

Tuesday 2 December 2014

ANTaR welcomes New South Wales support for constitutional recognition

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights advocacy organisation ANTaR today welcomed the formal backing from the New South Wales for constitutional recognition of the First Australians.

National Director Andrew Meehan said “We congratulate the New South Wales government on backing constitutional recognition and urge other States and Territories to follow suite and demonstrate their support.”

He said that public support had been growing for sometime, and that greater political support from the States and Territories would build on that momentum.

“We have an historic opportunity to finally recognise the First Australians in the nation’s founding document and address racial discrimination which should be seized by the nation,” he said.

He said that alongside further State and Territory support, a clearer pathway to a referendum, and a ramping up of efforts to get us there by early 2017 at the latest was now needed.

“We need a clear timeframe and process for finalising the words for a proposal, and an agreement to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about those words.”

Regarding the proposal Mr Meehan said that it must be substantive and address racial non-discrimination unless otherwise agreed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“We remain positive about the prospects for finalising a proposal supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that would succeed at a referendum.” He said.

He urged Federal Government to work with the Opposition to clarify the pathway by the end of the year and commended political parties for maintaining bipartisanship.

ANTaR is the only non-Indigenous organisation dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and working to educate the wider community, shape public opinion, and speak up for justice, rights and respect for Australia’s First Peoples.