

MEDIA RELEASE



1pm, 19 January, 2012

An historic step towards recognition and equality

ANTaR congratulates the Expert Panel on its extensive community consultation and detailed report and endorses its recommendations for recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's Constitution.

"The Expert Panel's historic report presents a sound and practical proposal for bringing our Constitution into the 21st Century," said Jacqueline Phillips, National Director of ANTaR.

"Despite their political differences, all Panel members have united behind the report's recommendations to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and remove racial discrimination from our Constitution."

"The Expert Panel has recognised that existing powers to make laws that exclude people from voting and discriminate on the basis of race are offensive and unnecessary. They have no place in a contemporary Constitution."

"The Panel has brought together prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders from across the country with representatives of the major political parties, independents and Constitutional experts."

"This diverse panel has travelled the country in some of the most extensive community consultations in living memory."

"Panel members have united behind language that is simple, cautious and clear. Its balanced approach respects the unique status of Australia's First Peoples, the oldest continuing culture on Earth, but rejects the discredited concept of race as a basis for law-making."

"This is a practical proposal which Australians from across the political spectrum can unite behind."

"These historic recommendations have the backing of the Australian people; recent Newspoll reports show that 80% of Australians support amending our Constitution to prevent racially discriminatory laws."

“This proposal represents an historic opportunity to fulfil the promise of the 1967 referendum and remove racial discrimination from our Constitution. With the passage of this referendum, we can start a new chapter in our nation’s history.”

To find out more go to: http://www.antar.org.au/constitutional_recognition

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