

Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Inquiry into Truth and Justice Commission Bill 2024

Dear Committee Secretariat,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live on Wardandi Noongar Boodja. I am grateful to have a home in this country that has been looked after for over 65,000 years by careful and loving custodians. I'm proud of our heritage and consider Australia lucky to have such a rich First Nations history. It is my hope that we can become a nation that supports and celebrates this culture.

I recall the benefit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa that allowed people to tell their stories after apartheid was abolished. I am certain that we need something like that here. I want to hear the truth. I want to hear the stories that Australian First Nations Peoples have been holding onto for years. I want to be able to lighten their load by hearing the stories.

I wholeheartedly support the Truth and Justice Commission Bill 2024 which would establish a national Truth and Justice Commission to inquire into and make recommendations to Parliament on particular matters relating to historic and ongoing injustices against First Peoples in Australia and the impacts of these injustices on First Peoples.

I really want to be part of this: to witness the testimonies and to support Indigenous Australian's ideas for change. I want Australia to stop repeating mistakes. I would love it if all Australian's took time to read the very generous Uluru Statement from the Heart – if we all did that, I am sure there would be absolutely no problem in everyone endorsing the set-up of a Truth and Justice Commission.

Based on all the ham-fisted interventions non-Indigenous Australians have forced onto First Nations people, I am certain that First Nations communities must exercise their right to self-determination and make decisions that are best for their peoples, communities and futures. I fully agree that governments must relinquish control and to hand meaningful decision-making power back to First Nations communities, where it belongs.

Information that I have read confirms that the national Truth and Justice process must be strengths-based in order to counter stereotypes of First Nations communities as disempowered. A national truth-telling process must centre and increase public awareness of First Nations culture, community and connection to Country so that these can play a more central role in contemporary Australia.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry and sincerely hope the points I have raised will be considered.

Sincere regards

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