

## **FECCA submission to National Voice to Parliament inquiry**

29 April 2021

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the national peak body representing multicultural Australians. We have 22 member organisations across each state and territory capital as well as regional areas, who represent thousands of local organisations. Our policy, research and advocacy work is guided and informed by this vast network across Australia, and as such we have a deep understanding of the needs, priorities, challenges and aspirations of multicultural Australia.

FECCA's main goal is to help build a socially cohesive, multicultural nation where the diverse cultures of new and established migrants are not just celebrated but woven into the fabric of our society. We believe this is not truly possible unless we first acknowledge and address the historic and current inequities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

FECCA strongly believes that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples must have a say in the matters that affect them. We are proud to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its vision for what a Voice to Parliament should look like.

We strongly support the call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

FECCA considers that:

1. The Government must honour its election commitment to a referendum once a model for the Voice has been settled to ensure that a First Nations Voice to Parliament is protected by the Constitution;
2. Enabling legislation for the Voice must be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament; and
3. The membership model for the National Voice must ensure previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same chance of being selected as established leadership figures.

FECCA is increasingly hearing from our membership and directly from multicultural communities that listening to, learning from, and improving recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures in Australia is vital to creating the country that they want to live in.

As such, we urge the Government to listen to the Uluru Statement from the Heart's call for substantive constitutional change and structural reform.