



AUSTRALIA



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Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Agenda item 6: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognises the rich heritage of Indigenous peoples and their entitlement to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This accords fully with our common goal of addressing Indigenous disadvantage in Australia.

We see Australia's support for the Declaration is another opportunity and another tool to strengthen our relationship with Indigenous peoples, building upon the 2008 National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Stolen Generations.

A further historic act of recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was passed earlier this year, setting in motion the process for a referendum where the Australian people will be asked to give due recognition to Australia's First Peoples in the Australian Constitution.

And acknowledging past dispossession and connection to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples now enjoy various levels of access or control over more than 25% of the Australian land mass.

Australia is dedicated to improving the future for the First Peoples of Australia, notably through its *Closing the Gap* strategy.

Australia is also committed to finding new ways of implementing the rights enshrined in the Declaration into concrete benefits for its Indigenous peoples. To this end we are working to increase awareness and encourage dialogue about the Declaration in all sectors. Our work with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, for example, is essential to ensuring that all aspects of Australian society better acknowledge and address the needs identified by Indigenous peoples and communities.

In addition, we facilitate discussion regarding the application and implementation of principles underpinning the Declaration. All legislation proposals in Australia are scrutinised by a parliamentary committee to ensure their consistency with human rights, and the Declaration is considered in this context. Examples such as these demonstrate the Australian Government's commitment to the practical implementation of the principles underlying the Declaration. We look forward to continuing our work in this regard in the future.