



What is the Congress?

“ The Congress will create a national and collective voice, conduct research, be a partner for government and industry, a think tank for our issues and our peoples. ”

Sam Jeffries, Congress Co-Chair

A National Voice

The establishment of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples is the culmination of years of hard work to re-create a national Indigenous representative body. The Congress has been established as a Company Limited by Guarantee and was incorporated in April 2010.

Our Vision is to be a national leader and advocate for recognising the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Nation peoples.

About the National Congress

The final Model for the Congress is based on:

- the highest standards of professionalism and objectivity
- clear principles and ethics: integrity, honesty, accountability, transparency, openness, participation and inclusion, being informed
- a non-government organisation
- an organisation which will raise corporate and philanthropic support and funds

The National Congress will:

- advocate for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights
- work towards securing an economic, social, cultural and environmental future for our peoples
- build new relationships with government, industry and among communities
- have fair and diverse membership, guarantee gender balance for delegates and office holders
- ensure participation from youth, urban, regional and remote communities
- encourage new leadership
- grow and change based on decisions made by our members – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The National Congress will not:

- provide service delivery or funding for public programs
- have representatives or memberships who are hand-picked by government
- be dependent upon the good will of parliament or the government of the day

Financial Sustainability

The Congress aims to become financially sustainable by raising funds, and gaining sponsorships. The Australian Government has committed \$30 million to the establishment and operation to 2013.

“ We are promising to deliver a vehicle for our aspirations and visions – not an overnight fix or that would have been realised already. This is a long term proposition. ”

Dr Kerry Arabena, Congress Co-Chair

What is the Congress?

The National Congress Structure

The National Congress is made up of its Members, a National Executive, an Ethics Council and an Annual Forum of delegates.

The National Executive:

The National Executive are charged with overseeing the set up phase and along with a secretariat and is tasked to convene the first meeting of the Congress and its 120 delegates. The 8 Directors of the National Executive make up the Company Board.

Dr Kerry Arabena and Mr Sam Jeffries are the inaugural Co-Chairs and are joined by fellow directors: Ms Josephine Bourne, Professor Peter Buckskin, Mr Ned David, Professor Colleen Hayward, Mr Klynton Wanganeen and Ms Daphne Yarram.



The Ethics Council:

A special body of expert peers has also been established as an Ethics Council and will provide independent advice on standards and guidelines for the Congress. As an oversight and advice body the Council will assist with legal and reporting requirements but also as an external body that can investigate breaches or complaints. There are 6 members of the Council. The Council may attend meetings of the membership and the National Congress but does not vote. There is a two year term of appointment.



Members of the Council are: Mr Tom Calma, Ms Megan Davis (Co-Chair), Mr Wesley Enoch, Ms Mary Graham, Ms Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun and Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney (Co-Chair)

Annual Forum of 120 delegates:

The Annual Forum of 120 delegates are organised into 3 chambers. The Forum makes decisions on policies and issues affecting our peoples and advises the National Executive on the future direction and priorities for the organisation. Each Chamber has 40 delegates made up of 3 Categories:

Chamber 1: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peak bodies, operating at a Regional, State/Territory or National level.

Chamber 2: all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Chamber 3: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 18 years and older.

Find out more about the National Congress:

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