

National Indigenous Australians Agency

Voice Secretariat

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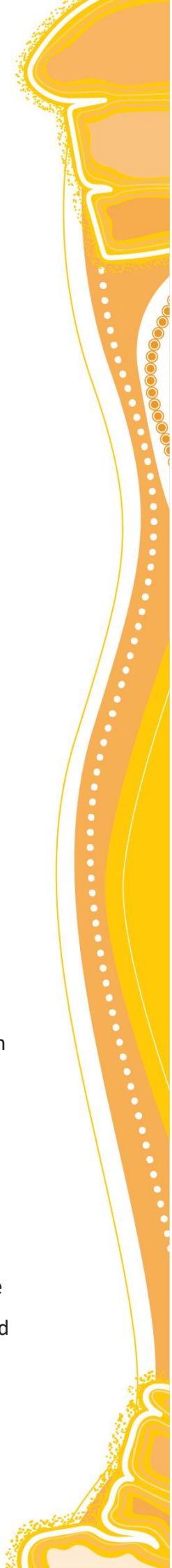
Dear Sir/Madam

The Benevolent Society joins the 70 per cent of Australians surveyed supporting First Nations peoples' constitutional recognition and the 60.7 per cent that also support the Voice to Parliament proposal, as stated in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. As Australia's oldest charity we feel as an organisation, that it is incumbent on us to stand beside our First Nations Peoples in their unprecedented and judicious call for a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

An inclusive Australian society based on equality, that advances the economic, political and social inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve parity in life outcomes, can only occur when First Nations Peoples stand in their rightful place in direct dialogue with the Australian Parliament. We believe that a Voice to Parliament will provide what The Benevolent Society has been honoured to experience; that experience being that to advance genuine reconciliation, the wisdom, leadership, strength and resilience of the world's oldest living culture is an imperative in establishing and then maintaining an inclusive Australian society.

We believe and will advocate persistently that a Voice to Parliament is both critical and essential, if we as a nation want to accomplish equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and thereby thrive in whole-of -life outcomes, within our Australian society.

We strongly advocate for structural reforms including constitutional change. In the spirit of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we support a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution as a matter of priority so that we can truly advance reconciliation.



The Benevolent Society requests that;

1. The Government 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. The Government enable legislation for the Voice to 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.

Yours faithfully

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Tim Beresford, Chair

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Jo Toohey, CEO

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Kathleen Conlon, Director

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Christine Feldmanis, Director

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Nancy Milne, Director

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Charles Prouse, Director

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Andrew Yates, Director

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Rod Young, Director

