

14 May 2019

Mr Paul Wright
National Director
Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation
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Dear Mr Wright,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes billions of dollars of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and more.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO AUSTRALIANS FOR NATIVE TITLE AND RECONCILIATION

The Morrison Government is committed to closing the gap and achieving health equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Morrison Government is making a significant investment of \$4.1 billion in Indigenous health from 2019-20 to 2022-23, representing an ongoing increase of around four per cent per year and we have committed an additional \$10 million in this year's Budget for the Lowitja Institute to support Indigenous health research.

A re-elected Morrison Government has also committed \$34.1 million to strengthen Indigenous youth suicide prevention measures including support for Indigenous leadership that delivers culturally appropriate, trauma-informed care as well as services that recognise the value of community and protective social factors. Our support includes \$19.6 million for measures to prevent Indigenous youth suicide in the Kimberley.

The Morrison Government remains committed to improving the delivery of our investment in remote Indigenous housing and we will do that in partnership with Indigenous Australians because housing is a critical factor in indicators which impact Closing the Gap, such as health and education.

We are also committed to ensuring that state and territory governments take up their responsibility for housing in remote Indigenous communities just as they do for every other community, town or city in their state.

The Morrison Government has already delivered significant remote housing investment across including \$550 million to the Northern Territory, \$121 million to Western Australia and \$37.5 million to South Australia. Importantly, this funding leverages funding from state and territory governments for example \$550 million matched investment from the Northern Territory Government delivering a record \$1.1 billion investment over the next five years.

A re-elected Morrison Government will invest \$105 million in remote housing in Queensland direct with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shire councils. The Morrison Government offered \$105 million to the Queensland Government to partner and deliver houses for remote indigenous communities in Queensland however the Queensland Government refused to engage or accept our funding. We offered the Queensland Government remote housing funding on 26 June 2018 and repeated that offer on 13 December 2018 and 25 February 2019 yet they continually refused to negotiate, and moreover failed to explain in any detail their own limited investment in remote housing.

Our commitment to invest \$105 million direct in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shire councils will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have control over their own housing and can make decisions about how that money is invested including in relation to local employment and contracting.

In relation to justice and Indigenous incarceration, the Morrison Government is committed to using all Commonwealth levers to reduce Indigenous offending, victimisation and

incarceration by tackling the drivers of crime, including alcohol and drug misuse, poor educational outcomes and unemployment.

The Morrison Government is providing over \$245 million a year through the *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* for activities to improve community safety and address the drivers of Indigenous incarceration. This includes funding to reduce recidivism, justice reinvestment projects and strategies to address the incidence of family violence and support for victims of family violence.

In addition, the Commonwealth is funding frontline Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services throughout Australia, including a Custody Notification Service in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

A re-elected Morrison Government would continue to advocate for other state and territory governments to take up the Commonwealth's funding offer for this critical service to reduce tragic deaths in custody.

The Morrison Government remains committed to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Constitution. The recognition of First Australians in our nation's founding document would acknowledge our shared history and the value we place on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

We also acknowledge the importance of telling and sharing our nation's story, especially the history and culture of the oldest living culture on Earth. Supporting a process of truth telling and healing is an important part of our nation's journey to reconciliation.

A re-elected Morrison Government would implement the recommendations of the bi-partisan *Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (chaired by Julian Leeser MP and Senator Patrick Dodson).

The Joint Select Committee recommended that further work was needed to clarify a model for constitutional recognition and how it could best suit the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

To deliver on this recommendation, the Morrison Government is providing \$7.3 million for the comprehensive co-design of models to improve local and regional decision-making and options for constitutional recognition. The Government will engage and consult with Indigenous communities, organisations and leaders across Australia to deliver this important work.