

**Submission
No 4**

**INQUIRY INTO HIGH LEVEL OF FIRST NATIONS
PEOPLE IN CUSTODY AND OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW OF
DEATHS IN CUSTODY**

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Overpolicing of Aboriginal communities is an ongoing problem, and leads to high levels of unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system. Aboriginal young people are targeted for just hanging out in parks or in shopping centres and face serious penalties for offences which their non-Aboriginal peers would receive only a warning. All of this contributes to overrepresentation of First Nations people in prisons. Families deserve to know that if their loved one dies in prison they will be heard and a proper independent investigation will occur – including inspection of where their family member died, interviews of all witnesses including fellow inmates, and that they will be told of the progress of this inquiry. Independent oversight is needed of all Aboriginal deaths in custody to ensure those responsible face justice. Not a single police officer or prison officer has ever been held responsible for a single one of the more than 435 deaths in custody since the Royal Commission, or the thousands of deaths before that time. This is a crime in itself, a national and international disgrace. It speaks volumes of the structural and institutionalised racism that exists throughout the law and justice system.