



EnergyAustralia
LIGHT THE WAY

REMARKS TO RECOGNISE ANNUAL DINNER

Thank you...

Before I say a few words I'd like to acknowledge Wesfarmers, the co-principal sponsor of tonight's dinner. Wesfarmers has made a wonderful contribution to reconciliation and it's great to see them represented by Jennifer Westacott.

Although she can't be here I'd like to thank and congratulate Tanya Hosch on her contribution to RECOGNISE and for her support pulling together EnergyAustralia's Reconciliation Action Plan.

She has a new role but she's not lost to us. I am so pleased Tanya continues to support the movement through her work with the AFL and as a member of the referendum council.

So, to tonight...

Two years ago I asked you to think about the extraordinary power of deadlines; how they can galvanise and drive us to achieve great things.

It's true: we don't have a referendum date yet. But we are perhaps only 12 months from one of the most important decisions this country has had to make in its rich history.



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Let's not kid ourselves – our cause is in the balance.

Events here, in the United Kingdom and the United States tell us today no political cause can ever be certain of success. The community well knows the power of its voice; we're hearing it through the ballot box.

In response, we could raise our own voices. Certainly, we could redouble our public calls, highlighting the urgency of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our constitution.

But speaking louder isn't always the answer. I think it is better to acknowledge uncertainty; get people in the cart and bring them along with us.

In business we have a greater capacity to lead change than we know. People in this room run some of Australia's biggest companies – our biggest employers with deep roots in communities around the country.

In many ways it is easier to get a board and shareholders on board than it is to recruit an entire nation to a cause.

Recognition is a conversation we should have publicly *and* in our homes and lunch rooms. Let's invite that discussion with our own people, our customers and our communities.



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And where we're able, let's lend resources... office space or secondments... these things can make a big difference to our campaign.

There's a very great difference in being business leaders versus leaders of our own businesses.

Imagine what we might achieve by devoting a fraction of our time to thinking about how business might use its resources to support recognition.

Not everyone will agree – there are varying and passionately-held views about recognition across politics, the wider community and in Aboriginal Australia.

But we should welcome the dialogue. This is an opportunity to bring us together; it is well past the time to recognise our first peoples.

When I last spoke at this dinner two years ago we had 220,000 signed-up supporters of RECOGNISE; today there are more than 300,000. Almost 110 people are joining our campaign every day.

We're within sight of one of the most important historical moments Australia has had.



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Success is not a birth right. It's something we earn. So, when we sit down at this dinner next year, what will we say we did to support RECOGNISE?

I hope we can say we did great things.

Thank you.