



29 April 2021

Voice Secretariat  
C/- Professor Dr Marcia Langton AO and  
Professor Tom Calma AO  
Co-chairs, Senior Advisory Group  
Reply Paid 83380  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Professors

**Re: Submission to the Indigenous Voice Co-design Process**

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland is a Diocese of the Anglican Church of Australia, stretching from Bundaberg in the north to Coolangatta in the south and west to the South Australian and Northern Territory borders. Our Diocesan community includes more than 130 parishes; 20 schools; Anglicare Southern Queensland; St Francis Theological College; and, various other ministries.

We are blessed with large numbers of culturally distinct First Nations peoples in our Diocesan community, including people from various Aboriginal Countries across the geographical regions of South East Queensland, Darling Downs South West and Wide Bay-Burnett, as well as people from other Aboriginal Countries across Australia and from the Torres Strait Islands.

Inspired by the Uluru Statement From the Heart, the Anglican Church Southern Queensland wholeheartedly supports the call for a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland believes in a 'fair go', which is a value shared across our nation's wider communities and is reflected in the broad support for this call. The Anglican Church Southern Queensland believes that constitutionally enshrining a First Nations Voice will be a significant step forward in enshrining long overdue fairness. It is only fair that our First Nations peoples have a genuinely independent and genuinely representative body that sits alongside Federal Parliament and Government to advise on legislation and policy that impact their communities now and into the future. Ensuring this constitutional guarantee will help provide our First Nations leaders and their communities with stability and longevity, particularly across election cycles and changes of Government.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland seeks to uphold the value of meaningful change. In this context, we believe that a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution will support the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make decisions at a local level and to have the autonomy to meet their social, cultural and economic needs. First Nations communities have a right to be able to effectively and efficiently influence the laws and policies that will impact their capacity to keep community life going. Through our national Church's Synodical resolutions, we have long upheld this right, including in 2017 when General Synod resolved to "support the recommendation of the Referendum Council for a constitutionally-entrenched First Nations' Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament."

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The Anglican Church Southern Queensland seeks to uphold the values of peace and reconciliation, as expressed in the fourth Anglican Communion Mark of Mission. Reconciliation is about strengthening and healing relationships with First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the common good of all Australians. In order for us to be sincere in our commitment to reconciliation, the Anglican Church Southern Queensland stands with our First Nations peoples to seek relationships built on mutual trust, equality, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance, as outlined by Reconciliation Australia. As such, we see enshrining a First Nations Voice as a significant unifying opportunity in the reconciliation journey.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland also seeks to uphold the value of integrity and thus calls upon the Federal Government to honour its election commitment to a referendum once a model for the Voice has been agreed to. We believe that this model must reflect diverse First Nations voices, and that membership of the representative body should be open to new and previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. We also believe that legislation for the Voice must only be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament.

Yours sincerely

The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall  
Archbishop of Brisbane