

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Indigenous Voice Discussion Paper.

My name is Jacqueline Widin and I live on the land of the Gadigal people. As a society we have long lived under the shadow of the early violent colonisation of this country. Since colonisation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have continued to be subjected to extreme racism and abuse by the key institutions and denied even basic human rights. In 2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people came together and produced the Uluru Statement which gives the Australian government a pathway to First Nations People's self determination and reconciliation. This pathway challenges systems of injustice, unfairness and inequity and leads us towards a more just society. The Uluru Statement gives the government clear direction:

*We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.*

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

*Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self determination.*

*(Uluru Statement of the Heart, 2017)*

I support the Uluru Statement's demand for not only constitutional recognition, but also an independent voice enshrined in the constitution. In this submission I call on the Australian government to:

1. honour its election commitment to a referendum once the model for the Voice has been settled;
2. introduce enabling legislation for the Voice must be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament; and
3. support a membership model for the National Voice which ensures that previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same chance of being selected as established leadership figures.

The Australian government, in taking up the calls of this submission and seriously engaging in reconciliation processes such as agreement making and truth telling will allow us to form a stronger and fairer society.

Yours sincerely,  
Jacqueline Widin