

## Submission to Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process

### Support for a VOICE to Parliament, enshrined in the Constitution

Thankyou for your work on the Interim Report to the Australian Government.

My understanding of all these reports is that constitutional enshrinement is the only viable option for substantive structural change that has promise of improving lives of First Nations People.

In an historic consensus, First Nations people asked for this with the Uluru Statement, which was rejected by the previous government. Discussion of constitutional options for Voice has been explicitly removed from terms of reference for this CO-Design process.

However, I have an obligation, and am honoured to stand with first Nations Peoples and to affirm the Uluru Statement from the Heart. I stand in solidarity, in their call to be genuinely listened to, through the establishment of a **permanent advisory First Nations Voice that can form the basis of a reliable, ongoing seat at the table of government.**

Its call for **truth-telling**, for a **Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty-making**, and for a **national voice enshrined in the Constitution**, is an invitation which **must be acted upon.**

1. **I request that the Federal government honours its 2019 electoral promise to take a model for a First Nations VOICE to Parliament, to a referendum.**
2. **I ask for legislation for the First Nations VOICE to be passed after the referendum in the next term of Parliament.**
3. **The National VOICE member model, must be a model that ensures ALL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island grassroot voices are heard from every level.**

This is fair, practical, timely, supported by Australians and is foundational to a unified Australia.

This is a **pioneering opportunity** and **next step for this government, to make history**, and to show solidarity and leadership with ALL fair-minded Australians, in enabling the First Nations Voice to Parliament.

It is an imperative for this government **to join with most other countries** in honouring and respecting its First nations Peoples in both a symbolic and practical way.

Yours sincerely,



Fr Erick Niyiragira