

MEDIA RELEASE



31 May 2012

ANTaR urges all Australians to “talk recognition”

This National Reconciliation Week, Australia marks two historic anniversaries - 45 years since the 1967 referendum and 20 years since the *Mabo* decision. To mark this year’s theme, ANTaR urges all Australians to reflect on the importance of recognising the First Peoples in our nation’s founding document.

“This is a week to celebrate historic milestones in our reconciliation journey, but also to look to the future,” said Jacqueline Phillips, National Director of ANTaR.

“Constitutional recognition is this generation’s opportunity to acknowledge the important place of the First Peoples’ in our nation’s history and identity and commit to a future free from racial discrimination.”

“With more than 270 events scheduled across Australia celebrating the National Reconciliation Week theme, ‘Let’s Talk Recognition’, and the recent backing of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the momentum for change is building.”

“This momentum must be maintained by our political leaders and supported by a broad coalition of business, community and religious leaders.”

“We must seize the current opportunity to make these historic changes and ensure this referendum has the best chances of success.”

The timing of a referendum should be negotiated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, mindful of the Expert Panel’s recommendations that it be preceded by a properly resourced public education and awareness campaign and the ‘widespread concerns’ about holding a referendum at the same time as an election.

ANTaR welcomes Premier Weatherill’s commitment to formally recognise the First Australians in South Australia’s Constitution as another step towards national recognition of the prior occupation, cultures and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“Joining NSW, Queensland and Victoria, a majority of States will recognise the First Australians in their founding documents for the first time in our history.”

ANTaR has recently launched a Supporters’ Kit to educate and inform Australians about Constitutional Recognition. To find out more go to: http://www.antar.org.au/constitutional_recognition

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