

Boomerang petition reaches Canberra



Norman Miller gives his paper petition to Ken Wright and Warren Entsch.

INDIGENOUS justice campaigner and artist Norman Miller presented MP Bronwyn Bishop, the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Canberra with a giant boomerang on November 21, with 360 signatures on the back of it asking for constitutional change to recognize Indigenous people and remove racism from the constitution.

Called the boomerang petition because Mr Miller, Chairman of the Centre for International Reconciliation and Peace Inc, who is also a pastor, artist and social justice campaigner, also presented a paper boomerang petition to the Member for Hasluck, the Mr Ken Wyatt, Chairperson of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The petition has 2,115 signatures on it gathered from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from all over Australia and follows the recommendations of the Expert Panel on the Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians.

Mr Warren Entsch MP, the Member for Leichhardt will be tabling this petition in Parliament in the this week. It has been signed by Australians from all walks of life.

Mr Miller said the purpose of this campaign, is to prepare people for a

yes vote in a referendum to be held on these issues in the term of the current parliament. He believes Tripartisan support is already there which will make it easier to achieve.

"My aim has been one of public education, raising community awareness and support and keeping the issue before government, bolstering its political will in this matter," Mr Miller said.

"While getting signatures for this petition, I have met people from all walks of life, Indigenous and non-Indigenous and found that there is little knowledge of this issue on the street and I have been able to discuss the issues and gain broad support."

"The 1967 Referendum enabled Indigenous people to be counted in the census instead of the degrading situation of being counted with plants and animals and now we need to take the next step" Miller said."

Mr Miller's petition to the House of Representatives said the following:

Educate the Australian nation about the need for constitutional change and hold a referendum within two years to:

- Remove Section 25 - which says the States can ban people from voting based on their race;
- Remove section 51(xxvi) - which can be used to pass laws that discriminate against people based on their race;
- Insert a new section 51A - to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to preserve the Australian Government's ability to pass laws for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Insert a new section 116A, banning racial discrimination by government; and
- Insert a new section 127A, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages were this country's first tongues, while confirming that English is Australia's national language.



Norman Miller with his boomerang petition.