

MEDIA RELEASE

Future leaders want say on taking native title forward

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Australia's recently appointed Youth Representative to the United Nations has called for an open conversation and dialogue between Indigenous youth and older generations about native title and rights.

Benson Saulo, a young Wemba Wemba and Gunditjmara man, made the call today during his address to an Indigenous Talking Circle on Young People and Native Title at the 2011 National Native Title Conference held in Brisbane.

"We can make a change now, in our generation. We need to ask the hard questions and not be afraid of answering the silly ones – this is the way we will overcome the generation divide and unify our people."

"There is an urgent need for engagement between generations," he said.

In calling for an open conversation and dialogue, the 23 year paid tribute to the struggles and achievements of previous generations of Indigenous people, who fought hard to secure recognition of native title.

"What should be regarded as a right is actually a privilege because of how hard past generations fought to get these."

"The need to communicate across these generations is great – talking about leadership, promoting the need for role models and moving now to make a positive impact."

Kiah Woodall, a 19 year old Kabi-Badtjala (QLD) woman and passionate advocate for practical Reconciliation, also spoke of her respect for previous generations and the need for the younger generation to continue to work to achieve results.

"We're moving forward strongly and proudly because of the decisions, actions and results of those who struggled through past hardships. In 2011 we have the opportunity and resources to bridge the gaps – but we must walk united as one mob," she said.

Participants in the talking circle spoke to the need for individuals and communities across Australia and the Torres Strait Islands to focus on commonalities and shared experiences.

Fraser Nai, from Yorke Island's Prescribed Bodies Corporate noted that the Conference's talking circles brought together different people – lawyers, PBCs, traditional owners, - all of which distinct challenges with native title.

“We could focus on these differences and risk losing sight of what we have in common, that is working for recognition of our rights and entitlements – we're all working for the cause,”

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