

**United Nations
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

Sixth Session
New York
14-15 May 2007
26 May 2007

JOINT STATEMENT DELIVERED BY LIAM RIDGEWAY ON BEHALF OF:

**Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM)
Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA)
National Native Title Council
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO)
New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC)
University of New South Wales, Indigenous Law Centre
World Council of Churches (Australia)**

Thank you Madam Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of all of the Australian Indigenous peoples' organisations in attendance at the 6th Session of the Permanent Forum.

On May 27, 1967, 40 years ago this weekend, an Australian national referendum was held affecting the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. What it did was amend the Australian Constitution to remove specific phrases and provisions discriminatory of Australia's indigenous population, and is seen as giving full citizenship rights to the Aborigines.

This win was fantastic for the Aboriginal movement for equality. Although, it is frequently stated that the 1967 referendum gave aboriginal people Australian citizenship and that it gave them the right to vote in federal election. Neither of these statements is correct, the referendum in actual fact did not end discrimination against Indigenous Australians

All though today does mark the 40th Anniversary of the national referendum we as indigenous people in our country of Australia still have a long way to walk in our struggles to be treated as equal.

We would now like to ask everyone to honour a minutes silence not t only for the 40th Anniversary of the Australian Indigenous national referendum but also for all indigenous people across the globe who suffer from the adverse impacts of colonisation and government policy

Thank you Madam Chair.