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Comments on Issues contained in the Issues Paper

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LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW  
COMMITTEE

1. What are some of the reasons that Indigenous peoples are underrepresented in the Queensland Parliament?

*I believe that some reasons Indigenous people are and have been underrepresented in the past is because of a lack of awareness through education. These kind of things have not been apart of our society. So the relevance of having a representative is not needed.*

2. What are some of the reasons that indigenous people might choose not to be involved in Queensland Parliament and Government?

*I think that it's to do with the fact that it hasn't been easily accessible, as in the opportunities to get involved haven't come around.*

3. What factors make it difficult for Indigenous people to participate in Queensland's system of democracy?

*One main factor is that Indigenous people don't understand or have enough knowledge to be able to participate. When you don't have much of an understanding of something you tend to withdraw yourself from what ever it is.*

4. Is more civics education and voter education targeted specifically to Indigenous people necessary?

*Yes. These types of education programs will make an enormous impact on the whole community. If its designed for Indigenous people it will make a huge difference because it's aimed at them for them.*

5. What other strategies might promote greater participation by Indigenous people in the existing democratic process?

*I really like the idea of political parties recruiting young indigenous members of the community.*

6. Would avenues for bodies which represent Indigenous peoples to have direct input into Parliament enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in the Parliament?

*Probably, yes.*

7. Is it a good idea to enable bodies which represent Indigenous peoples to have direct input into parliament? Why or Why not?

*Somewhat yes, it depends on what body. If you have the same body representing all the time, such as ATSIC, you will probably get the same people, which doesn't necessarily give a fair, equal or representative view of what the community wants.*

NO 14

8. If a representative body with direct input into Parliament was to be established how should it operate? For example:
- who should be on the representative body?
  - what forms of direct input should the representative body have?
  - What else would be necessary to ensure Parliament considered matters raised by the representative body?

*If there was to be a representative council it should have an equal number of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.*

9. Would an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly contribute to the participation of Indigenous people in the democratic process in Queensland?

*I don't think so. It would just be the same people making the same decisions for both Indigenous peoples when really nothing is been contributed from the people.*

10. Is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly a good idea? Why or Why not?

*I don't think it's a good idea. It would tend to segregate the community rather than getting them involved. It would be just creating a whole different assembly rather than getting the community involved with the Parliament.*

11. If an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly was to be established, how should it operate? For example:

- How should members of an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Assembly be selected?
- What would be the specific role and functions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly?
- How should the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly have input in the Queensland Parliament?
- What else would be necessary to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly contributed to representation of Indigenous people?
- Would one Assembly be appropriate, or should there be separate Assemblies for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders?

*N/A*

12. Would dedicated seats enhance the participation of Indigenous people in the democratic process in Queensland?

*Possibly.*

13. Are dedicated seats a good idea? Why/ why not?

*No. If you want to be involved in something you need to be treated fairly, trying to make dedicated seats is a good idea up to the stage where it actually becomes a disadvantage.*

14. If dedicated seats were to be introduced, how should they operate? For example:
- how many dedicated seats should there be?
  - in what ways, if any, should the role and functions of members in dedicated seats differ from members in other seats?
  - how should members in dedicated seats be selected?
  - should people who vote for members in dedicated seats also be able to vote for members in their general electorate?

N/A

15. Should there be a referendum about the introduction of dedicated seats?

*No. Why should there be a referendum if its directed toward Indigenous people. If it is going to affect the rest of Australia, why not just have the one assembly and just involve more indigenous people like as in recruitments and cadets.*

16. Should Queensland electoral system seek to achieve representation of minority groups in Queensland?

*Yes, shouldn't it be doing that anyway?*

17. Should the electoral system be reviewed to ensure that it is the most effective electoral system to represent the diverse interests of the Queensland community?

*I would like to think that it has been. If its not working then maybe it does need to be reviewed. The system should be already trying to represent the diverse interests. If you are not getting the results you want then you might just need to review it.*

18. Would a different electoral system be likely to ensure greater representation of Indigenous peoples?

*Maybe, it depends what kind of electoral system.*

19. What other strategies could be used to enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in the democratic process of Queensland?

*Some thoughts and ideas:*

- *Education/training*
- *Media*
- *Identity – Torres Strait Islanders/ Aboriginals recognition of both cultures*
- *Negativity e.g. View of Parliament*
- *Equal Opportunity e.g. equal representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders*
- *Access to information*

- encouragement/ support
- community issues
- Youth Parliaments
- Involvement and Recruitment
- Members involvement in the community e.g. what they stand for, representing

*Its a question of what can you do for me? what have you got to offer me? How?*

*I also think in the community you need some kind of role model say elder or even someone in the community that can represent them, someone to lead the way and get involved first. I know with Torres Strait Islander people that if one person does something like that, the rest of the community will follow or recognise it and thus well get involved.*

*I haven't really seen any campaigns that directly targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people directly. As in not enough to get involved or have a say.*

20. What strategies would best achieve enhanced participation of Indigenous peoples in the democratic process in Queensland?

*I really like the idea of political parties recruiting young indigenous members of the community.*

*Mainly the key is education. Not enough education and awareness about this kind of stuff is around or available in the community or even being promoted in the community. I think that it's a lot to do with how the media has portrayed indigenous people in the past and how we have been represented in society by political issues. Rather negatively which has formed peoples views, so they just don't want to get involved.*

- *Lack of trust. A lot of issues have plagued the relationship between governments and Indigenous people, as in, reconciliation and sovereignty of Indigenous people. So I can understand why people would not want to get involved with something that hasn't supported them in the past.*
- *More Indigenous Youth Forums where Indigenous youth can discuss issues like this with equal representation. Then have like another Forum with community leader and elders and representatives from the government to discuss and put the issues and the suggestions into practice.*
- *Civics and voter education ideas sound good. Political party encouragement is a great suggestion. I believe that it would definitely encourage more Indigenous involvement. I'm sure lots of Indigenous people want to have a say and want to be involved in government decision making but need some sort of encouragement or support.*



- Also I think the mentoring programs would be a good start for Indigenous people to get involved. If you know someone that's already involved of course your going to feel more comfortable and more inclined to get involved yourself. For instance, it is just like going to a party with people you know, if you know them you will be more relaxed, if you don't you just want to go home and not stay because you know nothing about them.
- Indigenous Cadetships within parliament, I know in N.S.W there is already Indigenous cadetship programs that have been selected by sections within Parliament and are being trained, to have deeper knowledge about Parliament and what is done in Parliament. It is a great idea cause not only does the cadet learn more but the cadets family and extended family become interested which leads to the cadet being able to inform them about Parliament.

The idea of a community committee is really good. This way the community can have a say without feeling intimidated because it will be community based.

Disagree with the idea of letting the ATSIC Chairperson with the right to:

- have observer status in the parliament
- speak to parliament on bills affecting Indigenous interests
- make an annual report on Indigenous Affairs

Also disagree with the idea of the creation of Indigenous Parliaments for Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people to decide matters govern areas or advise the Parliament and the dedicated seats for Indigenous people in parliament. I guess this kind of segregates the community rather than getting them involved, like if you have a Indigenous Parliament then your making two different things where as it should just merge with one.