

Statement on the Recognition of Aboriginal & Torres Straits Islander people in the AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION

I have been in this country for over 30 years. I feel I am one of the Aborigines in my earlier life because I deeply feel that so much of social injustice that Aboriginal people have went through in their own land and that too after looking after this land for over 60-70,000 years, peacefully and with diligence, with various tribes that existed at that time.

This is the respect and recognition that they got in their own land!

The have such a rich culture and heritage that we, non-indigenous people, fail to recognize because of our bias.

The spirituality of the Indigenous people is to embrace everyone and share everything. We should be graceful and grateful enough to correct the injustice meted out to them and accord them their rightful place in their land, we live.

In fact, we should 'walk with them' and hear their 'Voice for respect and dignity'

Former Labor PMs Paul Keating & Kevin Rudd delivered The Mabo legislation of Land rights and Sorry to the First Nation's people, respectively

Former Liberal PM Howard in 2007, made the case for Aboriginal Recognition, in stating that "I believe we must find room in our national life to formally recognise the special status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first peoples of our nation. We must recognise the distinctiveness of Indigenous identity and culture and the right of Indigenous people to preserve that heritage.

Thus, governments of both persuasions have retained bi-partisan commitment for Constitutional recognition of Aborigines and Torres Straights islander people

So, what are we waiting for? Any discussions between the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people on the process and model could be resolved by Legislative & Executive measures.

I would like the following statement be put for the referendum for the above Constitutional Amendment for recognizing Aboriginals and Torres Straights islander people

'The nation and people of Australia formally recognise the prior Sovereignty of Australia's First People, commits to an ongoing process of truth-telling in our history and agreement making with them, and to the continued sharing of our rich Aboriginal cultural heritage as an integral part of our national identity'

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Uluru statement is calling for the establishment of the voice enshrined in the constitution. It is not a demand but a reminder and statement of a historical fact that this was the first voice sounded on this land, we call Australia

I am ██████████, an Australian and Indian by DNA. I was born in India and moved to Melbourne for better life prospects. Before moving here, I have heard that Australia is a multicultural and the most ethnically diverse country in the world. She is welcoming, inclusive and embrace cultural diversity. And I wasn't wrong from the first day I felt that I belong here.

This sense of belonging and connection deepens as I tend and care for the land, I now call home. As an environmental; and sustainability professional, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to assist in the protection, management and restoration of the sacred land of Wurundjeri people of Kulin nation. But sometimes I question where are the people, the community who took care of this land for more than 70,000 years?

I have come to believe the sense of belonging, home, place and voice enjoyed by us non-Indigenous subject — the colonizer or migrant — is based on the dispossession of the original owners of the land and the denial of their rights under international customary law. (An example my daughter is learning Chinese language but is not taught Dreaming stories or the native language at school).

We cannot possibly undo the neglect, injustices and harm done to First nation people in the past and present. But we can try and amend it by starting a dialogue which is based on trust and respect. First nation people have made the move by submitting the Uluru statement written from heart guided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. Now we need to stop and listen and give our first nations people the respect, recognition and representation they deserve in our country's most important document. This will empower them and the communities which have suffered over the years due to the physical, mental abuse, neglect and trauma. Until then, we can't call ourselves mature, just, plural and democratic society.

Enshrining the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in constitution will ensure that they have a real say in decisions that affect them (and Australia), instead of being governed by colonial powers. Embracing and integrating first nation people concerns, traditional knowledge and incredible wisdom would make us wiser and more sustainable as a nation. This is the recognition of First Nations' sovereignty and First Nations' rights based on their unique political and cultural existence. Sovereignty is not undermined nor diminished by Voice, Treaty and Truth.



We support and stand in solidarity with the Uluru statement