



## Jeder Institute's Yes 23 Statement

Indigenous Australians have been asking for a say in decisions that affect them for more than 100 years. In 2017, they created the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which called for a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution and a 'Makarrata Commission' to oversee agreement-making and truth telling. The Jeder Institute supports these actions because they match our values and belief in community-led decision making. We appreciate the offer from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to join them in working towards a better future.

Jeder Institute supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a 'Yes' vote in the upcoming referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament. We are dedicated to promoting understanding about how constitutional recognition and a Voice to Parliament can create lasting change, benefiting both Indigenous peoples and all Australians. We encourage individuals to form their own opinions and respectfully discuss the upcoming referendum.

The following information and resources are available to support you to understand the Referendum and the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

## Key Resources and Information

- [Yes 23 Campaign](#)
- [Find out more](#) about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a First Nations Voice to Parliament protected by the Constitution.
- Listen to or watch [Noel Pearson 2022 Boyer Lectures](#)
- [Watch the 2022 Sambell Oration](#) where Aunty Pat Anderson AO and Professor Megan Davis, share how the Uluru dialogues were designed and run.

## Accessible Information on the Voice Referendum:

- [Access tool kits in 46 languages](#) including [Auslan](#) and easy to read English prepared by Life Without Barriers.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Indigenous Constitutional Recognition and why is it important?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have long been advocating for recognition in Australia's constitution. Although they gained the right to vote in federal elections in 1962 and the 1967 Referendum extended the reach of laws to include everyone, including Indigenous people, there is still no official recognition of our First Nations in the Constitution. This is significant because the

Constitution governs our country's operations. In 2017, Indigenous representatives, after more than 15 years of discussions and consultations, came together and crafted the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This statement called for a representative 'Voice to Parliament' as the initial step towards constitutional recognition of Indigenous people.

## **What is a Voice to Parliament?**

A Voice to Parliament is a representative body for Indigenous people that offers advice to the Parliament and Government regarding laws and policies affecting their families and communities. It ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard during the drafting of legislation, funding decisions for initiatives, and evaluations of programs to assess their impact.

## **What difference will it make?**

For non-Indigenous Australians the changes to the referendum will make no difference, your life will not change. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will finally have a chance, through their representatives on the Voice, to have a say on decisions that impact their lives. While there have been different advisory bodies set up in the past, they haven't been enshrined in the Constitution, so they have been established or shut down at the whim of the Government of the day. Being enshrined in the Constitution means that the Voice to Parliament will have long term legitimacy and impact.

## **Will the Voice to Parliament have decision-making powers?**

No. At the end of the day Parliament will still be the final decision-makers, but they will be required to take advice directly from First Nations people on issues that impact them. Governments will no longer have an excuse to say they didn't have a way to get input from First Nations people.

## **How will the Voice to Parliament work?**

The Government, the Referendum Working Group and the Constitutional Expert Group has been consulting with relevant communities and involving them in the design details for how the Voice works.

The question that will be asked at the referendum in the second half of 2023 is as follows:

*"A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?"*

The Government has also announced how the Constitution will be amended to enshrine the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in law, which is effectively how the Voice will work in practice:

In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia:

- *There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice;*
- *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;*
- *The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures.*

## **Do First Nations People support constitutional recognition and a Voice to Parliament?**

Most First Nations People, although not all, support a Voice to Parliament. These ideas emerged from the First Nations Regional Dialogues, a series of twelve meetings held throughout Australia. The Dialogues led to a National Convention at Uluru, where over 250 delegates from various regions came together. At Uluru, these delegates collectively developed, wrote, and signed the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which outlined their agreed-upon components and reforms. This process was an expression of their self-determination.

## **Why is Jeder Institute supporting the campaign for Constitutional Recognition and establishment of a Voice to Parliament?**

There are several reasons why Jeder supports these two actions. One big reason is that through considerable conversations and a codesign process across the country Indigenous people have decided that this is the best way to bring about change. Let's face it the current system has not supported self-determination or community led decision making. By supporting Constitutional Recognition, we are acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the First Australians who sustainably managed this continent for over 65,000 years prior to colonisation. We share the vision of community-led development, and people having a voice in change that impacts them. We appreciate the offer from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to join them in creating a better future.

## **How can I find out more about the campaigns for a Voice to Parliament?**

Places to find out more information and how to get involved include:

### **Get Involved:**

- Hold a kitchen table conversation developed by the Victorian Women's Trust - [Together, Yes - First Nations Voice to Parliament \(togetheryes.com.au\)](https://togetheryes.com.au)
- Sign the pledge to support Constitutional Recognition and an Indigenous Voice to Parliament on the [Yes23 website](https://yes23.com.au)

### **Websites:**

- [Uluru Statement](#)
- [From the Heart Campaign](#)
- [Reconciliation Australia](#)

### **Books/articles:**

- The Voice to Parliament Handbook - All You Need To Know (Thomas Mayo and Kerry O'Brien) - May 2023
- Everything You Need to Know About the Uluru Statement from the Heart (Professor Megan Davis, Professor George Williams) – June 2021
- Finding the Heart of the Nation – The Journey of the Uluru Statement towards Voice, Treaty and Truth (Thomas Mayor) – 2019
- Finding Our Heart, A Story about the Uluru Statement for Young Australians by Thomas Mayor (specifically written for young people)
- [An Indigenous Voice to Parliament will not give 'special rights' or create a veto](#) (Professor Anne Twomey) – 2021

- [Indigenous Voice Co-design Process Final Report](#) – July 2021

### **Education materials:**

- [Short Course – A Voice to Parliament \(15–20 mins\)](#) – prepared by From the Heart and the Uluru Statement

### **Videos:**

- [History is Calling](#) (TV ad, 1 min viewing time)
- Watch [Travers McLeod's Sorry Day Message](#) on Twitter

