



Media Release

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NACCHO Welcomes Constitutional Recognition Report

NACCHO Chair Ms Donnella Mills and CEO Pat Turner have welcomed the Joint Parliamentary Committee report on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. However, as the saying goes the devil is in the detail and NACCHO looks forward to what the parliamentary parties and cross benches propose as election commitments.

The Committee has endorsed and recommended a process of co-design between the federal government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to determine the detail of the Voice, to conclude within the term of the 46th Parliament. However, 'it is important that a timeframe for progressing the discussions with Aboriginal leadership codesign in the whole process be held now as waiting until after a May 2019 federal election is too late,' said Ms Turner.

Then any proposal for constitutional change will be put to the voting public in a referendum that must be passed by a majority of the Australian people and a majority of people in a majority of states. Pat Turner noted that, 'this has proven very difficult to achieve in the past with the last referenda passed some 45 years ago if held in 2022. So, the age of a voter who said yes in 1977 would by then be 63 years old!'

Pat Turner is also concerned about the proposed delays involved and commented that 'she can walk and chew gum at the same time so surely the ALP can handle the question of our Recognition, the Voice and a republic at the same time.'

NACCHO acknowledges that there has been support for the concept but limited information about how to proceed with developing the proposal to enshrine in our Constitution the recognition and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People truly deserve as First Peoples.

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