

AGENDA ITEM 4 THE CONCEPT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

IN JANUARY OF 1994, THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF NORFOLK ISLAND DECLARED THEMSELVES TO BE INDIGENOUS IN KEEPING WITH THESE FOUR GUIDELINES;

1. THE PITCAIRN SETTLERS OF NORFOLK ISLAND ARE A PEOPLE WITH A DISTINCT ORIGIN, A DISTINCT LANGUAGE, A DISTINCT HISTORY, A DISTINCT CULTURE AND A DISTINCT TRADITION

2. WE WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE AS A WHOLE PEOPLE TO LIVE IN NORFOLK ISLAND AS A PERMANENT HOMELAND. ALL PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT (VARIOUS POLYNESIAN PEOPLES AND TWO BRITISH PENAL COLONIES ) HAD BEEN ABANDONED. BUT WE HAVE ENDURED. NORFOLK ISLAND IS OUR HOMELAND AND REGARDED BY US AS SUCH.

3. FOR THE BEST PART OF 150 YEARS WE HAVE BEEN GATHERING WHALE BIRD EGGS , MOUNTAIN RUSH ,M'UU , FLAX AND OTHER PLANT FIBRES AND FOODS FOR OUR TRADITIONAL PURPOSES .

4. BECAUSE WE ENJOY A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR LAND , ONCE A YEAR WE GIVE THANKS TO THE CREATOR FOR THE BOUNTEOUS GIFTS OUR HOMELAND OF NORFOLK ISLAND PROVIDES US .

NO ONE , ANYWHERE , WHETHER THEY LIKE THE WORD INDIGENOUS OR NOT , CAN DENY THESE FOUR POINTS .

THESE FOUR POINTS WERE TRUE 45 YEARS BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA CAME INTO EXISTENCE . THEY ARE THE

FACTS UPON WHICH WE DECLARED OURSELVES THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF NORFOLK ISLAND .

EVERY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HAS ITS OWN FACTUAL GUIDELINES DEFINING ITS INDIGENOUSNESS . WE INDIGENOUS OF NORFOLK ISLAND FIRMLY BELIEVE WHAT AUSTRALIA HAS ALREADY SAID IN THIS FORUM , AND I QUOTE ; "AUSTRALIA DOES NOT CONSIDER A DEFINITION OF INDIGENOUSNESS NECESSARY , SINCE THIS WOULD LIMIT THE FLEXIBILITY CRUCIAL FOR SUCH A COMPLEX REALITY . AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS SELF-IDENTIFICATION , INCLUDING RECOGNITION BY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AND DESCENT ."

THERE REALLY IS NO MORE TO BE SAID .

THE CONCEPT OF INDIGENOUSNESS CANNOT , AND MUST NOT , BE DEFINED . YET THERE ARE MANY STATES WHICH HAVE SUPPORTED THIS VIEWPOINT HERE IN THIS FORUM , WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY REFUSING TO RECOGNISE SOME OF THEIR CITIZEN PEOPLES AS INDIGENOUS , EVEN WHEN THOSE PEOPLES HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES TO BE INDIGENOUS ON FACTUAL GROUNDS . TO THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF NORFOLK ISLAND , AN ATTITUDE WHICH MAKES ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE . IT GIVES WITH ONE HAND , AND TAKES AWAY WITH THE OTHER .

BUT WE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE WORLD HAVE ENDURED , AND WILL GO ON ENDURING . THANK YOU .