Path to Treaty Bill 2023

Submission No:	2
Submitted by:	Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

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Parliamentary Committee
Inquiry into Path to Treaty Bill 2023

To the Committee,

The Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art writes in support of the proposed Path to Treaty Bill as an important part of our journey of truth-telling and treaty towards reframing and strengthening the relationship between Queensland's First Nations people and the wider community, in view of creating a better Australia.

QAGOMA endorses the stated objectives of the Bill which are to establish:

- a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for and then commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland Government, and
- a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into, and report on, the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

QAGOMA was established in 1895 and as such was born as a colonial institution, however over the last decade QAGOMA has strived to play an important contemporary role in the promotion and recognition of the creative visual practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, The Gallery has also been committed to increasing employment and commercial opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, reimaging representation and past histories, embedding Indigenous values into our business, and seeking to increase shared promotion and caretaking of their cultural material within our gallery and wider sector.

The Gallery has presented 40 First Nations exhibitions since GOMA opened in 2006 and has dedicated galleries for the display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in both QAG and GOMA. Since 2016, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have also comprised 50%+ of the Australian Art collection display at QAG.

The Gallery understands the need to have First Nations Australian speak to their culture, work, and art. QAGOMA appointed its first Indigenous Art Curator in 1995; has a dedicated curatorial section of Indigenous Australian Art as well as Indigenous staff in other gallery departments. The Gallery's activities are guided by our eight-member Indigenous Advisory Panel established in 2017 and QAGOMA is in the second year of its endorsed Reconciliation Action Plan at Innovate level.

QAGOMA's Collection strength is in contemporary Queensland-based artists, many of whom are fearless in their portrayal of Australia's post-colonial history. Artists such as Judy Watson, Megan Cope, Gordon Bennett, Tony Albert, Richard Bell, Fiona Foley, Vernon Ah Kee, Gordon Hookey, D Harding, and Jennifer Herd often directly confront the impact on Indigenous lives and communities caused by historical factors such as:
  - the inter-generational trauma resulting from the dispossession and dislocation from Country brought by colonisation;
  - the role of the Queensland Native Police Force in suppressing Indigenous resistance to early settler encroachment;
  - the harrowing but little-known stories of massacres, for which there was little to no state sanction.

- o the forced removal of children from their families, between the years 1910 to the 1970's, better known as the Stolen Generation;

In giving access to the art and voice of such artists QAGOMA is an important platform for truth-telling through acquiring and displaying artworks, and presenting programs, which tell revealing stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, culture, and histories.

QAGOMA appreciates this Path to Treaty is a long but important road. Gallery executive members have attended both Interim Truth and Treaty Body workshops relating to the Queensland Cultural Centre organisations and stands willing to continue this good work for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

With thanks,

Simon Elliott
Deputy Director, Collection and Exhibitions