



A QTU newsletter for Indigenous educators in state schools

Indigenous Educators Network

UPDATE



QUEENSLAND
TEACHERS' UNION
OF EMPLOYEES

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To QTU Indigenous Educators Network

At the 20 March meeting of Gandu Jarjum, the QTU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee, recent comments by Tony Abbott on the practice of acknowledging traditional owners were discussed. The QTU strongly supports the practice of acknowledging country and it is QTU Policy to open union meetings with such an acknowledgement (or with a welcome to country for major events).

Gandu Jarjum members found the following article from the Human Rights Commission helpful and it is provided for your information and use.

John

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**Australian
Human Rights
Commission**

everyone, everywhere, everyday

e-update

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15 March 2010

Acknowledging traditional owners is an accepted sign of respect

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda has rejected the idea that acknowledging traditional owners is tokenistic, saying it is an accepted mark of respect.

Responding to references by the Federal Opposition leader Tony Abbott, on the weekend that the practice was tokenistic and paternalistic, Commissioner Gooda said such acknowledgements were a statement of fact and critical to the nation's ongoing reconciliation process.

The High Court of Australia in the Mabo decision recognised the fact that Australia was occupied when the British came here and that the land (and the seas) continued to be cared for, occupied, utilised and identified as the land of different tribal groups, operating in accordance with their customary laws and traditions, Commissioner Gooda said.

It was more than 200 years before the courts finally recognised this fact in 1992 and it, along with the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, has steered us along the reconciliation path that we are still travelling on.

Acknowledging Traditional Owners is a contemporary and practical way of enshrining the High Court decision in Mabo, Commissioner Gooda said.

As a nation, we have now moved beyond debating what is a self-evident truth about our history.

Acknowledging Traditional Owners is a matter of respect, Commissioner Gooda said.

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