

Our Ref: SPB:JM/GO

11 March 2026

Senator Jana Stewart

Chair

Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Via email: rhvinquiry@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator,

Inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Knowmore welcomes the inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. We thank all Members of Parliament and Senators who have advocated for this important inquiry. We agree with your comment that ‘if we are serious about community safety, we must confront the environment in which hatred grows’.¹

Knowmore is a nation-wide, free and independent community legal centre. We provide culturally safe legal help and multidisciplinary support to victims and survivors of child abuse, including victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and the Stolen Generations. We see the impacts of racism, hate and violence against First Nations peoples every day. About 2

¹ Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, *New inquiry to tackle racism, hate and violence toward First Nations people*, 4 March 2026, <https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/About_the_House_News/Media_Releases/New_inquiry_to_tackle_racism_hate_and_violence_toward_First_Nations_people>.

in 5 of our clients (39%) identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. This reflects the ongoing impacts of racist laws, policies and practices, such as the forced removal and institutionalisation of First Nations children.

We recognise that the ongoing racism, hate and violence against First Nations peoples is inextricably linked to colonisation and structural racism. We therefore consider that reforms to address racism, hate and violence must approach these issues holistically and include a serious reckoning with Australia's history.

Knowmore has advocated for the Australian Government to implement the following reforms, which must form part of a holistic response to racism, hate and violence against First Nations peoples:

- establishing a Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty-making and truth-telling processes²
- implementing a Human Rights Act, drawing on the insights provided by the Australian Human Rights Commission in the position paper, *Free and equal: a Human Rights Act for Australia*³
- implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*⁴
- ensuring that First Nations peoples have access to meaningful redress and justice-making options, including by improving access to the National Redress Scheme and Stolen Generations redress⁵

² *The Uluru Statement from the Heart*, May 2017, <ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>.

³ See, for example, Knowmore, *Submission to the inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework*, July 2023, pp 5-6, <knowmore.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/submission-inquiry-into-australias-human-rights-framework-cth.pdf>.

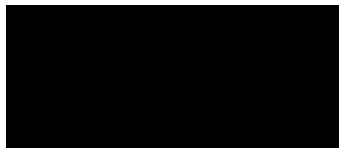
⁴ *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, September 2007, <www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf>.

⁵ See, for example, Knowmore, *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme*, February 2023, pp 25-50, <knowmore.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/submission-joint-standing-committee-on-implementation-of-the-national-redress-scheme-cth.pdf>.

- leading a comprehensive, nation-wide response to claim farming targeting First Nations victims and survivors of child abuse⁶
- leading a national approach to ending the overrepresentation of First Nations children in institutional environments that present a heightened risk of child sexual abuse, including prisons and out-of-home care⁷
- leading a national approach to preventing violations of the human rights of First Nations peoples in prison, including through improved monitoring of prison environments⁸
- leading a national approach to raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years, and supporting First Nations children to remain safely with their families and communities.⁹

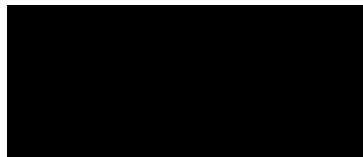
Should we be able to provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Gary Oliver, Executive Director Strategy and First Nations Engagement on [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,



JACKIE MEAD

Chief Executive Officer



GARY OLIVER

Executive Director

Strategy and First Nations Engagement

⁶ See, for example, Knowmore, *Submission to the audit of the Department of Social Services' management of the National Redress Scheme*, June 2025, pp 111-120, <knowmore.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/submission-dss-management-national-redress-scheme-cth.pdf>.

⁷ See, for example, Knowmore, *Submission to the inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system*, October 2024, pp 16-18, <knowmore.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/submission-inquiry-into-Australias-youth-justice-and-incarceration-system-cth.pdf>.

⁸ See, for example, Knowmore, *Submission to the inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system*, pp 26-28.

⁹ See, for example, Knowmore, *Submission to the inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system*, pp 19-23.