



MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: 25 JANUARY 2022
FROM: QUEENSLAND REPRESENTATIVE BODY ALLIANCE (QRBA)
RE: **50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABORIGINAL TENT EMBASSY**

The date, 26th of January, ignites many emotions from the people of Australia. But many Australians don't know the significance this date holds in the history of Aboriginal land rights.

It was on this date in 1972, that four Aboriginal men by the name of Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Tony Coorey and Bertie Williams arrived in Canberra from Sydney and planted a beach umbrella on the lawn of the old Parliament House – establishing the first Aboriginal 'Embassy'. This act was a political protest in response to the McMahon Government's announcement, refusing to recognise Aboriginal land rights or native title in Australia.

Although not considered an official embassy, the better known 'Tent Embassy' is a permanent protest site, one of the longest standing protests in the world, representing the ongoing motivation for Aboriginal People and their rights and recognition as Australia's First Nations Peoples.

The Queensland Representative Body Alliance pay our respects to the Ngunnawal People; the Traditional Owners of Country the Tent Embassy stands on in Canberra. We would also like to formally recognise and thank all involved in the 50 year ongoing Tent Embassy story and all who have contributed to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights for their initiative and determination that led to this day as we celebrate the 50-year anniversary. This activism and wisdom from the 1970's led to the establishment of many Aboriginal organisations. The QRBA wishes to pay regard too, to the Aboriginal women involved from early on, including Isabel Coe (Wiradjuri Nation, NSW), Matilda House (Ngambri-Ngunnawal Nations, ACT), and Cheryl Buchanan (Kooma Nation, SW Queensland).

As native title representative bodies and service providers, the QRBA acknowledge native title's long history and appreciate the at times frustrating and nonsensical processes our First Nations need to navigate through, for acknowledgement of rights and interests with Country they have been looking after for what scientists now say could stretch to 120,000 years. We still have quite a way to go in acknowledging and giving legal impact to historical, modern-day cultural rights and interests of Australia's First Nations' Peoples.

Australia is the only Commonwealth nation that has failed to enter into any kind of agreement or Treaty with its First Nations' People. In 2032, the whole world will be looking at Australia and the State of Queensland as the hosts of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Media enquiries:

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