



Lendlease Corporation submission in response to the Interim Voice co-design report.

Acknowledgement

Lendlease acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to them and their Elders past and present. As a business that works across many locations, we have a responsibility to listen, learn and walk alongside First Nations peoples to ensure our activities support their ongoing connection to their lands, waters, cultures, languages and traditions. We value their custodianship of 65,000 years.

About Lendlease

Founded in Sydney in 1958 by Dutch immigrant and innovator Dick Dusseldorp, Lendlease successfully combines the disciplines of development, construction and investment to create places designed and built upon the foundations of our ethical and social obligations to stakeholders and the community at large.

In Australia our business includes a diverse range of development and management activity, including large scale urban residential projects, the management of a portfolio of 72 retirement communities, and management of 16 shopping centres and retail precincts throughout Australia, with 83 million plus customers visiting these retail destinations annually.

Lendlease employs approximately 8,000 people in Australia. Our people work across the country: in our Sydney head office at Barangaroo, in State and Regional offices, in client and project offices, in retail centres, retirement communities, on construction sites and in sales offices.

Lendlease's Reconciliation journey

After almost a decade since the release of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) our current Australian Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan, *Country, Truth and our Shared Story, 2020-2023*, outlines our commitment to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, self-determination and community led, designed and delivered services and programs.

When we started our RAP journey in 2010, our RAP Expert Panel made it very clear that if we were serious about supporting the self-determination of First Nations peoples, our RAP partnerships should be with First Nations owned, governed and managed organisations, and our relationships made long and deep with the Traditional Owners and the First Nations communities where we operate. This really set our direction and a key foundational learning: that self-determination starts in communities, it is place based, and this knowledge guides our strategy and actions today.

Support for Constitutional recognition and Uluru Statement from the Heart

Prior to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Lendlease has publicly supported constitutional reform. In our last RAP, we partnered with the Recognise campaign to raise awareness and start a national conversation about the need for constitutional reform, and in 2019, Lendlease Group CEO and Managing Director Steve McCann was one of fourteen Australian CEOs who came together to respond to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

“While there has been some debate about whether business should be engaging in social issues like this, it seemed to me that as an Elevate RAP organisation, we have an obligation to respond to the invitation issued by the First Nations Convention to engage with them on the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Coming together with other Elevate RAP organisations to develop that response showed our collective commitment to work with First Nations people towards true Reconciliation.” *Steve McCann, Group CEO and Managing Director, Lendlease*

Comments on Indigenous Voice co-design groups’ recommendations

Lendlease welcomes the work of the Government and co-design groups to ensure that First Nations voices are given primacy in deliberations regarding the development of final models and their implementation.

We support the right of First Nations people to have a voice and an active role in decision-making about matters and policies that affect them—as articulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration)—as this leads to better outcomes and is a principle supported by the broader community, as evidenced in Reconciliation Australia’s Barometer Report 2020.

Government approaches to working with First Nations people must support self-determination and be consistent with the UN Declaration. These approaches must be underpinned by clear, structured, and mandated engagement with First Nations people that ensures their voices are heard in the development and application of legislative and policy processes and that they are active participants in subsequent implementation and delivery of actions arising.

We support the recommendations that there is community designed and led governance structures at a local, regional and national levels, with enabled flexibility to tailor the approaches and structures in accordance with First Nations peoples wishes.

However, we do not agree with the co-design recommendation that this will be referred to as the ‘Voice’ because we believe that this confuses and is at odds with the calls in the Uluru Statement for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament.

Urgent action needed

For far too long in our nation’s history, First Nations peoples have been excluded from the structures and function of government. Constitutional enshrinement and legislative design of a Voice to Parliament has been the widely mandated request from First Nations peoples through the Uluru Consultation and Convention processes and the resultant Uluru Statement from the Heart. We believe that supporting this mandate is the most effective and respectful means of unifying our nation.

We call for the Federal Government to honour its election commitment to a referendum as soon as the model for the Voice has been decided and that a statement that the Government actively supports the concept of the Voice is used when shaping the referendum question. We believe constitutional recognition should occur prior to legislating the Voice to underline its’ legitimacy and drive increased sustainability and durability over a legislated-only option.

We believe that this is critical and urgent unfinished business.

Cath Brokenborough
Executive Lead, First Nations Engagement and Reconciliation, Lendlease
On behalf of the management, Board and staff of Lendlease