



THE SENATE

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

## MEDIA RELEASE

12 September 2019

### Senate committee will examine Australian nationhood, national identity and democracy

Around the world, voters seem increasingly dissatisfied with how democratic politics works for them. Public trust in democratic institutions is declining. Notions of national identity, which can be the roots of a democratic community, are changing as our world becomes increasingly interconnected. Political divisions appear to be increasing in the face of rapid economic, social and cultural change. These are substantial issues that should concern all citizens. Ultimately, these changes have the potential to weaken liberal democracy itself.

The Senate has referred an inquiry covering these issues to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee for report by the last sitting day of **May 2020**. The committee will consider nationhood, national identity and democracy, including:

- changing notions of nationhood, citizenship and the nation state;
- rights and obligations of citizenship and the responsibility of the state to its citizens;
- social cohesion and cultural identity in the nation state;
- the effect of globalisation and economic interdependence on national identity;
- the extent to which nation states balance sovereignty and international obligations;
- contemporary notions of cultural identity, multiculturalism and regionalism; and
- comparison between Australian public debate and policy and international trends.

The committee has published a **discussion paper** to guide submitters, available at:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal\\_and\\_Constitutional\\_Affairs/Nationhood/Discussion\\_paper](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Nationhood/Discussion_paper).

The committee **invites submissions** addressing the terms of reference by **30 September 2019** from the public, academics, civil society, business, government, and individuals.

Information about the inquiry, including **full terms of reference** and public submissions, is available at: [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal\\_and\\_Constitutional\\_Affairs/Nationhood](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Nationhood).

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For media comment, contact the office of Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Chair of the committee, on 0427 126 355 or at [Thomas.Moorhead@aph.gov.au](mailto:Thomas.Moorhead@aph.gov.au).

For information about the inquiry process or making a submission, contact the committee secretariat on 02 6277 3560 or [legcon.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:legcon.sen@aph.gov.au).