

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1967 REFERENDUM

MUCH ACHIEVED, STILL MUCH TO DO



ROSALIE KUNOTH-MONKS

ABORIGINAL ACTIVIST

“ I was born by the river near Utopia.
I know that precious feeling of belonging.

CELEBRATING

50
YEARS

May 27: the day two discriminatory sections in our Constitution were removed after a vote overwhelmingly in favour

I was a nun in a convent when the referendum was held in 1967. But later I realised that the referendum was the beginning of black consciousness. A lot of my people

fought for the referendum – for the right to be considered Australians and be counted in the Census. But what audacity! To have a vote on whether the oldest continuous community in the world should be recognised. That should have been our right.

It was fantastic that so many Australians voted ‘yes’ in the referendum. Many referendums had failed but this one passed with the biggest majority ever. That led to land rights and the Mabo native title decision.

But Australia still needs to face up to its history – the massacres, the Stolen Generations, the attempt to destroy Aboriginal culture. When you think about the past, you realise that the resilience of black Australians is something to be admired. ”

- Rosalie Kunoth-Monks

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