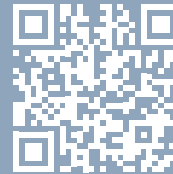


## What can we do?

- 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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WHAT IS  
THE VOICE  
TO PARLIAMENT

'In Search of Peace' by Canon Glenn Loughrey

What is the Voice to Parliament and Recognition about?

Is it about politics?

No. Is it about giving one group of people special privileges others do not have?

No. Is it about fixing the past?

No. Is it about First People issues and problems? No.

The Referendum on Recognition and Voice to Parliament is about people and the trauma of voiceless dispossession.

Simple.

We are not issues. We are people whose lives have been, and continue to be decimated by ongoing racism in this country. As the late Auntie Rosalie Kunoth-Monks said, "I am, we are not the problem." Our situation comes because of the invasion of our countries by people who, when they were unable to exterminate us, destituted our voice, language, law and spirituality. By designating us *persona nullius* (non-people) they possessed us and our country.

In recent days we have seen more mock outrage over a teenager allegedly racially abusing a professional footballer. The rhetoric of condemnation of a young person who is simply holding up a mirror to society has been comical at best. Why? Because this happens to people as high profile as Stan Grant and as minor as myself every day. It's inbuilt in the structure of our society and it is found in allies who fail to stop and listen, simply going on because they know best. If we resist their efforts in any way, we are deemed angry and ungrateful for their help.

This remains.

White Australia continues to decide who can speak and what they can speak about, what is right for us and what is not, what we can or can't do, even in the case of the Statement From the Heart and the absurdly generous offer to walk with those who caused and continue to cause our trauma. White Australia have turned this act of transformational forgiveness into a political and ideological football, hoping that it fails.

The Statement From the Heart, from which the elements of Recognition and Voice, Treaty, Truth, and Makarrata emanate is about people and trauma. It is about an absurd compassion that does not condemn or threaten but reaches out our hand for you to take and walk with us into healing. A close reading of the Statement itself will reveal no angry words, no threats of violence and no condemnation, just an invitation to walk together into a better future.

The elements of the Statement From the Heart make a circle. Circles in our tradition are all about healing and wholeness. They hold the medicine that heals – respect for self, each other, country and all that live on it. *Yindyamarra* is a Wiradjurri word that means respect, be gentle, polite, honour, do slowly. *yindyamarra winhanganha* means the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in.

Each element in the Statement is itself a circle and we begin to heal a little more each time we engage in each stage – Voice, Treaty, Truth, and Makarrata before we arrive at the centre which is ongoing healing and wholeness – justice. None of this happens quickly or immediately. It is a process, and it takes the time it takes to move around the circle and back again.

In terms of the Voice, we are asked to recognise that there are others in this country, the First People, who should be allowed to speak in their own voice on matters affecting them and this country. This is about respect. White Australia allows us to speak when they need our knowledge and wisdom or voice in song, art and how to deal with fires etc. which affect or are enjoyed by White people. We are not allowed to speak on matters that matter to us – our dispossession and its traumatic impacts of destitution and powerlessness.

This is what the Voice and Recognition is about. De-linking from the power of coloniality and re-existing what was here before – autonomy and self-determination for the people who remain sovereign in this our land.

This is not political or revolutionary, it is justice as demonstrated over and over in the pronouncements of Jesus and the various New and Old Testament writers we read, in the hymns we sing and the prayers for peace, the poor and the homeless we make in our regular worship services. Yet many of the same people who participate in these acts of Christian worship resist supporting the simple ask for recognition in the Constitution, the birth certificate of our nation, and a Voice to Parliament on matters that affect us.

Within many First People cultures they speak of seven generational change – it takes seven generations to change what needs to be changed. This recent move for recognition and Voice began in the 1990's so we are almost 3 generations down this path. Let's not stymie the progress made and together look forward to a new Australia sometime in the next 4 generations by supporting the hopes and aspirations of the First People of this country in the upcoming referendum.