

Andrew Bolt: My ABC documentary will show you can disagree and be civil

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The conservative columnist hits back at the editor-in-chief of *The Australian* Chris Mitchell over comments made about the change of PM.

Conservative commentator Andrew Bolt says he hopes his participation in an ABC documentary on Indigenous constitutional recognition will show that people can disagree passionately on controversial issues without yelling or abusive language.

Bolt is travelling around the country with NSW deputy Labor leader Linda Burney, the first Indigenous person elected to NSW Parliament, for the documentary *I Can Change Your Mind About Recognition*.

The two met for the first time on Wednesday for filming in Griffith, NSW.



Journalist Andrew Bolt. *Photo: Louie Douvis & Jesse Marlow*

Bolt told Fairfax Media: "Linda and I have so far had a very respectful, even friendly, chat.

"I hope we will show that it is possible to talk about this issue without yelling, assuming the worst of each other or abusing anyone.

"What unites us is surely more important than what divides us – which is, of course, one reason I don't want us as a country to be formally divided by race."



Labor MP Linda Burney will face-off against Andrew Bolt for the ABC program. *Photo: Cole Bennetts*

Screen Australia has [described the program](#) as a "provocative one-off documentary" which "follows two fierce individuals who travel the nation with opposing views about the referendum on Indigenous recognition".

The News Corp Australia columnist sparked a national debate on freedom of expression when he was found guilty of breaching the Racial Discrimination Act in 2011 for two articles implying some light-skinned people who identified as Aboriginal did so for personal gain.

Ms Burney, who supports recognition in the constitution, said: "We are different people; we come from different worlds.

"This is not about Linda Burney or Andrew Bolt – it's about the issues."

Ms Burney said she had spent an "engaging and pleasant" day with Bolt.

"I have no idea whether I'll be able to change his mind," she said.

Filmmaker Simon Nasht said the documentary would follow a similar format to the 2012 *I Can Change Your Mind about Climate* program in which former finance minister and climate sceptic Nick Minchin travelled around Australia with environmental activist Anna Rose.

Mr Nasht said it was not easy to convince either Bolt or Ms Burney to participate in the program.

"Our aim is to shine a light on the issue – not just heat," he said.

"They won't be shouting at each other. [Bolt] won't be pounding away on a typewriter so it will be possible to test his assumptions and see how deeply he has thought about the issue."

The ABC says the program is expected to air in 2017 – the year the referendum on recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution is expected to be held. But Mr Nasht said he hoped it would be broadcast next year. He expects it to be followed by a Q&A panel program and to be repeated on the National Indigenous Television (NITV) network the following night.