

Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Members

Re: Senate Select Committee on the Aboriginal Flag

This submission is provided on behalf of the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and the living descendants of the great Aboriginal leader, Vincent Lingiari, whose brave actions over 50 years ago are widely recognised as the pivotal beginning of Aboriginal Land Rights in Australia.

With great regard to the flag's designer, Harold Thomas, and the current license holder, WAM Clothing, we, the Gurindji people, would like to respectfully express our concerns for the future of the flag.

Every August on Gurindji country, we commemorate and celebrate the Freedom Day Festival, an event marking the Wave Hill Walk-off and the epic struggles for freedom and rights to our land. We come together each year in the spirit of unity and pride. There are few, if any, greater symbols of unity and pride than the Aboriginal Flag for our people. And its use in a wide variety of formats for Freedom Day and every day is vital to our community.

With regard to the Freedom Day Festival and the many other community events at which we proudly use the Aboriginal flag, the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and Vincent's Lingiari's grandchildren would like to question the following:

1. What will the financial burden be on us to continue using the flag?
2. What will be the impact on our community's wellbeing if this flag is no longer used?
3. What will prohibitive measures around the flag's usage do to this nation's broader goals of reconciliation?
4. Can the Government take action to ensure that this flag, our very own symbol of freedom and hope, is safeguarded for the future?

As we approach the 55th anniversary of Freedom Day in 2021, as the Aboriginal flag also approaches its 50th year, we hope that all stakeholders involved in this significant matter can reflect on the efforts of Vincent Lingiari and many others, who envisaged a world in which the rights and hopes and dreams of Aboriginal people were heard and valued.

Sincerely,

The Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation