

MEDIA RELEASE



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Constitution Day call for election commitment to reform

On National Constitution Day, ANTaR calls on all major parties to make an election commitment to seek reform of the Australian Constitution to recognise the specific status and rights of Indigenous peoples.

“It is time to deal with the unfinished business of reconciliation, including recognising the unique status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our nation’s Constitution,” said Dr Janet Hunt, ANTaR President.

This year’s Constitution Day falls in NAIDOC week, a time of recognition and celebration of Indigenous achievement. This year marks the 110th anniversary of the birth of the Australian Constitution in 1900.

Ten years ago, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation made key recommendations for reform of the Australian Constitution. These included:

- the development of a new preamble which recognises the status and history of Indigenous Australians;
- the amendment of the race power to authorise the Commonwealth to make special laws only for the benefit of a particular race; and
- the inclusion of an equality and non-discrimination clause.

“The Council’s recommendations set out a blueprint for the reconciliation process, including reform of the Australian Constitution. Ten years on, and constitutional reform remains unfinished business”, said Dr Hunt.

“The Australian Constitution fails to recognise the unique place, history and rights of Indigenous peoples.”

“It offers no protection against racial discrimination, and it has been interpreted as enabling governments to legislate to the detriment of Indigenous peoples”, Dr Hunt said.

“ANTaR calls on all major parties to make an election commitment to a process of constitutional reform as an essential part of the reconciliation process”, said Dr Hunt.

ANTaR launched a year of re-commitment to reconciliation in May as part of the [Are we there yet?](#) campaign, with a focus on constitutional reform.

ANTaR is the pre-eminent non-Indigenous national advocacy organisation dedicated specifically to the rights - and overcoming the disadvantage - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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