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Constitutional recognition—another step in our reconciliation journey

Reconciliation Australia believes that recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution would prove a huge boost for reconciliation.

Welcoming the report from the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Chief Executive Officer Leah Armstrong said recognition and reconciliation go hand in hand.

“Working together and engaging in ongoing discussions about the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a modern Australia is part of the reconciliation journey,” Ms Armstrong said.

“Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in our nation’s founding document is a further way to demonstrate the valued place of the First Australians in our national identity.

“Both the Panel’s research and our own Australian Reconciliation Barometer tell us there is an appetite for change that brings the Constitution into line with our modern thinking and values of equality for all Australians.

“Racial discrimination is no longer accepted in our community, in our workplaces and in our daily lives, and it makes no sense that parts of the Constitution continue to permit laws that can discriminate against anyone on the basis of race,” she said.

Constitutional reform has been on the reconciliation agenda since the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation’s final report in 2000, and Ms Armstrong applauded the Panel for a tremendous job in canvassing a broad range of views and opinions and receiving well over 3,000 submissions.

“The Panel has deliberated far and wide and I strongly urge all Australians to read the report so informed debate and discussions can continue,” Ms Armstrong said.

“We have an opportunity to properly recognise the First Australians and to reset the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all Australians. This is fundamental to realising true reconciliation.”

Reconciliation Australia is the peak body promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. For more information: www.reconciliation.org.au.

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