

Indigenous MPs to meet youth in push for constitutional recognition

Ken Wyatt, Jacqui Lambie, Patrick Dodson and Linda Burney to share stories with youth representatives as part of campaign



Recognise youth representatives are in Canberra to share stories with Indigenous MPs – the 45th parliament boasts the highest number of Indigenous representatives in Australia’s history. Photograph: Darrian Traynor/Getty Images

[Paul Karp](#)

Indigenous youth representatives will travel to Canberra on Monday to meet four Indigenous MPs as part of a campaign to raise awareness of reasons to recognise the First Australians in the constitution.

The Liberal MP Ken Wyatt, the independent senator [Jacqui Lambie](#), and the Labor MP Linda Burney and senator Patrick Dodson will meet with the representatives and share their stories about why they support constitutional recognition.

In a statement the Recognise organisation noted the 45th parliament boasted the highest number of Indigenous representatives in parliament in Australia’s history, making this the moment to achieve constitutional recognition.

A Recognise youth representative who is travelling to Canberra from Adelaide, Rebekka Rogers, said: “I know that with constitutional recognition and the removal of racial discrimination from our constitution our country will be better and I am prepared to fight for that.”

Kayameshia Kells from Alice Springs said the record numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the parliament was “a great source of hope and inspiration for young Indigenous people”.

Almost 50 years after the 1967 referendum removed two constitutional provisions discrimination against [Indigenous Australians](#), Recognise is launching a campaign called Why I Recognise. The campaign will share 50 stories about why recognition is important, including personal messages from the Indigenous MPs.

The campaign for constitutional recognition is entering a fragile period. Although [support for recognition is high](#) many delegates to the referendum council which is designing the proposal [have called for recognition to be scrapped in favour of a treaty](#).

The deadline for the constitutional recognition referendum has been [pushed back until 2018 to allow for better consultation](#) with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

[Labor has said it would consider a treaty with Aboriginal Australians](#) in addition to constitutional recognition, a proposal which led the government to [accuse it of putting at risk “meaningful but modest” change](#) in the form of constitutional recognition.

A Recognise spokeswoman told Guardian Australia preparations for the Why I Recognise campaign had shown that there is strong support for recognition across the Australian community, including bipartisan support for it. “When this moves towards a referendum, multiparty support is critical,” she said.

A Recognise ambassador, Mark Yettica-Paulson, said the movement for constitutional change across the country was strong and almost 300,000 Australians had signed on to support the campaign.

“People from across Australia want to be part of fixing our constitution and to leave a legacy for future generations that we can all be proud of,” Yettica-Paulson said.

“It’s great to see parliamentarians from across the political spectrum come together to support the movement for constitutional change and maintain momentum. We can’t leave this to the next generation.

“Having tomorrow’s leaders – our youth representatives – meet and share their aspirations with politicians who are making history in this new parliament is a big step forward.