

STATEMENT BY SPONSORS

The undersigned concerned white Australians believe that experience since 1978 has demonstrated the need for the status and rights of Aboriginal Australians to be protected by a legally binding agreement or Treaty freely negotiated by their chosen representatives with the Commonwealth of Australia.

We therefore call upon the Commonwealth Parliament to resolve that negotiations should be arranged for this purpose and in particular to call upon the Commonwealth Government -

- a) to arrange a convention of Aboriginal Australians nominated by Aboriginal communities and Associations to choose their own negotiators, to determine the basis on which they will negotiate and to decide upon procedures by which an agreement or Treaty provisionally accepted by their representatives will be confirmed; and
- b) thereafter to set in train procedures for the relevant negotiations.

To facilitate consideration of the issues we draw attention to a draft resolution of the Commonwealth Parliament and a draft statement of principles which some of the signatories have prepared. We are not all of us necessarily wholly in agreement with this statement of principles but believe it covers the issues which must be resolved, and provides a basis for discussion. Arrangements will be made to promote such discussion through a wide range of religious, community, professional, industrial, business, academic and other organisations.

We invite members of the public who share our concern to inform the Secretary of the Committee if they are willing to add their names to a request to Parliament to call upon the Commonwealth Government to set these negotiations in train and to help finance the administrative costs involved by making a donation to the 'Aboriginal Treaty Committee' whose funds will be administered for these purposes by Stuart Harris, Eva Hancock and Dymphna Clark, acting as Trustees. The form set out below will enable this action to be taken.

We hope that this process will culminate, in the presentation to the Federal Parliament of a Resolution urging the negotiations of a Treaty.

We invite your interest in this project which, if it is widely supported, could mark the beginning of a new era in black-white relations in Australia. We ask you to signify your support by signing the statement set out below and by making a donation to the costs to this campaign. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Aboriginal Treaty Committee' and despatched to PO Box 1242, Canberra 2601.

(SPONSORS NAMES HERE)

I/we the undersigned support the draft resolution that a Treaty of Peace and Friendship be concluded between Aboriginal Australians and the Commonwealth of Australia, and agree that -

My/our signature may be affixed to a statement to that effect.

I/we enclose a cheque for... as a donation to the costs incurred by the Aboriginal Treaty Committee in support of such a Treaty.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF BOTH HOUSES OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH
THAT A TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP BE CONCLUDED BETWEEN THE
ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PREAMBLE

Whereas before Europeans settled in Australia, the Aboriginal people of Australia had lived on their traditional lands from time immemorial and had in Aboriginal law and customs a clear title to those lands; and

whereas Europeans and other non-Aboriginal people have occupied and used most of the traditional lands of the Aboriginal peoples against their will and without negotiation, compensation or treaty; and

whereas that occupation has seriously damaged the traditional way of life of Aboriginal Australians and has caused poverty and hardship to be the fate of the great majority of their surviving descendants; and

whereas the surviving descendants of the Aboriginal peoples have expressed a wish to have their rights to land acknowledged, to preserve their link with their Aboriginal ancestors and to maintain their distinctive identity with its own cultural heritage; and

whereas the people of Australia in 1967 voted overwhelmingly that the Commonwealth Parliament should have responsibility for laws relating to Aboriginal Australians; and

whereas it is accepted internationally by the United Nations organisation that each country should work to establish the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, non-discrimination and the enjoyment of their own culture; and

whereas Aboriginal Australians have expressed the wish that while enjoying those rights, they should resolve their differences with non-Aboriginal Australians, and share this land with them in peace and friendship; and

whereas the Woodward Commission in 1974 established principles by which Aboriginal rights to land should be acknowledged and realised; and

whereas the Senate of the Commonwealth Parliament in February 1977 resolved that Aboriginal Australians should be compensated for the loss of their traditional lands and for the damage to their way of life.

Now this House resolves that -

1. The Commonwealth Government should invite the Aboriginal people of Australia to negotiate a Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Commonwealth of Australia; and if that invitation is accepted -
 2. the Aboriginal people of Australia shall be responsible for the choice of representatives to negotiate for them, for the approval of the basis on which these representatives shall negotiate and the acceptance of the terms of any treaty provisionally negotiated on their behalf;
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3. the Commonwealth Government should give all necessary financial and other assistance to the Aboriginal people to enable them to establish before 30 December 1979 and to maintain in operation thereafter until a Treaty has been concluded and ratified by the parties, a Convention of representatives chosen by Aboriginal communities and associations;
4. when any Treaty has been concluded and agreed to between the parties the Commonwealth Government should submit that Treaty to the Parliament for ratification;
5. this House is prepared to use its legislative powers to reserve to itself responsibility for Aboriginal Australians and to give effect to any or all of the terms of any Treaty that invite or necessitate legislative action;
6. this House is of opinion that any Treaty should incorporate or be based upon a recognition of the following principles:

Protection of Aboriginal identity

- a) The Treaty should recognise the right of Aboriginal Australians:
 - i) to maintain an independent identity within Australian society;
 - ii) to preserve, protect and develop their own languages, law and culture;
 - iii) to determine their own way of life, to plan their own future, to be responsible for the nurture and education of their children, to promote the health of their people and to protect their civil liberties and rights as citizens;
 - iv) to incorporate associations and, within the Commonwealth, to develop institutions for these purposes;
 - v) to resolve any question about the eligibility of a person for membership of an Aboriginal Association or institution.

b) Recognition and restoration of rights to land

The Treaty should recognise that the Aboriginal people have a right -

3) Law and order

The Aboriginal people have a right, on land to which Aboriginal Australians hold title, to maintain order and to protect and enforce Aboriginal law and customs -

- i) non-Aboriginal people resident within Aboriginal lands will respect and observe rules for the maintenance of order and Aboriginal law and customs;
- ii) Aboriginal Australians resident among non-Aboriginals Australians and within their communities will respect and observe non-Aboriginal Australian law.