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Australians Must Support Constitutional Reform

Simple Measures give equality for all Australians

Congress says Australians who support equality and fairness in our Constitution should support recommendations to change the nation's founding document.

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples put its full support behind the final report of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians released today.

"The message from this report is clear, it's time to eliminate racism from the Australian constitution and to prohibit racial discrimination," said Congress Co-Chair, Jody Broun.

"If taken to Referendum and passed, these reforms will establish the Constitution as a pillar against racism.

"This report is the culmination of months of public consultations and over 3,000 submissions with careful consideration of the best way to achieve successful and meaningful recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"It is imperative that Australians make an informed decision when voting in any future Referendum on this issue. Congress encourages everyone to read the comprehensive report and join us in supporting the recommendations.

"We call on our political leaders to be brave in taking the country forward on this issue," she said

Congress Co-Chair Les Malezer said Constitutional recognition was one of many long term goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"Although these reforms are substantive, Congress acknowledges that they do not address calls for a treaty or greater protection of the rights.

"A Referendum will not achieve those aspirations, so we are recommending simple, logical and just changes that can be supported by a majority of Australians.

"They will not diminish or extinguish the campaign for self-determination to be the standard to be met by all governments.

"Along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' sovereignty, these issues must be dealt with separately.

"Our Members and Delegates have already decided Constitutional Reform is among the top Congress priorities. Congress Members want us to have a major role in promoting Constitutional reform, in consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and in educating the whole community on the issues involved. We have remained committed to their views during this process," he said.

Congress will be encouraging everyone to read the full report, understand the issues and political challenges, and then add their own voice to achieve Constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples.

Read the full report at youmeunity.org.au

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