

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

## **Report an important step towards a referendum to recognise First Peoples**

Advocacy organisation ANTaR said the tabling of the Final Report of the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was another milestone in moves towards a referendum.

National Director Mr Andrew Meehan said the Report formed an important part of the national conversation needed to finalise a proposal to put to a referendum.

"What's been needed for some time has been greater clarity of process, especially regarding discussion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on proposals.

The Report will play an important part in that, and will hopefully push government to work with First Peoples to clarify how that process will occur," Mr Meehan said.

Noting that further discussion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the proposals was required, Mr Meehan said that it was positive to see that the Expert Panel's proposals were included in the Report, especially in relation to racial non-discrimination.

"The Expert Panel engaged across the country in 2011 and found overwhelming support for its recommendations which go beyond symbolic recognition, so it's right that these continue to play a central role in taking the issue forward," he said.

He said that ANTaR looked forward to the response from government to the Report, and agreement to a clear process for conducting a national discussion on finalising a proposal.

*ANTaR is the only non-Indigenous organisation dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and working to educate the wider community, shape public opinion, and speak up for justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.*

**Media contact: ANTaR National Director, Mr Andrew Meehan**