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Hanson Warns Acknowledgement of Country Undermines National Unity

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One Nation Senator Pauline Hanson claims teaching Acknowledgement of Country in schools risks weakening national identity and Australia's defense readiness.

One Nation Senator Pauline Hanson has sparked controversy by arguing that teaching children to perform Acknowledgement of Country rituals in schools erodes their sense of national belonging, potentially leaving Australia vulnerable in times of conflict. In a statement reported by The Daily Mail on March 24, 2025, Hanson asserted that such practices condition students to feel disconnected from Australia, undermining the unity needed to defend the nation. She emphasized that fostering a shared Australian identity is critical for national security, citing concerns that divisive rituals could weaken collective resolve.

Hanson's remarks align with her broader policy to eliminate taxpayer-funded Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country ceremonies, as outlined in a One Nation policy document. She argues these practices, which recognize Indigenous custodianship of land, promote division by implying non-Indigenous Australians are less entitled to the country. Her stance is supported by a 2025 poll cited on her party's website, indicating 56% of Australians view such ceremonies as divisive. Hanson further claimed that schools teaching Indigenous languages or "woke activism" risk indoctrinating students, a position she reiterated in a Senate speech on July 26, 2025, calling for equal treatment of all Australians.

Critics, including Indigenous Affairs Minister Malarndirri McCarthy, condemned Hanson's views as disrespectful, arguing that Acknowledgement of Country fosters unity, per a July 24, 2025, Guardian report. McCarthy described Hanson's actions, including One Nation senators turning their backs during parliamentary ceremonies, as "childish" and harmful to First Nations Australians. The Australian Labor Party and Greens echoed this, with Greens Senator Larissa Waters accusing Hanson of stoking division. However, former Shadow Indigenous Affairs Minister Jacinta Nampijinpa Price supported Hanson's intent, stating on ABC Radio that such rituals are unnecessary for a unified Australia.

The debate intensified as Hanson proposed abolishing the \$4.5 billion National Indigenous Australians Agency, claiming it fuels a "corrupt Aboriginal industry" without closing inequality gaps, per The Daily Mail. With the Australian Bureau of Statistics reporting persistent disparities in Indigenous education and health, Hanson's critics argue her policies oversimplify complex issues, while her supporters see them as a push for equality.