

14 March, 2001

Anson Bay Road
NORFOLK ISLAND

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

FAX NO : 00612 6277 8506

Dear Sir/Madam,

Inquiry into the Norfolk Island Electoral Matters

I am very worried about the Parliamentary inquiry to be held next week, as it seeks big changes to the electoral roll which will destabilise the way we govern ourselves, and will further threaten the culture and traditions of the Norfolk Island people.

The two main parts of the proposed changes will allow only Australian citizens to vote and be elected, and will allow T.E.P's to vote after a very short qualifying period.

To disallow long-term residents who are not Australians the eligibility to stand as a candidate for the Legislative Assembly, or to vote in our elections if they are not already on the roll, is blatant discrimination which I strongly object to. It has been OK for years and years – what's the reason for trying to change it now?

To allow T.E.P's to vote and stand as candidates for the Assembly is quite alarming as most T.E.P's are transient people with little interest in the long term future of Norfolk Island. When last calculated, eligible T.E.P's would account for around 17 – 18% of the electoral roll. Allowing them to participate in running the Island will surely begin to cause instability, and will harm the longer-term wishes of the Norfolk people to gain full self-government. This cannot be allowed to happen.

Another couple of hundred T.E.P's added to the electoral roll will greatly diminish the percentage of Pitcairn descendant's voices in any decision about the Island's future. I hope that this is not a deliberate move by Canberra to achieve this? Bob Ellicott in 1979 said our laws could be different to Australia's, and we agreed!

I am keen to encourage our people to kick-up about these changes, and to tell the Inquiry that no changes should be allowed to happen. Our government asked us our opinions about this more than once. Most of us told them at referendum that no changes were wanted. The story is still the same!

I would be happy to appear before the Committee when they are here in Norfolk Island.

Yours sincerely,

GGF (Greg) Quintal MBE