



12 November 2010

ACOSS Board Resolution on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recognition in the Australian Constitution

The Australian Council of Social Service applauds the Prime Minister Julia Gillard's decision to form an expert panel to advise on recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution.

As the peak body of the social service sector, we would like to officially declare our unequivocal support for the process announced by the Prime Minister.

We urge all politicians and political parties in the country to show good faith and responsibility, and engage in a sincere and mature debate on this important issue.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to include our first peoples in the single most important framing document of our nation.

The official apology to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Stolen Generations in 2008 showed deep community sentiment for a new relationship based on respect and equality.

The community services sector knows all too well the enormous disparity that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in our frontline daily work providing crucial assistance to the most disadvantaged in society.

We know Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples still face gross inequities and are the single most disadvantaged group in our country on virtually every conceivable measure. It is time to reinvigorate our efforts to 'Close the Gap' within a framework of a deeper partnership that this process could bring.

We call on all Australians to be involved and as a sector we pledge to do all we can within our means to help inform and give Australians a true sense of ownership of this process towards a truly reconciled Australia.

END