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Interim Report to the Australian Government
Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process
January 2021

**ACTU Retired Unionists' Network (RUN) Submission
April 2021**

The **ACTU Retired Unionists' Network** endorses the First Nations *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. Especially, RUN recognises that now is the time for **makarrata** – a Yonhgu word signifying *the coming together after a struggle*. For many years, First Nations people have struggled deeply and now is certainly the time for us all to come together. If the undisputed sovereignty of First Nations people to be fully recognised by all Australians, a First Nations Voice must first be enshrined in the Australian Constitution and RUN fully supports that objective.

It is not enough that a First Nations Voice be enshrined in legislation - such legislation could be emasculated or even abolished by successor governments. Rather, such a Voice must be included in the Australian Constitution, following a referendum. RUN is confident that, properly informed, the Australian people would overwhelmingly endorse such a referendum. In 2019, the Australian Government committed "to hold a referendum with regard to a National Voice." Now is the time to follow through on that election commitment!

Further, we note that the Uluru Statement calls for "**a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.**" Again, we endorse this objective and, in doing so, we note the establishment and success some time ago of a similar *Truth, Justice and Reconciliation* commission in Timor L'este.

Rodger Smith
National Chair
ACTU Retired Unionists' Network