As you will also recall, you refused this offer on both the occasions it was put to you.

I, and other members of the Reference Group, share your concerns about the efficiency of the administration of funds for education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, about the large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who don't participate in secondary, vocational or higher education, and about the adequacy of financial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community schools. The Review has now received over 170 submissions and members of the Reference Group overseeing the Review have met with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country in the course of their consultations. These themes are common in both the submissions and in the consultations.

Let me assure you that this Review is not, as you write, 'yet another exercise in bureaucratic 'damage control' and public relations'. It is a real opportunity to identify what works and what doesn't in education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to make changes that lead to better educational experiences for all our people. Many of the submissions and comments made at meetings have been frank and honest, and many creative and imaginative solutions to our problems have been put forward.

It saddens me that we apparently can't work together to fix these problems; arguments between us are not in the best interests of our people. For my part, I have always been willing to listen to any constructive suggestions that you may wish to make.

Yours sincerely



Mandawuy Yunupingu  
Chair, Reference Group overseeing the Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander People.

18 August 1994