



EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Australia National Statement to the Pacific and Asia Regions Seminar

Delivered by H.E. Ms Sally Mansfield, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva

TUESDAY 13 JULY 2021

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Thank you Chair.

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and community. I pay my respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging. I extend this respect to Indigenous Peoples throughout the world and acknowledge those participating in this meeting today.

Australia commends the work of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and welcomes the opportunity to further contribute to the studies on self-determination and the Rights of the Indigenous Child. Australia would also like to reaffirm its support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Self-determination

Australia recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples commitment to self-determination, and notes that the best outcomes are achieved when Indigenous peoples are at the centre of decision-making on issues that affect them.

Australia continues to work on an Indigenous Voice - co-designed with Indigenous Australians - and the Government awaits the recommendations of the co-design group on what options for an Indigenous Voice could look like.

The Australian Government is committed to truth-telling by working in partnership with Indigenous peoples and communities; and local, state and territory governments, to support reconciliation and to acknowledge and understand our nation's history. A number of States and territories - Victoria, the Northern Territory, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory - are progressing treaty-related discussions.

Australia supports the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls through the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani* project, led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, which supports Indigenous women and girls' leadership and participation in all decisions that impact their lives.

Rights of the Indigenous Child

Australia is committed to protecting Indigenous children's rights. There is still progress needed to protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Australia recognises that Indigenous children are over-represented in rates of incarceration, youth suicide, child protection and out-of-home care services. Australia is committed to changing this situation: key targets to address it are in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Other key initiatives include developing the successor plan to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 - 2020 with SNAICC, the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Children are our future and Australia appreciates EMRIP's work to protect the rights of the Indigenous child.

Thank you.

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