

# 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1967 REFERENDUM

## MUCH ACHIEVED, STILL MUCH TO DO



**JACK AH KIT**  
ABORIGINAL LEADER

**“ I didn’t understand the importance of the referendum at the time. I was only 17 and interested in other things – a teenager had the challenges of learning.**

But later on in life, as I achieved maturity, I realised that it was a landmark decision

– Australians had voted to include Indigenous people in the census and allow the Commonwealth Government to make laws for us. As ridiculous as it seems now, the constitution was being changed to, in effect, recognise Indigenous people as Australians.

The referendum didn’t have much immediate impact on our day-to-day lives in the Northern Territory. I’m often asked: ‘Has life improved for Indigenous people?’ Yes. We’ve made lots of advances, but there’s still a long way to go. Australia is a lot more understanding of Indigenous people.

There’s more maturity. And there’s a feeling that it’s time for true reconciliation.

The push for more constitutional change is good, but Indigenous people must be sensible about what can be achieved and when. Whatever question is put to Australians in a referendum must have bipartisan support, otherwise it won’t be passed. History proves that.

Indigenous people are still a political football. That has to stop. ”  
- Jack Ah Kit

CELEBRATING

**50  
YEARS**

May 27: the day two discriminatory sections in our Constitution were removed after a vote overwhelmingly in favour