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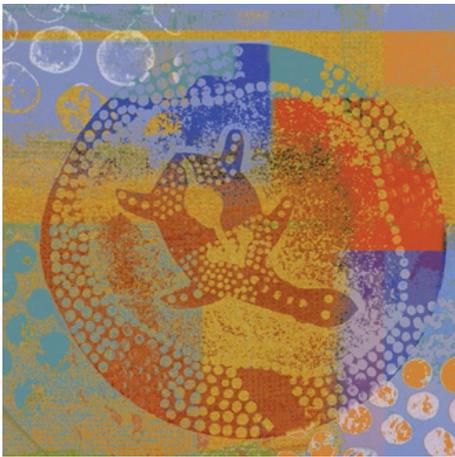
# Getting ready for the Referendum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian Constitution

Monday 8 August 2011 5.15 – 7.30pm

## Symposium

Led by **Professor Mick Dodson**

Sparke Helmore Theatre 2 ANU College of Law, Fellows Road, ANU



The Gillard government has committed to holding a referendum on constitutional 'recognition' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples before or at the next federal election. This is an extremely rare opportunity to change a Constitution which offers inadequate protection for Australian citizens from being discriminated against on the basis of race.

Our Constitution permits every Australian to be adversely discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic or cultural ('racial') background. It did not protect Australian citizens from having their children forcibly taken, partly for the purpose of 'breeding out' their colour. It contemplates denying citizens the right to vote on the basis of their race. More recently, purportedly to protect children from abuse and neglect, it allowed racially discriminatory laws to apply to citizens who did not even have children.

Soon, we will have the chance to amend the Constitution in a way that protects the rights of all Australians. An expert panel is conducting consultations across Australia, and will accept submissions until 30 September 2011. It will then give recommendations to the government. This process allows Australians to contribute their views about which amendments (if any) we would like to see made to our Constitution.

The vast majority of referenda in Australia are unsuccessful. Lack of accurate and accessible information about the law is likely to play a major role. To explain the issues involved and to assist those interested in writing submissions, academics with expertise in constitutional and Indigenous issues will provide concise, practical and focussed advice about the status of current law and the legal implications of likely proposals.

## Agenda

- 5.30pm Session 1 Amending the Australian Constitution & Information on Preambles
- 6.30pm Session 2 Equality/Non-Discrimination Proposals & Indigenous-Specific Proposals

Presented by

ANU National Centre  
for Indigenous Studies

Law Reform &  
Social Justice Program

ANU College of  
Law

RSVP

by Monday 1 August 2011

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This lecture is free and open to the public

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