

# Work for recognition

INDIGENOUS, MULTICULTURAL GROUPS MEET TO INSPIRE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

By Jenna Bishop

The chair of a national constitutional recognition committee has commended Shepparton's Indigenous and multicultural communities on their ability to work together to inspire change.

Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples chair Ken Wyatt was in Shepparton on Wednesday to conduct a community hearing.

The hearings are designed to collect community consultation on the process of recognising Indigenous people and history in the Australian Constitution.

It will also assess taking steps towards a successful referendum on the issue.

Mr Wyatt said the committee was impressed with how different multicultural groups worked with the

broader community in Shepparton.

"It was great hearing from so many different groups in the community," he said.

"The clear message we took away was that it is important to recognise Aboriginal people in the constitution because it reflects the history and what we've become as a nation."

Shepparton's hearing was one of two in Victoria, with a second hearing in Melbourne yesterday.

Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group co-convenor Bobby Nichols said the group's submission discussed including land rights.

"It's about coming up with things to include in the constitution and discuss what it's going to look like and what's going to be in it," he said.

Representatives from Greater Shepparton City Council, Ethnic Council of

Shepparton and District, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Bangerang Cultural Centre's Uncle Sandy Atkinson and the Shepparton Interfaith Net-

work also presented submissions to the hearing.

Federal Member for Murray Sharman Stone said it was important for the committee to host a hearing in the region.

"Shepparton is a key area if you want to understand Aboriginal issues in the Victorian community," Dr Stone said.

"There is major support for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in our community."