



the
Lowitja
INSTITUTE

Australia's National Institute
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Research

*Incorporating the Cooperative Research Centre
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 24 December 2010

Lowitja Institute applauds expert panel

The Lowitja Institute supports the appointment of the expert panel to lead the process for the recognition of First Peoples in the Australian Constitution.

As the National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research, and an organisation committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we commend the Prime Minister, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and the Attorney General on undertaking such a broad ranging public consultation and engagement program.

Chief Executive of the Lowitja Institute, Dr Kerry Arabena, is excited about the opportunity that engagement with this process presents. "We believe that a positive outcome from constitutional recognition will be better health and wellbeing for Australia's First Peoples. It is the job of the Lowitja Institute to provide the evidence to Australians that this will be the case" Dr Arabena said.

As a national organisation with established partnerships in the health and research sector, the Lowitja Institute is uniquely placed to raise awareness of the positive benefits that can be gained.

"We aim to collaborate with the community, health and research sectors through consensus building so that when Australians go to the referendum, our organisation has done everything possible to recognise the proper place and contribution of our First Peoples. But as with every referendum the Australian people have the final say. Australians need to make an informed decision on this very important issue" said Dr Arabena.

2011 will herald the commencement of a significant period in the history of reconciliation in this country. The Lowitja Institute acknowledges the expertise of the individual members of the panel charged with this important responsibility.

The Lowitja Institute will premise its work in this area on the three principles identified by the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples:

- That Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be guaranteed the opportunity to participate.
- That there are adequate resources to ensure genuine participation by all Australians.
- That the Governance arrangements are critical. Indigenous leaders must be included at all levels of the strategic, technical and operational work of this campaign.

ENDS

For more information about the Lowitja Institute please go to www.lowitja.org.au.

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