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Leaders Meet in Canberra

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples confirmed to the Prime Minister today that the Congress would provide strong and practical advocacy for its members.

The inaugural meeting of the Congress National Board and Prime Minister Julia Gillard in Canberra, reaffirmed commitments to work to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Congress Co-Chairs Jody Broun and Les Malezer said there was a clear need for negotiation, collaboration and frank discussion.

"Following the establishment of Congress, it is now important to engage with the Federal Government and chart a way forward," said Ms Broun.

"As the first elected national representative body for some time, leadership and a powerful unified voice is needed more than ever," she said.

Mr Malezer said the meeting was a starting point for a working relationship to produce results.

"We outlined our plans for Congress and our own credentials to deliver that vision," said Mr Malezer.

"The first meeting covered Congress achievements, how we will advocate our Members' interests and how the Government will respond to this agenda.

"The Board welcomes a commitment by the Prime Minister for an annual meeting with Congress Directors," he said.

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