



10 August 2019

The Honourable Ken Wyatt AM, MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Wyatt

On 10 August 1967, some fifty-two years ago today, the Australian Constitution was amended to give effect to the outcome of the 1967 Referendum, allowing Aboriginal People to finally be counted as part of the Australian population.

Prior to this, Aboriginal Australians had no proper legal status in Australia, no stable say in Government, and limited political rights. This was a landmark event in our fight for acknowledgement, equality and reconciliation.

It goes without saying that in the twenty-first century all Australians, no matter their colour, race, gender, or creed, should have the right to vote.

However, notwithstanding the heroic struggles of our elders past and present, we now find ourselves again denied the right to vote. In particular, our People, the Barngarla People, have been excluded from the vote on whether there should be a nuclear waste facility on our traditional lands near Kimba, South Australia.

Residents and property owners are allowed to vote—as they should be. The decision will affect all of their rights over their land whether they are for or against the nuclear facility. Similarly, the decision will also affect all of the Barngarla People's rights over our native title land. The right to live on and care for Country, our ability to use the land, its sense of "home", and its value to third parties will all be affected for us, like everybody else.

We have requested the right to vote—by writing both to the local council and the Commonwealth Government—but we have still been excluded from the ballot.

We write to you on the anniversary of our recognition as Australians to ask you personally to intervene and allow us to have a vote on this issue which will affect us, and all of the generations to come. We ask you to ensure that we do not again live in a country where Aboriginal People are denied the basic human right to vote.

On the anniversary of the 1967 Constitutional amendments, in the spirit of our elders and our ancestors, we ask your Government to ensure that we are included in the Kimba ballot.

Sincerely,

The Barngarla People

Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC ICN 8603