



April 19th 2011

NEW ERA FOR SELF DETERMINATION AS LEADERS ELECTED TO NATIONAL BODY

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples announced today the results of its first elections for the two most senior positions in the organisation – male and female Co-Chairs.

Ms Jody Broun and Mr Les Malezer have been declared Co-Chairs Elect following confirmation by the National Board at its Redfern headquarters on the weekend.

Inaugural Co-Chairs Sam Jeffries and Josephine Bourne said that the elections were one of the most critical stages of establishing the national representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.

“This has been a long time in the making and the inaugural Directors are proud to hand over the foundations we've laid for re-creating a national voice for our peoples,” **said Ms Bourne.**

“The elected Co-Chairs will have a mandate on behalf of our members and the massive task to grow the Congress as a trusted advocate and voice for the First Nations of Australia.

“The diverse field of ten nominees was impressive and they upheld our comprehensive ethical guidelines to stand for election.

“On behalf of our members, we thank each of these experienced men and women for their commitment to lead,” she said.

Mr Jeffries said the new organisation was setting standards.

“These elections are the first time we as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been able to exercise our rights to determine who will lead us at a national level since the abolition of ATSIC,” he said.

“Our model ensures the Co-Chairs of the Congress are directly accountable to the members that elected them.

“The fact that we also mandate equity by guaranteeing male and female representation for our Co-Chairs, on our board and for our conference delegates is a standard for others to live up to,” **said Mr Jeffries.**

The Co-Chairs Elect were both humbled by the outcome and re-iterated their commitment to talk directly to our peoples and communities during the two-year term.



Ms Broun, a Yinjibarndi woman from Western Australia, identified her five priorities:

- Listening to community/delegates/members. Ensuring voice of women, youth and elders is heard.
- Setting rights/advocacy agenda - close the gap, constitutional recognition, cultural protection and impacts of general issues like climate change on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- Partnerships with Indigenous organisations, government and private sector.
- Building the membership base and legitimacy.
- A sustainable financial base.

Mr Malezer, of the Butchulla people in southeast Queensland, has listed his priorities as:

- Ensuring the National Congress is representative of the people it serves.
- Healing and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Promoting the relationship between the people and their lands and resources.
- Focussing upon political, economic, social and cultural development.
- Achieving decision-making through self-determination by the people.

The Co-Chairs Elect nomination statements and CVs are attached.

MEDIA CONTACT

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Congress was incorporated as a company in April 2010
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders over 18 eligible for membership
2200 individuals and 120 organisations are members
Election was held in February/March 2011
26% of the membership voted in line with other non-compulsory elections
Co-Chairs Elect will take up their full time positions in July 2011
Remaining six Directors of the company will be elected at the first national meeting
of Congress Delegates in June