

30 April 2021

National Indigenous Australians Agency
Voice Secretariat

Submission on the Indigenous Voice co-design process

[Justice Connect](#) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Indigenous Voice co-design process.

Our organisation

In the face of huge unmet legal need, Justice Connect designs and delivers high-impact interventions to increase access to legal support and progress social justice. Our innovative and effective legal services for people and community organisations aim to solve legal problems to prevent negative impacts and empower the community to use the law as a force for good.

We believe in a fair and just world, where communities are supported to engage with and fully participate in our legal system. We have been serving the community for more than 25 years. We are a registered charity, operating nationally.

Our work

Justice Connect works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities by providing access to lawyers and legal help, supporting people and communities with the tools and knowledge they need and challenging and changing unfair laws and systems.

Our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is undertaken across a range of [services](#), to provide people and communities with access to the most appropriate legal help.

For example, for the last four years we have partnered with the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the peak representative body for Aboriginal people and Local Aboriginal Land Councils (**LALCs**) in New South Wales, to provide free legal information, advice and training to the network of 120 LALCs.

Our feedback on the Indigenous Voice co-design process

Justice Connect is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination. We therefore recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are best placed to provide detailed feedback on the Indigenous Voice proposals put forward



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by the Government, and we seek to support the views of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations we work with.

[The Voice to Parliament must be constitutionally enshrined](#)

The Uluru Statement from the Heart called for full recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament.

We reject arguments that a legislative framework for the Voice to Parliament needs to exist before holding a referendum, and we echo the calls for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament put forward by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners.

[The Indigenous Voice process must be underpinned by community mandate](#)

In rejecting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Government has pushed forward with Indigenous Voice proposals without a mandate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

A Voice to Parliament which is not underpinned by a mandate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities will undermine its legitimacy and diminish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination.

We would be happy to discuss or expand on any of our comments. We agree to this submission being made public (with signature redacted).

Yours sincerely,

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