

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Constitution should recognise Indigenous people, say Baptists

State and national Baptist leaders have given in-principle support for a constitutional amendment to recognise Australians of Aboriginal and Islander origin as first peoples of this nation.

The unanimous decision came at a National Council meeting of the Baptist Union of Australia, now known as Australian Baptist Ministries, in Melbourne yesterday.

“We would welcome an amendment to the Constitution that has strong bipartisan support, acknowledges historical reality, and provides a way for all Australians to move forward together,” ABM National Director Rev Dr Brian Winslade said.

“At the same time, it is important to stress that symbolic words and actions do not by themselves bring about reconciliation. Symbolism such as an amendment to the preamble of the Constitution must be accompanied by practical strategies for reconciliation at the local community level.”

“Relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have a troubled history, but it is our hope that Baptist churches and individuals will be inspired to lead the way in expressing practical reconciliation and forging a harmonious and prosperous common future for all Australians.”

An excellent way to explore what practical reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians might look like is the [Reconciliation Action Plans](#) facilitated by Reconciliation Australia, which could be tailored to Baptist churches and small groups.

Australian Baptist leaders have been in conversation with Indigenous leaders around Australia on the best ways forward, and were treated to a presentation by Mr Grant Paulson of Reconciliation Australia at a dinner meeting on Tuesday.

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