

Tania Jackman

No 44

From: Samantha Faulkner
Sent: Thursday, 26 June 2003 9:39 AM
To: LCARC
Subject: Submission

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LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
COMMITTEE



QLD parliament
inquiry feedback...

The Research Director,

Please find attached my response to the Qld Parliament Inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the parliamentary process.

I am a Torres Strait Islander woman living in Canberra but represented on the following national boards:

Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board (Member for NSW/ACT)
National Secretariat of Torres Strait Islander Organisations Limited
(Director for ACT)

I am very interested in the inquiry and would be keen to hear the outcomes reached. I can be reached at work on 02 6289 5362 if you have any queries in relation to the submission.

Regards,

Samantha Faulkner

(See attached file: QLD parliament inquiry feedback form.doc)

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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

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

Mail to: The Research Director
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee
Parliament House
George St
Brisbane Qld 4000
Fax: 07 3406 7070
Email: lcarc@parliament.qld.gov.au

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?
1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may be under represented in the Queensland Parliament due to lack of interest, unaware of the political system. Also, the western worldview is essentially different to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview.
2. As above. Also the system may be difficult to negotiate with a number of different levels. Also, there may be a perception of lack of support.
3. As above.

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?
4. Yes. With civics education it is unclear how long this has been in place and whether all schools participate. Voter education should be continued and targeted specifically at children, adults and parents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be employed in the campaigns.
5. As discussed in the Issues Paper, and also specifically inviting groups to view the sitting of the Queensland Parliament and fellowships to Queensland Parliament. Schools should also be encouraged to visit Parliament.

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?
6. Yes it would, ensuring that the representative body/ies represents all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 7. Yes, to ensure true representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 8. Representation on the representative body would most likely include ATSIC elected representatives. However, it should include local community leaders and ensure representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Torres Strait Islander people are often overlooked when it comes to representation of both Indigenous peoples.

Forms of direct input that the representative body should have include legislation that have direct impact or may be of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

To ensure Parliament considered matters raised by the representative body it is suggested that a review and evaluation be completed on a regular basis to ensure the system is working well as intended and to examine ways to improve the system.

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
9. Yes, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly would contribute to the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the democratic process in Queensland.
 10. Yes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly is a good idea to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a voice and that their views are represented.
 11. Representation should include gender (men and women), youth, elderly, and Torres Strait Islander specific. This could be done through election or nomination.

The specific roles and function should be similar to that outlined in the Issues Paper. The Assembly should have real power and strength and not only be symbolic.

The Assembly should have input as outlined in the Issues Paper.

The Assembly should report to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community each year.

Furthermore, there should be a separate Assembly for Torres Strait Islander people. The numbers exist to support a separate Assembly and Torres Strait Islander people are often subsumed in the overall Indigenous (Aboriginal) population.

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?

12. Yes, dedicated seats would enhance the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the democratic process in Queensland.
13. Yes, dedicated seats are a good idea as they provide an avenue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to raise matters of importance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
14. The number of dedicated seats should be in proportion to population numbers. There should be dedicated Torres Strait Islander seats too.

The role and functions of members in dedicated seats should be no different from members in other seats.

Members in dedicated seats should be selected through an election process.

Yes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should vote twice.
15. No, there should not be a referendum.

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?
16. Yes, otherwise it is not truly representative of all constituents.
17. Yes, the electoral system should be reviewed on a regular basis and incorporate recommendations that would enhance the current system.
18. Perhaps, it would be good to consult widely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland and nationally. It would be useful to further investigate other international Indigenous models of representation.

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?
19. Undertake specific consultations with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community at a state and national level.
20. As above.

Your personal details:

Full Name: Mrs Samantha Faulkner