

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26 May-6 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Constitutional recognition

Senator: Senator Cory Bernardi

Question reference number: 253

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Please outline what processes have been established to advance a bipartisan approach to Indigenous Constitutional Recognition?
2. Please outline the purpose of the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?
3. When does it report?
4. What work is underway in relation to the Expert Panel recommendations?
5. The legislation requires a Review under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Act 2013. Where is this up to?
6. What is its role?
7. When does it report?
8. Could you outline where Recognise fits?

Answer:

1. On 2 December 2013, Parliament re-established the Joint Select Committee (the Committee) on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Mr Ken Wyatt AM MP was appointed Chair and Senator Nova Peris OAM was appointed Deputy Chair.

2. As agreed by the Parliament, the Committee will inquire into and report on steps that can be taken to progress towards a successful referendum on Indigenous constitutional recognition, including working to build a secure strong multi-partisan parliamentary consensus around the timing, specific content and wording of referendum proposals for Indigenous constitutional recognition.

3. The Committee will deliver its interim report on or before 30 September 2014 and its final report on or before 30 June 2015.

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4. The Committee has been asked to examine particular referendum proposals, and will take account of the 2012 Expert Panel recommendations in the course of its inquiry.

5-7. The Government announced a Review Panel on 28 March 2014 under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Act 2013* (Act of Recognition) to review support for a referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution. The Review will also consider the Expert Panel recommendations in its review of support for Indigenous constitutional recognition.

The Panel comprises Mr John Anderson AO, former Deputy Prime Minister, Ms Tanya Hosch, Deputy Director of the 'Recognise' campaign and Mr Richard Eccles, Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Review will report by 28 September 2014.

8. The Government continues to work closely with Reconciliation Australia's "Recognise" campaign to raise awareness of, and support for, constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Government funding to date has helped Recognise recruit over 204,000 supporters, and conduct awareness raising events and activities around the country.