

**Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Inquiry into the Truth and Justice Commission Bill 2024  
Responses to Question on Notice – Public hearing, 15 October 2024, Thornbury  
Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations**

**QUESTION 1 (Page 30)**

CHAIR: It feels like I'm jumping around a bit because we don't have lots of time. In your submission you raise concerns about the punitive and judicial nature of section 4 on offences. What do you see are the risks? Can you unpack some of your concerns?

Mr Paton: I am just trying to think to that part of the submission now. Do you mind if I have a look at that?

CHAIR: You are very welcome to have a look at your notes. You're also very welcome to provide an answer on notice, if that assists.

Mr Paton: Yes, I will take that one on notice.

**ANSWER**

Our views on this go to what we see as the original purpose of a Truth and Justice Commission - which is to acknowledge, investigate and document the policies, decisions and activities by successive governments that have impacted and continue to First Nations people in Australia.

First Nations people should not be compelled to appear as witnesses and any action to do so risks total disengagement with the process from the community. Governments must be accountable to its citizens and therefore government officials must be compelled to appear before a Commission otherwise it risks government avoiding transparency and accountability.