



NEW SOUTH WALES
RECONCILIATION
COUNCIL



April 1, 2016

MEDIA RELEASE

Open letter: PM must commit to funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body

The NSW Reconciliation Council has today written to the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Treasurer Scott Morrison and Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion, urging them to commit to ongoing, stable funding for the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, the national representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The full text of the letter is below.

1 April 2015

The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP Prime Minister Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

CC: The Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Treasurer; Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion MP, Minister for Indigenous Affairs

Dear Prime Minister,

The NSW Reconciliation Council is writing to urge you to commit to ongoing, stable funding for the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples ("Congress").

We are deeply concerned that the ongoing uncertainty over the funding of such bodies is crippling their ability to act as a strong and effective representative voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Congress— which was established as the national peak representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advocate for the wellbeing and empowerment of its peoples, and to secure their economic, political, cultural and environmental futures – has now been reduced to a staff of just six people, and has accordingly had to curtail its activities and the services to a drastic extent. This has created an extremely difficult situation for the organisation, its staff, and the many people and communities that it represents.

Strong representative bodies that can advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and hold governments accountable are vital to the meaningful

collaboration and consultation with Indigenous Australia that your government has previously spoken of. Accessing the expertise and experience of a national body like Congress can facilitate better policy development, meaningful consultation and effective implementation of policies and programs targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

We call upon you to urgently make a new, long-term commitment to this national representative body through a stable funding model and consistent, reciprocal consultation.

*Sincerely,
Gilly Dempsey
CEO, NSW Reconciliation Council*

