



*Kalwun Development
Corporation Limited*

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LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
COMMITTEE

The Research Director
The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee
Parliament House
George street
BRISBANE QUEENSLAND 4000.

Guy C Jones
Kalwun Development Corporation
P.O Box 2123
NERANG QLD 4211

27 March 2003.

RE: Submission to the "Hands on Parliament."

Committee members,

As an Aboriginal man I am encouraged by the interest shown by this Government in the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in the Democratic process.

I have perused the document regarding the various suggestions as to the increased participation of the indigenous members of the community in the Queensland Democratic Process.

Whilst some of the ideas are not without merit there are some which give me serious concerns.

I can not object too strongly to the concept of having the chairperson of ATSIC given observer privileges within parliament. Whilst ATSIC do play a major role within the communities they do not represent, I believe, to any great extent the needs, wants and desires of the average person within the wider Aboriginal community.

What is needed is an independent representation at the parliamentary level. Designated seats, given to three areas, being Northern, Western and Southern Queensland, would give representation to the peoples of these three major areas.

These seats being taken by representatives of the given area, being persons not already representing their communities at ATSIC. I believe that these people are giving their communities representation in the ATSIC sphere of influence. The person who represents them at a parliamentary level should be a person independent of ATSIC, giving the communities a greater opportunity for representation and the potential to have more than an ATSIC dominated point of view.

The persons holding these seats should be given observer privileges within the parliament, as mentioned within the suggestions.

Persons should hold the seats in the first instance, who are selected by the parliament.

The applicants to be nominated by a Member of Parliament.

Persons already elected to an ATSIC position should be excluded from the selection process for the previously mentioned reasons.

Persons with criminal history should also be excluded, as I believe this would compromise the integrity of the position.

In this style of selection, there would not be the distrust of some members of Aboriginal Communities, who have been elected to positions within ATSIC. I believe that general members of the Aboriginal Community would be more inclined to speak without the fear of retribution, with a representative, who has the ability to voice their concerns,

I believe that the formation of an Aboriginal Parliament would be a waste of considerable resources, in what would inevitably do little towards producing effectual outcomes.

Whereas an integrated parliament would be an opportunity for members of the community who have little or no input to the system to have their say. I believe it would generate interest in a system that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples traditionally have not partaken.

Once the designated seats were in place, at the next State election these seats could be added to the ballot. Whilst the seats are to be occupied by Aboriginal and Torres Strait members, the voting for these people should not only open to Aboriginal peoples, but to all the people of Queensland.

By having the designated seat option on all ballot papers, so that it is an optional extra, each voter has the option as to voting for the designated seat or not.

Voting for the designated seat would not be compulsory and would therefore not then preclude the voter from the choice for their preferred candidate in their given seat.


In this way the vast numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples, who do not normally turn out to vote, would be more inclined to have their say on polling day. By having the designated seats voted upon on the same day as a normal election it not only increase the participation rate, the State is spared the exorbitant expense of a separate polling day in an ATSIC style election.

Further with the ability of non-indigenous members of the community to vote it demonstrates willingness by the wider community to accept the aboriginal peoples as part of the community.

The role of the designated seats could include interaction with the Minister as to a more fluent introduction of legislation that would have a direct effect on the lives of the Aboriginal Peoples of Queensland. The seats could act as a direct conduit for the Minister, to get information from the source, rather than through a long bureaucratic process.

In this role the designated seats could also incorporate an investigative role, so as to give the Minister advice regarding the success or otherwise of government funded programs within the Aboriginal community. This I believe would demonstrate to the wider community that Aboriginal peoples want to eradicate corruption and waste from within their community

The Government has demonstrated, by this call for submissions, that it is concerned as to the level of participation of the Aboriginal Peoples and that it has a genuine desire for reconciliation throughout the State. I believe that with consultation and agreement, this process could see a far greater level of participation by the indigenous peoples of Queensland.



Guy Jones
Prevention, Diversion & Rehabilitation
Program Co Ordinator
Kalwun Law and Justice.