

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 Frances Kelly.

I live now on Kurna land but was born and raised on Barngala country where in my entire childhood and early adolescence I never saw , or heard of anyone belonging to that nation.

As a child of possibly eight years of age I read in a local magazine that two Aboriginal men were hanged and buried under what I knew then as the Franklin Harbour hotel. For the crime of stealing a sheep . My child mind was horrified by this story knowing even then the injustice of this.

The land of Eyre Peninsula had been entirely cleared of those who had lived on it according to law for very likely the past 100,000 years. Nurturing and nourishing it and which to this day has never been ceded by that or any other First Nation group. And a fact I now know to be true of this entire country now called Australia.

I grew up enveloped in this horrifying 'sin of silence' .

But then all this is known which is why I make this submission in support of this Act . An act which seeks to establish a 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 impact of these injustices.

The six million who voted YES in the referendum know this too or enough of the brutal appalling history of invasion - not settlement.

The terms of reference as outlined in the bill are comprehensive and I believe cover the arenas within which these atrocities occurred.

And I applaud the authors of this bill for their thoroughness in ensuring such inclusion. I applaud them also for outlining criteria for ensuring personal safety of information contributors as for the first time an accurate history of the dreadful and shameful truth is told and assembled .

I am responding to this enquiry into Truth and Justice with an understanding that this is a commitment already made and heard by this nation when Mr Albanese as new PM took office following the last election,

It is embedded within the Uluru Statement from the Heart. A commitment to this statement has been made which must now be honoured.

The remaining millions of my fellow Australians who either didn't vote or voted NO too have a right -a need in fact to learn this history.

And no other way to achieve this than to proceed with this undertaking via a 'Truth and Justice' commission -action as provided by this bill

There is no question that this issue should of course be a bipartisan issue. Which it clearly is not. Every Australian has the right to know their true history .

I thank the committee for this opportunity to respond to this inquiry and I speak on behalf of my 6 million fellow YES voters when I say that this Inquiry into Truth and Justice must be actioned at the earliest.

Yours sincerely

Frances M Kelly