

MEDIA RELEASE



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Expert Panel announcement an important step on the road to Reconciliation

ANTaR has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of an expert panel to help progress the Constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples.

ANTaR's National President, Dr Peter Lewis, said the extensive experience and broad range of views amongst the Panel's membership will significantly enhance the prospect of a successful outcome.

"Constitutional recognition of the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original sovereign custodians and owners of the lands and waters of Australia would be an important step along the path to resetting the relationship between all our peoples," Dr Lewis said.

"Such recognition needs to create a pathway to addressing the unfinished business of reconciliation by implementing all the recommendations of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's final report, handed down ten years ago."

"We are pleased that the Expert Panel has been given a broad mandate to consider a range of reform options and consult with Indigenous communities and the broader Australian public."

"It is in the interests of all Australians that the referendum question that is put to the people at the end of this process is as comprehensive as possible and is supported by a substantial majority of the community."

"To get full value out of this process of community consultation and debate, all of the barriers to full equality for Indigenous Australians should be identified. In addition, the significant benefits to our nation from a successful referendum on this important issue should be highlighted."

"It is critical for our national maturity that we all engage with this process to consider the questions of our national identity and reframe that identity to transcend the nation's racist origins and really close the gap."

"ANTaR looks forward to working with the Expert Panel and participating in this important debate. We encourage all Australians to do the same."

Media contact: Peter Lewis (National President) – 0400 586 617; Jacqueline Phillips (National Director) – 0423 773 395

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