

## How was the Statement from the Heart created?

“The Uluru Statement from the Heart was born from a series of regional dialogues held across the country, culminating in a National Constitutional Convention at Uluru in 2017. The purpose of these 12 Dialogues and 1 regional meeting was to consult and educate, resulting in the most proportionally significant consultation process of First Nations peoples Australia has ever seen.”

Source: <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/the-dialogues>

## What is ‘the Voice’?

- What the First People have asked for because of the process of consultation across Australia.
- A permanent, advisory body on laws & policies impacting First People able to speak to Parliament and the executive enshrined in the constitution.
- Consists of elected representatives of and by First People only.
- Unable to block legislation, deliver services or manage government funding.

## Why do we need constitutional change?

Can't we just introduce legislation to establish the Voice?

- An important step in acknowledging and addressing the wrongs and ongoing harms of colonisation.
- Empower our people to speak on matters relating to them.
- Will help our people to live in a Nation where their Traditional Voice is as important as their Modern Voice. This will empower the challenge of living in two worlds.
- Will ensure that we address our embedded powerlessness and allow us to provide alternatives to the top down and imposed decision making maintaining our deficit culture.

Queensland boy, 13, spends at least 45 days in solitary confinement, 22 days in succession, despite not being sentenced to detention.

Source: Guardian 15 March 2023

## What can we do?

- Take the lead - the Statement is an invitation to you and non-indigenous people to say yes. It is your responsibility to decide.
- Grassroots Networking
- Begin where you are.
- Use social media to promote.
- Engage in Kitchen Table Conversations.
- Join in community events.
- Write letters of support to all politicians and local councillors.
- Address local history / massacres and challenge 'don't mention the war' mentality.
- Encourage / deepen relationship building with Aboriginal and Torres Strait people.
- Invitation to hear the stories of local FNP, in a way that doesn't re-traumatise.
- Allow the conversation to happen.
- Use this document as a conversation starter.
- Invite Glenn to come and lead workshop.

Access further  
resources by the  
QR code.



redshoeswalking.net



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

## Do we need more detail?

- Heads of powers are enshrined in the Constitution; this is a Heads of Power
- Heads of Power are enacted in legislation and tested in the High Court. Here detail is added.
- Section 51 contains 39 clauses, all similar in length as the tax power below. The detail to the tax law has been added over time responding to need and been regularly tested in the High Court. The High Court does not test the detail, only the right of the Gov't to enact such legislation.

For Example: Australian Tax law

51. Legislative powers of the Parliament

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:

(ii) taxation; but so as not to discriminate between States or parts of States;

## Will it cede Sovereignty?

- No. Aboriginal sovereignty is relational, based on country and kin and cannot be ceded or taken.
- It will embed First People sovereignty alongside the sovereignty of the Commonwealth.
- It will allow both to function in relationship.
- Recognizes the two sovereignties:
- External sovereignty of the Constitution (from the outside) versus Internal sovereignty of First People (from within – person and community).

## Will it divide by race?

This will unite not divide. Why?

- Australia was built on racism inherent in the colonization process from the beginning.
- The racism was the basis of coloniality from 1492
- Based on the premise of Western European white supremacy.

Persona Nullius

- This refers to the idea that Aboriginal and Torres Strait People not being recognised as equals.
- As such they became white possessions along with the land defined as Terra Nullius.

## Why not Treaty first?

- Runs the risk of ceding sovereignty on a national level. Requires a secure equality on which to negotiate a treaty otherwise the imbalance means the Crown remains in charge.
- Not the process agreed on in the dialogues.
- Some suggest it is more appropriate to be managed by States because of the diversity of experiences. States are able to manage the difference in experiences and reflect them in their treaties.
- A National Treaty requires an inclusion in the National Constitution.

## Do we need more detail?

- First People are that, not immigrants.
- Immigrants who come here now are recognised as equal participants in Australian society. No White Australia Policy.
- The First People did not benefit from the end of that policy. They remained outside of society.
- Immigrants benefit from the dispossession of the First People.

The White Australia Policy was introduced in 1901 and was formerly known as the Immigration Restriction Act. The policy was designed to minimise the migration of all non-whites, predominantly non-European. However, the Indigenous locals, who were considered a 'dying race', were also targeted.

Source: Red Earth - White Australia Policy

## Do all First People's support the Voice?

- No, should they? Polling says 80% do.
- This should not be seen as an obstacle.
- Different experiences mean different responses. Context matters. e.g. Torres Strait Islanders had a very different to Aboriginal people in the Southeast as did those in Northern Territory.
- Distrust of Governments and non-First People mean people are sceptical. Too much sorry, too little action. Massacres, missions, Stolen Generations, NTER and more, colours people's distrust of governments.

## Do we need more detail?

The four aims outlined in the Torres Strait Islanders Masig Statement are:

- to achieve self-determination for the people of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula area,
- freely determine political status and pursue economic, social, and cultural development,
- self-government in matters relating to internal and local affairs,
- create partnerships with regional stakeholders, and the Queensland and federal governments to achieve the region's goals and aspirations.

"We fully support that ... We see that voice to parliament and constitutional change will give our voice a unique place in this country."

## The 'No' Voices 'yindjamarra yambuwan' (Wiradjuri – respect everything/everyone)

Jacinta Price and the Conservative No

- Asks how this will resolve issues on the ground.

Lidia Thorpe and the Progressive No

- Asks how this protects and allows First People's sovereignty.

National Party and Who Is Indigenous?

- Questions who have the right to identify as First People.

Liberal & Detail

- Appeals to the need to know what the outcome will be.

Mob – scepticism and misinformation

- Past disappointments and such as the NTER and the Stolen Generation raises concerns of being disappointed by govts.

Yes, But..... Fr. Frank Brennan etc.

- Says they support a yes vote but continue to raise issues that fuel concerns in the general public.