

26/04/2021

By email only: [Co-designVoice@niaa.gov.au](mailto:Co-designVoice@niaa.gov.au)

Dear Voice Secretariat,

### **Shoalhaven City Council – Submission to Indigenous Voice Co-design Interim Report**

At its meeting of 23 June 2020, Shoalhaven City Council resolved to adopt the Local Government NSW Albury 2018 Conference policy on the Uluru Statement From The Heart. Council recognises that the Uluru Statement is a clear expression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples vision towards Makarrata and reconciliation.

In its meeting, Council acknowledged the challenges in the Uluru Statement and resolved to call upon the National Parliament to rise to these challenges and to establish a First Nations voice to Parliament.

Council also notes that the ‘Uluru Statement from the Heart’ was developed through wide consultation with First Nations peoples across Australia. The Statement not only outlines the history and pain of dispossession but also outlines the desired outcomes for the future – ‘a future for our children based on justice and self-determination’. Our non-indigenous community have now had extensive education and discussion on Constitutional Reform and have given every indication that it is time to formalise what Council considers to be the feeling of the wider community. It is time for Non-Indigenous Australians to take responsibility for the challenges that our First Nations People.

Shoalhaven City Council supports an Indigenous Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution. Council asks that the Government honour its election commitment to a referendum once a model of the Voice has been settled.

Council supports a diverse representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People on the National Voice and the Interim Report’s principle that “members of the National Voice be chosen by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, rather than being solely appointed by the Australian Government, and that the National Voice be linked with Local and Regional Voices” is supported.

The Interim Report also outlines important features of the National Voice proposal, such that the National Voice could:

- consist of up to 20 members, with guaranteed gender balance of members.
- include Youth and Disability Advisory Groups to ensure the voices of these groups are heard.

- connect with Local and Regional Voices to provide views from local communities.
- work with existing bodies, structures and organisations.
- advise on national matters that are critically important to the social, spiritual and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Shoalhaven City Council considers that the National Voice must include voices of Youth and Disability groups; it must connect with local and regional voices to provide views from the local communities; it must work with existing bodies, structures and organisations and it must advise on national matters that are critically important to the social, spiritual, and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The National Voice must also ensure a gender balance of members.

Shoalhaven City Council appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Interim Report on the Indigenous Voices co-design process and supports the initiative. Council supports the constitutional recognition of the National Voice and believes that the Australian People would also support a referendum.

If you need further information about this matter, please contact Michael Paine, City Lifestyles on (02) 4429 3683. Please quote Council's reference 1209E (D21/164816).

Yours faithfully

**Stephen Dunshea**  
**Chief Executive Officer**