

DR LESTER-IRABINNA RIGNEY

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION

DR LESTER-IRABINNA RIGNEY
SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES (JSC)

29 SEPTEMBER 2014

Dr Lester-Irabinna Rigney BEd, MEd, PhD, MACE

1. Individual Submission

I am a senior South Australian Aboriginal leader from the Narungga, Kurna and Ngarrindjeri Nations and a senior scientist as Dean of Indigenous Education at the University of Adelaide.

I maintain support for the reform of the Constitution of Australia. I support changes consistent with the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, which reported its findings to the then Prime Minister in January 2012.

I fully endorse and respect the integrity of the Expert Panel as an experienced and informed group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I concur with the view that Constitution recognition compliments rather than diminish sovereignty of First Peoples and treaty-making. Moreover I accept the report recommendations are capable of being supported successfully by the majority of Australians.

I support:

- A Referendum should be held no later than 2016 next federal election.
- A bipartisan approach to this important issue for Australia.
- The view that when the Government decides to put to referendum a proposal for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples other than the proposals recommended by the Panel, it should consult further with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative organisations to ascertain their views in relation to any such alternative proposal.
- Protection from all forms of racial discrimination.
- Recognition in the constitution of Indigenous languages from which our cultures derive.

Should alternative recommendations be proposed by the findings of the JSC it is important the Committee or government consult widely with Indigenous peoples before taking a position on those alternatives.

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