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Australia must formally adopt UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People

The Law Council of Australia is calling on governments to comprehensively adopt the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in order to protect the human rights of First Nations Peoples.

In a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee's Inquiry into the Application of UNDRIP in Australia, the Law Council said that to date the protections offered by the Declaration have only been implemented domestically in a piecemeal manner.

"The UNDRIP is the authoritative international standard informing the way governments across the globe should engage with and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples," Law Council of Australia President, Mr Tass Liveris said.

"Unfortunately, despite announcing support for the UNDRIP way back in 2009, Australian governments and parliaments are yet to recognise and implement its standards in a formal and comprehensive way."

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been subject to colonisation, dispossession, discrimination, marginalisation, and significant breaches of human rights across multiple areas, historically and in contemporary Australia, not least in the protection of cultural heritage and land rights and in the treatment of persons in contact with the criminal justice and child protection systems. The practices and impacts of colonisation continue in the present day.

"The Law Council considers the UNDRIP as foundational to addressing this state of affairs," Mr Liveris said. "Given the systemic nature of the issues facing First Nations peoples, comprehensive legal and policy reform across all federal, state and territory jurisdictions is required. Without this, breaches of human rights in Australia will continue to occur."

A priority for the Law Council is a referendum for a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution. Such a Voice would be a manifestation of the right to self-determination, which is the fundamental principle underpinning the UNDRIP.

The full submission is available [here](#).

Contact: Kristen Connell, P. 0400 054 227, E. kristen@talkforcemedia.com.au

The Law Council of Australia is the national voice of the legal profession, promoting justice and the rule of law.