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MEMBER FOR LINGIARI**

YUNUPINGU

Australia has lost a giant.

Yunupingu, a Yolngu man of the Gumatj clan, has passed away.

A pioneer of the Aboriginal land rights movement, including the landmark Gove Land Rights case and the Yirrkala Bark Petitions, in 1978 Yunupingu was named Australian of the Year.

Yunupingu served as the Chair of the Northern Land Council for 23 years.

He worked with more than 10 Prime Ministers of Australia on the struggle for Indigenous recognition, and lived through the many disappointments.

Yunupingu hosted Prime Minister Albanese at Garma last year when the government committed to holding a referendum on constitutional recognition through a Voice to Parliament.

Yunupingu was also a member of the Referendum Working Group and was also part of the Indigenous Voice co-design Advisory Group set up by Ken Wyatt.

His gifts to us as a nation was a life of truth-telling and a passionate belief in his people and in Australia, and we as a nation can gift to him a successful referendum later this year.

In his final months Yunupingu reminded us: “the future is our responsibility”, and that we all have a responsibility to show leadership on: reconciliation, recognition, and the referendum.

So when we are done, all Australians can say: “This is our country. It is a country that we are all proud of. We now rejoice and celebrate with our Indigenous brothers and sisters together as one.”

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