

# Media Statement



*Advocating for a  
better system*

28 June 2016

## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS POLICY NEEDS A CLEAR STRATEGY

The National Native Title Council (NNTC) calls for a sensible approach from the next Government to develop a clear and overarching strategy for Indigenous Affairs.

NNTC CEO Glen Kelly said that Indigenous Affairs has barely been mentioned in the election campaign so far, with those announcements made resulting in minor adjustments to current policies or being very narrowly focussed.

“The Indigenous Affairs portfolio requires some clear and strategic thinking to develop an overarching approach for the future,” said Mr Kelly. “And this needs to be negotiated across the political spectrum with Indigenous peoples at the centre of the discussion.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are sick of being left out of the room until they are told about policies affecting their lives as a fait accompli. We have been calling for proper engagement for years, but no one seems to be listening.

“The Prime Minister, in his recent Closing the Gap Speech, said it *‘is important that we listen to Aboriginal people when they tell us what is working’*. Indigenous peoples have been saying it to Governments for years, and we say it again to the Prime Minister today – the current approach is not working”.

Mr Kelly said that Governments should enter into a new relationship with Indigenous peoples across Australia. And the relationship has to not only be built on respect and a willingness to engage and to listen, but it also has to be above party politics.

“It is time to empower Traditional Owners and their communities with decision making powers over their futures not only for them but for future generations,” said Mr Kelly. “Traditional Owners have significant land assets across the country and communities are looking for economic development opportunities as well as improved health and well-being for their families. It’s not that complicated and it shouldn’t be this hard”.

The NNTC is the peak body for native title representative bodies and service providers.

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