

Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet

Parliamentary Joint Select Committee

Chairman Hon Ken Wyatt M.P. & Deputy Chair Senator the Hon. Nova Peris
 [cc N.C.A.F.P. & cc Member for New England]

Dear Chairman & Committee,

I hope it is well with you.

Re - steps toward a Referendum on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

- 1) Submissions to previous Expert Panel for Constitutional Recognition is done!
- 2) "Recognise" is the Government's campaign - well done!
- 3) A successful Referendum on Indigenous Constitutional Recognition overlooked since 1901 need involve choice and compromise for both Government & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- 4) CHOICE 1 : Amendment of Symbolic Treatise
 Indigenous will Vote : No
- CHOICE 2 : Amendment of Partition & Indigenous Statehood still within the Commonwealth of Australia.
 Majority will Vote : Yes/No
- CHOICE 3 : Amendment of Partition & Indigenous Statehood and Sovereignty ⇒ A New State not within the Commonwealth Majority will Vote : Yes/No
- CHOICE 4 : Amendment of Succession as Head of State
 Other Australians will Vote : No

Again I wish you well with Committee endeavours for and on behalf of the Australian Government.

Sincerely, Darren Sieims



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ANDREW FISHER BUILDING
ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON

received Feb 2014
copy 12/03/2014

Reference: C14/3766

Mr Darren Siems

Dear Mr Siems

Thank you for your email dated 15 January 2014 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, regarding constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I have been asked to reply on the Prime Minister's behalf.

The Government is committed to releasing for public comment in late 2014 a draft constitutional amendment to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution. A successful referendum would be a unifying moment for the nation, similar to the 1967 referendum and the National Apology.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are the first inhabitants of this nation, and the movement to recognise them in our Constitution presents an historic opportunity to acknowledge their unique culture and history, and their enormous contribution to this nation.

The Government is also committed to a bipartisan process to assess the chances of success of the draft constitutional amendment. A Parliamentary Joint Select Committee has been established to inquire and report on steps that can be taken to progress towards a successful referendum on Indigenous constitutional recognition. The Committee is chaired by Mr Ken Wyatt MP, the first Indigenous member of the House of Representatives and its deputy chair is Senator Nova Peris, also Indigenous. The Committee welcomes submissions on steps that can be taken to progress towards a successful referendum on Indigenous constitutional recognition and is required to submit an interim report to the Parliament by the end of September 2014.

Increasing public awareness and support will be critical for achieving a successful referendum. Reconciliation Australia is funded by the Australian Government for the 'Recognise' campaign to enhance awareness and support for constitutional change and you are encouraged to visit the Recognise website at www.recognise.org.au for more information.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Doherty
Assistant Secretary
Indigenous Affairs

16 February 2014