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30th November, 2000
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Mr Grant Harrison (Secretary),
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I am writing to lodge my objection to the well established government practice of signing international treaties without consultation with the electorate. It seems that the current treaty under consideration is the Statute of the International Criminal Court. I have not read any details of the ICC, but from comments of those who have, it would appear that it is in line with many other treaties and gives power over our affairs to people who do not live in Australia.

Recently I was involved with a group of water users who are concerned about the effects of the United Nations Agenda 21 Chapter 18 agreement signed in 1992, which gave Australia's water to the United Nations.

Our group had a site at the Australian National Field Days at Orange, which we used to inform people of the area about the loss of ownership of our water resources because of an international treaty. We handed out in excess of 1,800 flyers. Most recipients were completely ignorant of the treaty and/or its effects on our ownership of water. A number of farmers were aware of changes to water legislation in New South Wales but did not link that to a foreign treaty.

If the Government in the future informs ordinary Australians of the contents of these International Treaties with as much gusto and expense that was applied to the GST, the Australians would respond accordingly and reject any such agreements where we are giving away our right to govern ourselves.

Federal Parliament, through the long term effect of these international treaties have been changing our Constitution without referenda. We are being denied our independence, step by step, treaty by treaty,

There was much debate during the referendum on the republic that Australia should be governed by our own elected Head of State, as against the present system where we owe allegiance to the head of a foreign country. I wonder why those who used that argument are not up in arms against Australia giving allegiance to unknown foreign boardroom bureaucrats.

I urge your committee to recommend that the terms of any proposed international treaties be widely publicised so that ordinary Australians will have an opportunity for debate.

Yours faithfully,

RJ (Bob) REDFERN