

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **Social Justice Commissioner reports show governments the way forward**

**ANTaR welcomes the reports being launched this morning by the Social Justice Commissioner, Mr Mick Gooda, which offer government a roadmap to working more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**

“The Social Justice Commissioner’s reports highlight the vital principle of ensuring informed consent is provided by Indigenous people for proposed policies and programs which directly affect them,” said Ms Jacqueline Phillips, ANTaR National Director.

“The reports show that informed consent is not just an abstract principle, but is the most effective pathway to eliminating poverty and closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.”

“Last year, the Senate unanimously agreed that ‘free, prior and informed consent is a fundamental human rights principle for Indigenous peoples’. It is crucial that, having supported this resolution, all political parties now demonstrate that their actions are genuine.”

ANTaR supports the Social Justice Commissioners recommendations to reset relationships, implement the Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and achieve constitutional reform.

“ANTaR endorses the Social Justice Commissioner’s call for all parties to participate in good faith in the process to recognise the unique status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The referendum offers us a rare opportunity to achieve historic change together as a nation.”

The Commissioner has also drawn attention to ongoing racial discrimination under the Northern Territory Emergency Response, highlighting compulsory leases over Aboriginal land. These leases have been obtained by government without free, prior and informed consent, contrary to our international human rights obligations.

“ANTaR backs the Commissioner’s recommendation to reform the NTER legislation to prevent further compulsory leases and to deliver on its commitment to transition existing leases to voluntary leases.”

“The Commissioner’s recommended reforms of the native title system to ensure free, prior and informed consent, fair and sustainable benefits for traditional owners and a level native title playing field should be immediately progressed as a high priority by Government.”

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

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