

# Women for Wik

A member group of ANTaR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation National Coalition)

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Women for Wik is a national grassroots movement which began in May 1997 when four women sat around a table to discuss ways of expressing their support for Native Title and reconciliation. This eventuated in the first Women for Wik meeting in July when Lois O'Donoghue, Marlene Riley and Jean Carter spoke movingly about the pain of their stolen childhoods to a packed hall of women representing churches, business, the arts, indigenous organisations, all levels of government, legal and medical professions, universities and Australian women generally. These included Faith Bandler, Carolyn Jones, Rachel Ward, Jane Champion, Wendy Harmer, and many others.

The success of this meeting has generated a wave of similar gatherings across Australia in every city and many regional centres, a movement which is still gathering momentum and involves the active commitment of tens of thousands of Australian women including Hazel Hawke, Ruth Cracknell, Judy Davis, Jennie George and Margaret Whitlam.

This extraordinary groundswell of support has taken everyone by surprise including the Coalition Government. It has been very heartening to see such a massive commitment by mainstream Australian women, and increasingly, as we link with rural communities, the courage of women willing to talk over these issues. Lady Deane was being prophetic when she said at the Reconciliation Conference that it is up to the women of Australia to set our country back on the path to reconciliation.

This commitment to reconciliation can be summarised in the following Six Steps formulated by the National Indigenous Working Group and Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation which Women for Wik endorse,

**1. Abide by the High Court's Mabo and Wik decisions.** Eject all discriminatory aspects of the Government's native title amendments and start genuine negotiations with all the parties.

**2. Confirm all valid property rights.** Guarantee pastoralists' existing rights and give full protection to native title rights.

**3. Respect Indigenous cultural and spiritual attachment to the traditional lands.** Provide Indigenous access to native title land by reasonable and proper arrangement.

**4. Establish a system for negotiating binding agreements.** Aboriginal people, pastoralists, miners, governments and other stakeholders need to be able to negotiate agreements about land use, a system which is expeditious, fully supported by governments and under which agreements are backed up by statute.

**5. Address the genuine problems with the existing Native Title act in a constructive and non-discriminatory way.** Modest changes are required to improve the native title claims process.

**6. Fully support the reconciliation process.** Reconciliation is the matrix for co-existence in Australia.

We believe that Native Title as endorsed by the High Court Wik decision is a basic human right crucial to the well-being of Indigenous people and their culture as well as to a truly democratic society for all Australians.

We recognise that though we of this generation cannot bring the stolen children home, we can take some responsibility for ensuring justice is done at this crucial time in Australian history. We can do this by urging the Howard government to apologise for these past wrongs as a necessary step towards reconciliation., and by opposing the effective extinguishment of Native Title by the Wik 10 point plan as unnecessary, divisive, unworkable and unjust.

We ask your organisation to endorse these Six Steps as a clear message to the Government that a significant and growing proportion of Australian women voters strongly support reconciliation.

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Endorsements from 130+ National and Regional Women's Organisations for the Women for Wik Statement

Women and the Australian Church (WATAC) Inc

Y.W.C.A of Canberra

Women's Electoral Lobby (Australia) Inc.(plus individual state branches to follow)

National Union of Students

Network of Women in Further Education

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australian section)

Queensland Women's Interest Coalition

Australian Education Union

Older Women's Network (Australia)

National Council of Single Mothers and their Children  
Association of Women Educators (Australia)  
Missionary Sisters of Service Victoria  
Frock Rock Women's Performance Collective  
Canossian Daughters of Charity Queensland  
Daughters of Charity Victoria  
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative  
Erin's Place  
Caxton Legal Centre  
Geelong Feminist Ecumenical Theology Group  
Pinnacle Training and Consulting Services Ltd  
D.V.I.R.C. (Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre) Victoria  
Australian Women's Party  
Women's Information and Referral Exchange Inc. (WIRE)  
Deakin University Geelong Women's Department  
Centre for Coastal Management Southern Cross University  
N.S.W. Women Lawyers Association  
Women's Legal Service Inc.  
The Women of the Kimberley Land Council  
Playworks (National Centre for Women Performance writers)  
Carneys Barristers and Solicitors Alice Springs  
Lismore and District Women's Health Centre Inc  
Women's Refugee Education Network  
The Channon District Women's Group  
Women in Research Committee University of New South Wales  
Women's Studies Unit at Flinders University of South Australia  
Gooriana Community Aid Abroad Group  
Northern Territory Environment Centre  
Flinders University Women's Network  
Deaths in Custody Watch Committee (W.A.)  
International Women's Development Agency  
School of Law and Legal Studies La Trobe University  
North Queensland Combined Women's Services Inc.  
Griffith University Postgraduate Students  
Australian Peace Committee  
International Grail Movement (Australia)  
National Women's Justice Coalition  
Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service.  
Society of Australian Presentation Sisters  
Interhelp  
Social Change Training and Resource Centre  
Sisters of Mercy (Perth)  
Lismore Women's and Children's Refuge Inc  
Lismore Planning Service  
Far North Domestic Violence Committee  
Kyogle Family Planning Service  
Ballina Domestic Violence Court Support Service  
Casino Family Planning Service  
Ballina-Byron Family Support Service  
Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny

Marist Missionary Sisters  
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia  
Women of Community Aid Abroad (Australia)  
Community Radio 2XX  
Hecate International Journal  
Women's Electoral Lobby W.A.  
Lismore Women's Action Group  
C.O.A.L (Australia)  
City of Port Phillip citizens for Reconciliation.  
Camp Clarence Social and Support Group  
Union of Australian Women NSW  
Missionary Franciscan Sisters.  
Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association  
Women's Economic Think Tank  
International Women's Day Committee (S.A.) Inc  
Department of Social Inquiry University of Adelaide  
Coalition for Trafficking against Women  
Spinifex Press  
FINRRAGE (Australia)  
Soroptimist International  
Urban Ecology Australia Inc.  
Southern Women's Group Inc. Bega  
Womensport Australia  
Women's Circus  
Zonta Club (Lismore)  
Sisters of St Joseph Goulburn  
Women of Greenhouse Action Australia  
Tweed Shire Women's Service Inc.  
Sisters of St Joseph Perthville  
North Queensland Women's Legal Service  
Townsville Feminist Collective  
St George Women's Housing Inc.  
Victorian Women's Trust  
Australian Women Lawyers  
Presentation Sisters Victoria  
Independent Education Union of Australia (Women's Committee)  
C.A.P.A. of Australia  
Women Lawyers of Australia (Tasmania)  
Public Health Association  
Australian Women's Party W.A. Branch  
Rural Women's Legal Outreach Program (Warrnambool)  
Brigidine Sisters Victoria  
Holy Cross Congregation of Dominican Sisters SA  
Women's Legal Resource Group Inc Vic  
Sisters of Charity Queensland  
Catholic Women's League Sydney  
Women with Disabilities Australia  
Sisters of the Good Samaritan Social Justice committee  
Women and the Law Society University of Queensland Student Union  
Women of Byron Bay Environment Centre

B.P.W Club, Harvey W.A  
L.O.V.E.  
Wollongong Committee on Domestic Violence  
Nimbin Women for Reconciliation  
MacGregor, Solicitors, St Kilda  
North Melbourne Legal Service  
Yums Eco Entertainment  
Center for Women's Global Leadership Charlotte Bunch Executive Director  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom UN Office Executive  
Felicity Hill  
Victorian Women Lawyers' Association  
The Australian Greens  
Brigidine Social Action and Awareness Group  
Alice Springs Women's Centre  
Women's Electoral Lobby Tasmania  
Northern Women's Community Group and Health Centre  
Feminist Lawyers  
Coffs Harbour Women's Health Centre  
Sisters of Charity  
Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace  
Social Justice Committee of Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes  
Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Trust  
Designer Women in the Kitchen  
Reconciliation in the A.C.T  
Women in Film and Television (Victoria)  
Bourke Reconciliation Group.  
Community Consultants International  
Senator Margaret Reynolds Dr Nicole Moore Dept of English Tasmania  
University , Clare Burton , J. Gardiner Lecturer in Social Work , Kathleen  
Swinburne Diane Otto Senior Lecturer Law School, University of  
Melbourne, Mary Draper Senior Lecturer Dept Social Science and Social Work  
University of Melbourne, Professor J. Strauss, Dr Alba Ramano, Sharon  
Mascher, Lecturer University of W.A. Law School, Suzanne McGhie, Merrian  
McCormick, Dr Elizabeth Shannon, Sabine Erika, Renee Barder, Mary McNeil,  
J. Walker, Cathy Williams Jennifer Lawry, Wendy Foran, Aileen Kelly, Clare  
Henderson, Alison Young Senior Lecturer Melbourne University Criminology  
Dept, Hayley Katzen Associate Lecturer, School of Law and Justice, Kirsten  
Muir, Professor Margaret Thornton, Dr Frances Gray, Kay Walker, Jane Neill  
Lecturer in Nursing Professor Sandra Berns, Professor Marian Sawyer,  
TerriAnne White, Julie James Bailey, Helen Rhoades, Dr Jenna Mead, Madi  
McClellan, Gai Wilson, Marilyn McHugh, Meg Montague Social Research and  
Policy Consultant, Libby Gregory, Rae Welles, Jennie Schroeder, Karen  
Alexander, Barbara Hartley, Tanya Hosch, Alison Caddick, Mary Considine,  
Ann McGregor, Adrienne Mc Darra, F. Ralston, M.  
Sherlock, M. Girdler, Margaret Rawsthorne, Marisa Hickie, Angela Savage, Julie  
Clayton, Janine Barron, Sandra Bell, M. Gilles, M. Robertson Principal St  
Raphael's College, James Cook University, Lynette Byrnes, A. Gaffney,  
Jocelyne Scutt, C. Denigan, Dr C. Johnson, Angela Taft, Assoc Professor  
M. Franzman, M. Sargent, C. Flynn, Dr J. Homeshaw J. Roberts, S. Frank, P.  
Collett, J. Lindsay Dr N. Moore, Angela Nordinger, Jane Anstee-

Wedderburn, Melinda Richards, Philippa Pryor, Jane Homewood Sandy Bell, Donna Sullivan international lawyer (working on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW) Pat Giles former Australian Senator Kate Orman, Raeleene Gregory