

# 'Constitutional Recognition' Questions and Answers

*If you think 'Recognition' is a great way forward for Aboriginal people, be aware that when you pull the layers off this government proposal known as 'Constitution Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People', there is absolutely no evidence of any rights given to the First People in 'Recognition' and plenty of disadvantages and we will be locked in forever.*



## **Was Constitutional Recognition an initiative of Aboriginal people?**

- No. We never heard any First Nations person or group call for Constitutional Recognition before there was a government funded campaign.
- There has never been a rally saying 'We want Constitutional Reform' before the government funded meetings  
Where did the idea of Constitutional Recognition for First Nations peoples come from?
- In 1965 Prime Minister Robert Menzies noted in parliament that Aboriginal people are not Australian citizens and the government cannot legally control them.
- In 2007, Prime Minister John Howard, announced that if he was re-elected, he will put a referendum to the Australian people to formally recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution, 11 October 2007.
- John Howard's statement was made during the same period of government when he was opposing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, opposing a Treaty and following the introduction of the Northern Territory Intervention and the closing of ATSIC.

## **Why is the government pushing for Constitutional Reform?**

- The government can say that because the First Nations people voted for the changes in the referendum they have specifically voted to be controlled by the government.
- The government wants more control over First Nations people, especially those living on 'valuable mining land'
- The government wants to extend its power to further dislocate and marginalise First Nations people who have not already assimilated
- The invaders of these lands and the following governments have been aggressively trying to 'breed out' and/or assimilate First Nations people since the invasion in 1788, when they realised there were more Aboriginal people on the continent than they first thought and they were people with established societies. They have needed to eradicate the people to justify their *terra nullius* claim (unoccupied and free to colonise).

## **But how can they get away with it?**

- They have spent many millions dollars on the 'Recognise' campaign through advertising and other promotions, from the popular sports through to the arts. They have employed well known assimilated Aboriginal 'Leaders' to actively promote their campaign and have added a further \$15m in the 2016 Budget to press the 'Yes' vote in communities around the continent.
- With over \$100m already spent on the 'Yes' vote they have never allocated any money on people or organisations to put up a case for the 'No' vote or to explain the pitfalls.
- The commercial channels (Fox, 7, 9, 10 groups of channels) are all funded and operated by big business interests and collect advertising revenue from 'R' Campaign, and are also regulated by the government
- The ABC and SBS (NITV) is funded and being bullied by the government
- Former PM Tony Abbott inferred that all Aboriginal government funded organisations must support 'Recognise' or their funding may be compromised. (blackmail)
- There has been a media blackout on all mainstream media outlets to describe what rights Aboriginal people will get from Constitution Recognition or the disadvantages - this goes against the 'democratic' assumption of the Australian government system.  
Who is the 'Expert Panel' on Constitutional 'Reform' who advise the government?
- They are (un-elected) people especially selected and funded by the government to promote Constitutional Reform.

## **New Referendum Council**

On 7th December, 2015 the government appointed a new council to promote Constitutional Reform to work independently to the 'Expert Council' , including some of the front line people from the 'Expert Panel', which was named 'The Referendum Council'. This council includes more non-Indigenous people than the 'Expert Panel'. The non-Indigenous members are leading right-wing Lawyers and media experts..

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The Referendum Council members list: ~~Professor Patrick Dodson (co-chair) Resigned~~, Mark Leibler AC (co-chair), Stan Grant (tipped to become co-chair replacement), Pat Anderson AO, Professor Megan Davis, Andrew Demetriou, Murray Gleeson AC QC, Kristina Keneally, Mick Gooda, Tanya Hosch, Jane McAloon, Michael Rose, Natasha Stott Despoja AM, Noel Pearson, Amanda Vanstone, Dalassa Yorkston, Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM. Please note: None of these people were voted for or appointed as spokespersons by the Aboriginal community.

### **Why should I oppose it?**

- Because the government wants to name First Nations people in the constitution so they have more power over them.
- It will allow the government to discriminate on the basis of race.
- It fails the test of compliance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- It gives the government the power to pass legislation like the 'Northern Territory Intervention' against the First Nations people in all the states
- 'Sovereignty was never ceded' - this legislation will make it much harder for people to assert their sovereign rights - in other words. it will kill any chance of workable and grass roots self-determination
- The vote will give non-Indigenous people the power to make the decision on 'Recognition' (This is because they have 97% of the vote)

## **RECOGNITION - 10 Reason's to Vote No**

1. It wipes out Sovereignty and Land Rights
2. It Overrides Native Title
3. It doesn't give rights
4. It turns Blackfella's into 'Property' of the 'Crown'
5. It does not give Blackfella's any power
6. It doesn't protect Cultural Rights
7. It does not recognise Cultural Ownership
8. It does not protect Cultural Law / Lore
9. It offers a restricted citizenship
10. It allows the Government to make Laws for Blackfella's as a targeted race without limitations

### **Do Aboriginal people want 'Constitution Recognition'?**

- 'NO' 58%, UNSURE 16.99%, 'YES' 25%

### **Do non-Indigenous people want it?**

- Yes, because they think its what First Nations people want
- They have been tricked by the multi-million dollar advertising campaign.
- There is a media ban on 'Sovereignty' and any article that questions 'R' Constitutional Recognition
- Aboriginal organisations have been bullied by the Government to support the 'Recognition' campaign ... or else.

### **Why do famous Sports and Music stars support recognition?**

- These well-meaning stars are great at what they do in their professional capacity and know how to stand up for human rights, such as racism. However, they don't appear to know very much about politics, and seem to have been spun a story by well known assimilationists within the very well funded 'Recognise' campaign machine.

### **What is the advantage of 'Recognition' then?**

- It beats us, We can't think of one single advantage to First Nations people if a 'YES' vote in the referendum is successful. To have the words 'Indigenous people' included in the preamble of an extremely racist constitution will be of no value to the future or well being of the First Nations peoples whatsoever. Other planned wording additions and changes have not yet been decided, so in effect people are agreeing to vote on something they don't know anything about.
- It's just another very expensive government trick so they can further control First Nations peoples lives and land, carefully planned so that everybody believes it will help them.
- With all the millions the government spends on Constitutional 'Reform' there hasn't been one disadvantage on 'Recognition' ever mentioned and they never fly the Aboriginal flag at 'R' rallies and meetings.

Did the 1967 Referendum give First Nations peoples the vote?

In 1967 with good-will Australian Citizens thought they were voting 'Yes' for 'Aborigines' for the right to vote, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people already had the right to vote after Legislative changes in 1962.

- "The 1967 referendum did not give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the right to vote. This right had been legislated for Commonwealth elections in 1962, with the last State to provide Indigenous enfranchisement being Queensland in 1965." - (The 1967 referendum – Fact sheet 150 : National Archives of Australia)

## **What was the 1967 Referendum really about?**

1. Inclusion of 'Aborigines' in the Census
2. Commonwealth Government could make independent laws for Aboriginal People i.e. The Northern Territory Intervention

## **What impact has the 1967 Referendum had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia?**

The Impact has been lethal for First Nations and People's rights. The Northern Territory Intervention was supposedly put in place to prevent child abuse yet youth suicide has doubled since its enforcement. Pedophile rings remain rampant in Northern Territory headed by Non Indigenous people but there was not one found in the remote communities. Mining Royalties in the Northern Territory have been seized by the government and their social security payments divided out as a 'basics card' (Race card with spending regulations on places of purchase and goods), amongst other government controls that do not meet UN human rights protocols.

- The Northern Territory Intervention is already moving around the country to various areas, but it will be much easier for the government to lawfully put them and other race based regulations into place in all the States after the people have agreed to be governed in the proposed referendum.

## **How about our culture?**

- The destruction of First Nations and People's cultural integrity is what the government is specifically aiming at. No matter what they say, the governments (Liberal and Labor) continually legislate against our peoples cultural connections and integrity.
- You must realise that the people on the New Constitution Council and the previous constitutional reform 'Expert Panel' rarely talk about culture, they spent a lot more time talking about issues associated with assimilation. These high profile self-acclaimed 'leaders' spend most of the time talking about mining and jobs from mining. At least one of them has had a history of being funded by mining interests.
- Many of the New Constitution Council members who promote constitutional changes are on the government's payroll, either indirectly or directly. This is NOT a grass-roots movement from First Nations people.
- The government has demonstrated that they have no interest in culture and the importance of living on 'country'. The past PM Tony Abbott who was pushing for a vote as soon as possible, thinks that practising culture and living on 'country' is just a lifestyle choice.

## **Summary**

- The Australian Public were deceived in the 1967 Referendum and are being deceived again on the coming Referendum. A 'Yes' vote will surrender Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal 'Sovereign' Stance as first Nations and amalgamate on to Australian Government 'Colonial' Sovereign Stance which has still never proven its Legal Jurisdiction.
- Constitutional Reform will give the government more power to rule over First Nations

people and will kill off any chance of self-determination in the future.

- First Nations people will lose the chance of a 'Sovereign Treaty' for this generation and future generations.
- The Australian Government will be given the go-ahead to continue enforcing Laws that Breach International Human Rights, which allows specific laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all of the States.



For further information and reference links go to: [www.sovereignunion.mobi/node/1344](http://www.sovereignunion.mobi/node/1344)