

# Standing Together for First Australian Subsidiarity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – ‘the First Australians’ - lived and thrived for at least 65,000 years across the continent before European Colonisation. But despite their pre-eminence, today the First Australians have limited opportunities to influence important decisions that affect their families and their rights as Indigenous Peoples.

## Imagine you live in a country where:

- Your people are a small minority in their own land.
- The teachers at your school only speak a foreign language.
- At school you learn very little about the history of your people.
- Your doctor only speaks a foreign language.
- On television, people regularly blame your people for all kinds of problems.
- Every year you are expected to celebrate the invasion of your country.
- The wars your ancestors fought to defend your land are not remembered.
- Your parents worry that the Government might take you away.
- Other people always tell you what’s best for your people.
- Your families are exhausted from asking to be heard.

## How would you want to change things?

Not all First Australians experience these things but many people experience many of these things. Catholic Social Teaching teaches that the best people to make decisions are the people who are most affected by them. This is the principle of Subsidiarity.

Over several years Caritas Australia worked together with our First Australian Partner Organisations to develop a Joint Statement on Subsidiarity, which echoes the calls of many across the land.

**The Joint Statement has a simple message;**

**The First Australians have the solutions  
It’s time for everyone else to listen.**

*"Subsidiarity compels us to realise that the people closest to, and most affected by, the issues are the ones best placed to address them, with the help of the Government..."*

- NATSICC

