

## MEDIA RELEASE



Wednesday 28 November 2012

### **Bill of recognition marks next step on the road to referendum**

**ANTaR welcomes the introduction of a bill to establish an Act of Recognition and the establishment of a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee as significant advances on the road to a referendum to recognise Australia's First Peoples.**

"Today's developments will provide impetus to the people's movement and a structure and process for community engagement in the lead up to a referendum," said Jacqueline Phillips, National Director.

The establishment of a Joint Select Committee has attracted support from all parliamentary parties.

"We welcome the spirit of multi-partisanship that has enabled these advances in the movement for constitutional recognition."

"The importance of multi-partisanship cannot be overstated. This is critical to ensuring referendum success and must be maintained throughout the process."

The Joint Select Committee's first task will be to consider the bill for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution. Its longer-term task will be to secure multi-party support for the process and model of reform.

"It is vital that the Committee engages closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and works to build support for change in the broader community. It is also vital that the Committee gives the work of the Expert Panel the enormous respect it deserves in developing a model and process for reform."

ANTaR emphasised that the joint committee and the bill must be seen as steps along the road to a referendum.

"The bill must be seen as a statement of intent for future substantive reform. We therefore welcome the sunset and review provisions to ensure that the bill of recognition is not seen as a substitute for constitutional change, but as a step along the road."

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