

The Secretary
The Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal & Torres Strait
Islanders
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

(by email)

Dear Ms. Matulick,

My thoughts have evolved a good deal over the past few months and I ask your indulgence please to make a final supplementary submission and to disregard my earlier efforts.

I support the ideas of the Cape York Institute, the Uphold and Recognise organisation, and Professor Twomey and I would like to see our Constitution amended as follows :

Acknowledge, in the body, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (ATSI) as the original inhabitants of the continent and its islands.

Repeal Section 25.

Redefine Section 51(26) as an indigenous power from its current all persons power.

Add a new Chapter empowering Parliament to establish an ATSI standing body to advise it on up-coming laws affecting ATSI.

My reasons for supporting the above amendments are :

No-one can doubt the historical truth that ATSI inhabited Australia and its islands for millennia prior to British colonisation and that they had their own systems of governance which were ignored and replaced by the settler's systems, by force when necessary.

No subsequent immigrant group or descendants thereof had this indignity visited upon them, which puts ATSI in a unique place in the evolution of Australian public administration.

So it is entirely appropriate that the Constitution enable Parliament to address the above aspect of ATSI uniqueness by having a power to make laws for ATSI alone and to be guided in doing so by an ATSI advisory body.

In due course it is likely that Parliament will bring forth an Act (or Declaration) of Recognition but it is not necessary for an amended Constitution to require this.

I wish the Committee well in its difficult and essential task.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Nolan