



30 April 2021

By Email: co-designvoice@niaa.gov.au

Submission in Response to the Indigenous Voice Discussion Paper

Philanthropy Australia supports the call for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, enshrined in the Constitution.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with First Nations peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. We have conveyed this support through an open letter, published in July 2019¹, and this submission is consistent with that statement of support.

We believe that an Indigenous Voice to Parliament is an essential first step in achieving Voice, Treaty, Truth, and giving expression to the ancient and unbroken sovereignty that has existed in Australia for over 60,000 years.

In relation to the design of the Voice, Philanthropy Australia supports the positions of From the Heart and the Uluru Statement, which call for the following:

1. That the Government honour its election commitment to a referendum once the model for the Voice is decided, to ensure that it is protected by the Constitution;
2. That the enabling legislation for the Voice be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament;
3. That the membership model ensures that previously unheard First Nations people have the same opportunity to be selected to the Voice as established figures.

Philanthropy in Australia is an emerging and maturing sector, preceded by tens of thousands of years of First Nations culture featuring ancient practices of reciprocity and generosity. As the peak membership body for philanthropy, we are committed to being strong and supportive allies of Australia's First Nations peoples, to platforming First Nations-lead funder organisations and charities, and to encouraging philanthropic practices which empower First Nations leadership. As such, we emphasise that it is the voices and experiences of First Nations leaders that must be listened to in terms of determining the model of the Voice that is adopted.

An Indigenous Voice to Parliament has the potential to be a force for First Nations empowerment and facilitate national reconciliation and healing. However, it must be more than merely tokenistic. It must be constitutionally enshrined, it must give voice to regional and grassroots figures, facilitate local decision-making processes, and it must acknowledge the diversity of First Nations experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. If you have any further questions regarding Philanthropy Australia's position, we invite you to contact our Acting Director of Policy & Research Krystian Seibert at kseibert@philanthropy.org.au.

¹ Available here: <https://www.philanthropy.org.au/tools-resources/news/media-release-philanthropy-responds-to-uluru-statement/>

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Yours sincerely,

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