

Federal Government's failure to address needs of nation's First Peoples condemned

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The Turnbull Government's neglect of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been condemned by Delegates at Federation's Annual Conference.

"Prime Minister Turnbull's opposition to the *Statement from the Heart* reflects the same lack of leadership, political will and moral fortitude that has underpinned his government's failure to adequately address the widening gaps in education, health, mortality, life expectancy and employment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations," an Annual Conference decision states.

The *Statement from the Heart* calls for:

- a 'First Nations Voice' in the Australian Constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory body to parliament
- a 'Makarrata Commission', as the supervisory means for 'agreement-making' between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments, and 'truth-telling' to ensure the history of colonisation and its past and ongoing toll on human life, family, community and culture are finally told.



Senior Vice President Henry Rajendra said the *Statement from the Heart* was the greatest opportunity ever to seek justice for the nation's First Peoples.

"We will build unity to create justice for our First Peoples," Mr Rajendra declared.

Annual Conference Delegates condemned the Turnbull Government for scrapping the NSW National Education Reform Agreement: "[The] lift in recurrent funding would have ensured that teaching and learning programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander were adequately resourced to help close the achievement gap in education.

Delegates reaffirmed Federation's commitment in achieving a just outcome for the nation's First Peoples, pledging the union to continue to work with the Australian Education Union to ensure these policy objectives remain a national priority.