



Background Sheet 1: Impact on First Nations' Peoples

People's Inquiry: Exploring the Case for an Independent and Peaceful Australia

What are the costs and consequences of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the US-alliance?

Impact on First Nations' Peoples

Although there have been articles written concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the many facets of relationship with military activity, most have been discrete articles. There has been little opportunity to gain an overview of the multiple perspectives and little informed comparison of the benefits or drawbacks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The emphasis in many of these articles has been on reaction to an event, policy, legislation or media report at a local level. The People's Inquiry provides an opportunity to hear the diversity of issues and experiences and gain a more integrated perspective.

Much of the dialogue in the media has fallen into the 'Pan Aboriginal' model, or alternatively, a response from an affected

group without taking into account the wide variation of differing experiences.

Sovereignty and self-determination are real issues in the discussion. There are people who have negotiated the use of their land for the launch of communication satellites and on terms they find reasonable. In another state, people have had similar but more permanent operations imposed on them without proper consultation or consent. In Queensland land was 'returned' under Native Title but access has been restricted and damage to sites continues due to use for international military exercises. The Inquiry presents an opportunity to hear commentary from those involved and draw from the enriched comparative knowledge.

There are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples involved in the military who contribute financial and skill assets to their communities. Other communities suffer from appropriation of land and fear for the

environment they are the custodians for. Per and Poly Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFASS) and other water contamination being a common example.

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Consultation matters when relationship to land is so fundamental to cultural integrity, ceremony, access, sites, usage, food, water safety, environmental impacts, financial considerations, climate change... the list becomes long.

This Inquiry gives a chance for diverse situations to be compared so that in the future, policy and action may be expressed less as supposed opinion and more from informed understanding.



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