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**Media Release**

## **HOW WILL CHANGES TO THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT AFFECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE?**

- **Experts outline the potential impacts of the repeal of section 18C**

*Sydney, 3 June 2014* - The Federal Government's plan to repeal section 18C from the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) and its impact on Indigenous Australians will be the focus of an expert panel and public forum at UNSW this Wednesday (4 June).

A panel consisting of Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Tim Soutphommasane, barrister Dr Sarah Pritchard SC and Indigenous artist Bindi Cole will discuss the proposed changes and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Indigenous Law Centre Director and UN Expert Member, UNSW Professor Megan Davis, will chair the forum. She says the event is an opportunity to inform the broader community about the RDA and what the proposed changes mean.

"There has been a lot of commentary and debate surrounding section 18C and its alleged impact on free speech," Professor Davis says. "The aim of the forum is to provide community members—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—with the facts about the legislation and proposed changes, from some of Australia's leading experts in the field."

Dr Tim Soutphommasane, from the Australian Human Rights Commission, says it's important that Australian society sends a strong signal about racism being unacceptable.

"This includes having effective laws against racism, including against racial vilification. I have made very clear my serious concerns about proposals to amend the RDA.

"Any weakening of laws against racial vilification may encourage a minority of Australians to believe they can abuse others on racial grounds with impunity," Dr Soutphommasane says.

Members of the general public are invited to attend the forum hosted by the Indigenous Law Centre and UNSW Law School.

The forum will be followed by the launch of the Indigenous Law Bulletin and Australian Indigenous Law Review at UNSW. RSVP essential: [ilc@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ilc@unsw.edu.au)

**What:** Open Forum: The proposed changes to the Racial Discrimination Act and the impact on Indigenous Australians.

**When:** Wednesday 4 June, 6pm

**Where:** GO4 Lecture Theatre, Law Building, UNSW Kensington campus.

**Media Contacts:**

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