



AUSTRALIAN SENATE
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Statement by Senator Susan Ryan, Minister Assisting the
Prime Minister on the Status of Women

ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S TASK FORCE

An Aboriginal Women's Task Force will be established within the Office of the Status of Women to consult with Aboriginal women in communities around Australia.

In National Aborigines Week it is particularly important to identify areas where Aboriginal consultation and participation can be improved.

The Task Force will be seeking Aboriginal women's views on a wide range of issues including land rights, culture, health, housing, education, employment, legal aid and adoption and fostering of Aboriginal children.

Task Force members are Phyllis Daylight and Mary Johnstone. Ms Daylight, was born in Queensland and is an Education Officer with the Department of Education and Youth Affairs in Darwin where she has lived for six years. She will be taking up duty in Canberra soon. Ms Johnstone, originally from Yass, NSW, is already working in the Office of the Status of Women preparing the Task Force's program of consultations. She was formerly on the staff of Medibank Private in Melbourne and Sydney. They will work closely with the women members of the National Aboriginal Conference and the Federation of Aboriginal Women. The National Aboriginal Conference has already endorsed the establishment of the Task Force.

The most important objective of the Task Force is to ensure that Aboriginal women themselves identify their own needs.

The Task Force's recommendations will be based on the views of Aboriginal women. This will add a vital new dimension to government planning and programs, and be a first step in ensuring that the views of Aboriginal women are taken into account in the formulation and implementation of government policy.

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