

Path to Treaty Bill 2023

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Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane Qld 4000
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Sharon Smith - Submission re Path to Treaty Bill 2023

Ms Corrine McMillan MP, Member for Mansfield (Chair)

Dear Ms McMillan,

I wish to make a submission re the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. Unfortunately, due to the short time line offered for submissions, there is little time to include all the things I would like to say. However, let me start by saying that this is an incredibly important bill, long overdue, but in need of serious consideration and involvement by all Queenslanders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as well as non-Indigenous Queenslanders. If done correctly, this could and should change our state for the better.

Having worked in the Health area in Indigenous communities over a period of 10 years, I am aware of the importance of good communication with Indigenous Peoples. This all goes to building trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and as the State which has consistently been so untrustworthy to these people (as a recent example, the overriding of the Human Rights Bill for the Breach of Bail legislation) this is imperative. I am therefore concerned about what level of communication has so far occurred and what communication methods are being planned for the future with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

I understand from family members and friends who are Aboriginal that they have very limited knowledge of the Path to Treaty Bill. It has not been communicated through Indigenous channels, e.g. Murri Radio, Aboriginal Corporations, Aboriginal Legal Centres, Aboriginal Health Centres. There are many and varied options for this to have and continue to be happening. What attempts have been made to simplify language or to translate language, for people where English is not their first language or where education has been limited.

As a non-Indigenous Queensland, I would also ask where has the communication with us has been. I attended the Path to Treaty Parliamentary function in August last year and the Path to Treaty lunch this year. However, I can truthfully say that there has been very little, if any. information to the public about this. How are we supposed to engage with this?

There are three sides to this treaty process – the State, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. For this to be successful, we all have to be informed and engaged with this process. I believe that there needs to be a concerted effort for better communication that reaches all Queenslanders if we are to have a meaningful and constructive Path to Treaty Bill and on Truth Telling and healing.

Yours sincerely,

Sharon Smith

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