



ASSISTANT MINISTER
TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Reference: C15/77637

15 OCT 2015

Sister Jan Barnett
Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes in NSW
PO Box 259
ROSEBERY NSW 1445

Dear Sister Barnett

Thank you for your letter dated 4 August 2015 to the former Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, regarding Indigenous plans for community consultations on constitutional recognition. I have been asked to reply on the former Prime Minister's behalf.

The Commonwealth Government is strongly committed to pursuing recognition of the First Australians in the Constitution and ending the great silence about Indigenous people in our founding document. Recognition would acknowledge our shared history and the value we place on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. The Government believes that a successful referendum would be a unifying moment for the nation.

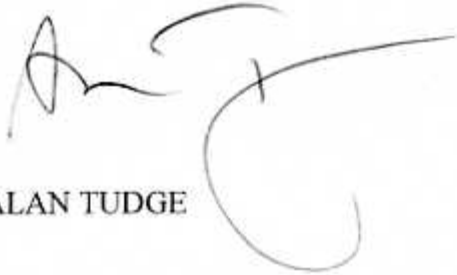
To continue the recognition journey, the Government will hold a series of national consultations on what Indigenous constitutional recognition can achieve and the form it could take. It is important that all Australians have the opportunity to have a say and that all points of view are considered. I would encourage you to participate and share your ideas.

Within the national consultation process there will be a series of Indigenous-designed and led consultations. The Government sees it as essential that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are heard and that the final proposition put to a referendum has the support of the First Australians.

A fair go for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is at the heart of what this Government wants to achieve for our country. It has made education, employment and community safety its top three priorities in Indigenous Affairs and is committed to working closely with communities to get kids to school, adults into employment and to build safer, stronger communities.

Greater involvement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions that affect them will ensure policies, programmes and service delivery are effective in producing better outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alan Tudge', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

ALAN TUDGE