



LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

## **HANDS ON PARLIAMENT —**

**A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN QUEENSLAND'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESS**

### **Feedback form**

This feedback form can be used to make a submission. Alternatively, submissions may be made in another form such as a letter.

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## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

1. What are some of the reasons that Indigenous peoples are underrepresented in the Queensland Parliament?
2. What are some of the reasons that Indigenous people might choose not to be involved in Queensland's Parliament and government?
3. What factors make it difficult for Indigenous people to participate in Queensland's system of democracy?

In parliament there should be two Aboriginal reps & one T.I rep to stand as an advocate for Indigenous peoples rights, but at this time there is no representatives to stand on our behalf who understand the needs of Aboriginies, due to a lack of trust because of a system that has unfairly judged, and discriminated against the Aboriginal people and our cultural beliefs as "terra nullius." this has left a gap of racism, bureaucracy and propaganda, this Parliament has left our people weary of placing trust back in a government that has done little to assist our democratic rights.

In previous past Aboriginal people have not voted because of these few reasons that I've stated, other people may have different views towards why very few Aboriginies vote, also there is a electoral fine for people who don't vote, this also would stop a person from voting in the future unless this Government considers to annul these ideals about fines, no Aborigine who hasn't voted will not vote in the future. It isn't worth a thousand dollar fine for one vote.



#### STRATEGY 1: ENHANCE PARTICIPATION IN THE EXISTING PROCESSES

4. Is more civics education and voter education targeted specifically to Indigenous people necessary?
5. What other strategies might promote greater participation by Indigenous people in the existing democratic process?

I feel that it to be important for Indigenous people to be educated in how to vote correctly. Civiely our duty is to be aware of what the government can do for us a minority population and what the Government expects from us as Citizens and learning about voter education, Will explain how our opinion Will be taken into consideration allowing us the right of expression both these are necessary to Indigenous people who wish to make a change, the only way available today. This is how we benefit as a population.

Just to basically know that All original issues are being promoted in Parliament might be enough to arouse curiosity among our people (elders) to come forward and participate in the voting process.



## STRATEGY 2: DIRECT INPUT INTO PARLIAMENT

6. Would avenues for bodies which represent Indigenous people to have direct input into Parliament enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in the Parliament?
7. Is it a good idea to enable bodies which represent Indigenous peoples to have direct input into Parliament? Why or why not?
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 these organisations shown where to empower the indigenous people and they were willing to do so as a direct input to Parliament then I believe it to be beneficial for Indigenous affairs and would enhance the participation of Aborigines in Parliament. If these issues of Indigenous affairs were represented by a direct committee in Parliament this would allow for special attention to particular matters and recommendations to be responded by the Minister. Considerations for a body to represent these issues must understand the complexity of our needs + culture they must be willing to be committed to the cause of Indigenous. Native Title, Land rights and Cultural respect, they should demonstrate their ability to do so respectively, this should happen when issues arise of concern to deal with when the matter's appear.



### STRATEGY 3: AN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ASSEMBLY

9. Would an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly contribute to the participation of Indigenous people in the democratic process in Queensland?
10. Is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly a good idea? Why or why not?
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 and 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 Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders

An Aboriginal & T.I assembly would contribute immensely to Indigenous participation. Aboriginal people would feel their being represented by people who should understand their needs and having them fulfilled democratically. The members should be selected by attributions they have done for Aboriginal Com's in the past yrs they should be aware of the Aboriginal Culture and the correct protocol of Parliament. This would be so that they could very easily identify the proper channels, to use to have direct input into Parliament this is so that democracy can serve its purpose. How we do this is by following the protocol of Parliament; those ~~(being)~~ issues to be discussed in Parliament should be notified to the Public as a notification to the Councils of Elders and Indigenous Communities, so that we can be updated to know what's being

said and what's not being said so that we can elect the

right people in and out of <sup>31</sup> position those who do not represent ~~(the)~~ us to best of their ability. Aboriginal & T.I have different Cultures so yes!

#### STRATEGY 4: DEDICATED SEATS

12. Would dedicated seats enhance the participation of Indigenous people in the democratic process in Queensland?
13. Are dedicated seats a good idea? Why or why not?
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?
15. Should there be a referendum about the introduction of dedicated seats?

If this ensures that our voices and our views are represented by Government law then yes it would enhance the participation, then we know that we have choice and a voiced vote. This would be a good idea if it came to pass. I think that many established Aborigines would be more willing to participate in that kind of democracy. The amount of seats should depend on the issues on how many seats were made available and who would use the seats maybe 10 seats 5 Aboriginal & 5 Torres Strait persons. Their roles should be for the purpose of bettering Indigenous circumstances their functions should not differ from any other member if the Queensland Parliament is dedicated to fixing those areas that need to be fixed. The people should be elected by the people for the people, this too should be their right to vote in a General election also & Basically a referendum is a waste of time, those dedicated seats change be introduced by law to call a referendum will only prolong the process.

#### STRATEGY 5: CHANGES TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

16. Should Queensland's electoral system seek to achieve representation of minority groups in Queensland?
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?
18. Would a different electoral system be likely to ensure greater representation of Indigenous peoples?

Well the minority no matter how small is still a very important group of any state, the state of Tasmania has the better voting electoral system than the rest of the Australian States being a minority in itself it works for the benefit of minority groups. Diversities are the things that make us different, with different needs not every community needs the same attention, communities as well as people should be treated individually. A different electoral system would have to be reviewed it's said to be likely to have some advantages and support by some sections of the community, but unknown to us are the consequences of changing (~~the~~) the system and looking for the most effective system that works. if it was changed to have the minority represented, then of course there is a better chance that Indigenous people would vote to have their say democratically.



#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

19. What other strategies could be used to enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in the democratic process in Queensland?
20. What strategies or combination of strategies would best achieve enhanced participation of Indigenous peoples in the democratic process in Queensland?

I think that mostly every thing to be considered has been, I feel that as long as the Government is genuine about including all communities of Indigenous people in Q.C.D) to participate in the democratic process + all the correct information is handed out to representatives for Aboriginal + Torre Strait members of assembly to review and the right people are elected to seats who will assist us to aid our people and the State of Queensland.

Deborah Bradshaw

