

# APPENDIX 2



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA

Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC  
Deputy President of the Senate  
Chair of Procedure Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator McLachlan

In the Senate chamber on Tuesday 21 March Senator Thorpe was ordered to remove a prop by a temporary chair, while speaking to a matter of public importance.

Senator Thorpe made a statement by leave the next day, in the following terms:

Yesterday, while talking to a matter of public importance, I was ordered to remove a prop: the message stick I brought into the chamber with engravings for lives lost through deaths in custody—441 lives. I would like to state to this chamber that a message stick is not a prop. It is a means of communication for my people. It is no different from the pieces of paper, the mobile phones, the iPads et cetera that everyone is allowed to carry in here. I would like to point out that the move was disrespectful to my people and culture and undermines cultural safety in this place. I will therefore approach the President and seek to find a way forward to ensure the practices in this place are respectful to First Nations people.

This is by no means the first time a senator has sought to use cultural artefacts as part of proceedings, although generally this has been for ceremonial purposes. These occasions have generally been facilitated by senators informally seeking the President's prior approval. You and I have discussed formalising this process to a degree, by ensuring senators seeking to use cultural artefacts as part of proceedings seek the agreement of the President and Deputy President to do so. I thought it would be appropriate to refer this arrangement to the Procedure Committee for discussion.

Yours sincerely

Senator the Hon Sue Lines  
President of the Senate

Thursday 29 March 2023