

Submission to the Australian Federal Government regarding the Voice to Parliament

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission, offered as part of the current Public Consultation program, in support of the many voices of First Nations' people.

We are a group of concerned non-indigenous Australian people, responding positively to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

First Nation Australians have maintained and sustained this land and its people over millennia and have never ceded sovereignty.

We are deeply disappointed that a proposal has not yet been developed to be enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

When the document and consultation have been developed Australia should vote on it in a Referendum.

We believe that the National Voice provides a broad scope for advice on nationally significant matters of importance to First Nations peoples' social, spiritual, and economic well-being, which we believe is a fundamental human right for all.

This will not be a third house of Parliament. It is not a threat to existing government, and we condemn the way it has been misrepresented as such.

We recommend that the Voice to Parliament:

1. Be a national body comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
2. Be enshrined in the Constitution and not simply legislated, as the latter is inadequate, risking removal by subsequent governments.
3. Provide advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on relevant laws, policies and programs.
4. Consist of members who are selected from First Nations Local and Regional Voices and not through Government appointment.
5. Be structurally linked to Local and Regional voices, rather than through a direct election model. Two National Voice members from each State, Territory and Torres Strait Islands be included to ensure both diverse and grassroots participation.

It is vital that the Voice to Parliament provide a way for Indigenous Australians in communities around the country to influence decisions made concerning them. This Voice must faithfully reflect the recommendations from the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

We believe this is an urgent matter. It is past time for us to accept the invitation by the First Peoples to walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

[This submission was developed by consensus as part of a two day meeting in Creswick, Victoria, of 24 people who gathered to hear and respond to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.]

David Shield
Jenny Shield
Jenny Morton
Alison Lamont
Carole Ingersoll
Jacob Yang
Ken Rookes
David Carter
Heather Northwood
Eseta Waqabaca-Meneilly
Alan Mathews
Bronwen Mathews
John Stuart
John Lamont
Paul Mayfield
Rex Fisher
Catherine McNichol
Ian Menzies
Rosemary Carter
Cynthia Page
Sarah Tomlinson
Jim Foley
Tim Angus