



AUSTRALIAN SERVICES UNION FOR YES

Campaign Kit

It's time to recognise Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
in the Constitution through a Voice



By your side

Section 1: How will the referendum work?

Australians will soon be asked if there should be constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Australia is a proud and diverse nation with a rich cultural heritage that dates back 65,000 years. The First Australians, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, have deep connections to this land and have played a vital role in shaping the society we know today.

But despite this, our constitution, which is 122 years old, still does not recognize the unique and important contributions of the First Australians - it's time for that to change.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a call by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for real and practical change in Australia through the establishment of a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament.

A referendum is needed to change Australia's Constitution.



The proposed Constitutional amendment:

Chapter IX - Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

129 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

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.

The proposed referendum question:

“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?”

To approve this change, Australian voters write the answer ‘Yes’ to the question when voting in the referendum. Just like a regular election, it is compulsory to cast a vote at a referendum.

Section 2: The ASU's commitment to Yes

At the 2022 ASU National Conference, delegates from across the country agreed to support and endorse a YES vote at the coming referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

ASU Endorsement for Yes!

Makarrata - Coming together after a struggle

The ASU recognises the prodigious history leading to the dialogues of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples coming together and signing the Uluru Statement from the Heart, in 2017. This resolution of ASU National Conference 2022 is tied to the Uluru Statement.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart - Voice, Treaty, Truth

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seek recognition in the Australian constitution. Such constitutional reform must be more than symbolic.

Recognition should also enshrine substantive, structural reforms that are endorsed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The principal reforms presented in the Uluru Statement, are the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations of this land ('the Truth'), a Treaty linked to that sovereignty, and a protected Voice to the Australian Parliament.

National Conference, therefore, commits to supporting First Nations peoples and the constitutional reforms presented in The Uluru Statement from the Heart of 2017, calling on Australians to enshrine Voice, Treaty, Truth in the Australian Constitution.

Moved: Wayne Wood, WA Branch Secretary

Seconded: Karina Maxwell, The Services Union Queensland Branch Delegate



Section 3: Why does this matter?

It's time to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution.

First Nations people have asked for that recognition to be through something very practical and simple: a Voice to Parliament, which means having a say in matters that affect their/our lives and communities.

Advice, experience and wisdom from people in community leads to better policy outcomes. The people on the ground know their issues best - having a Voice will deliver practical change.

Australians will be very clear they are voting to insert a simple change into the Constitution. Voters won't be asked to decide on a model or details.

Parliament will finalise the details of the Voice after the referendum and that is exactly how it should happen. We are confident the Australian people will understand what is being asked of them – and that they will vote Yes.

The majority of Australians support constitutional recognition through a Voice to Parliament. It's something that more than 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also get behind!

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know and understand the best way to deliver real and practical change in their communities. When they have a say through a Voice, we can finally start to close the gap that still exists between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians on practical issues like life expectancy, educational outcomes, and employment.

This is why a Yes result is important.



Section 4: What can I do?

To win a Yes vote on the Voice, a majority of states need to vote Yes, and an overall national majority of voters need to vote Yes.

That means our campaign must be everywhere: our workplaces, our families, our community groups, online and in-person at events. We are going to have to talk to everybody, even people we don't normally talk to about politics.

Things we can all do to help include:

1. Commit to voting Yes!
2. Make sure you are enrolled to vote, and your details are up to date with the Australian Electoral Commission: aec.gov.au
3. Talk to your family, friends, and coworkers about why you're voting Yes!
4. Put up a poster in your workplace or at home
5. Pledge your vote at yes.ausunions.io/asu and join the campaign



Section 5: Conversation Tips

This referendum is about one simple and practical thing we can do that will deliver real results to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Workers know that when their employer listens to them, better decisions are made – workplaces are safer and fairer. Government will make better decisions about issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people if they listen to them first.

The people you know – whether friends or family, people at work, your church, your local sporting club – will be far more influenced by a conversation with you about this than anything they see or hear from a third party.

This is why, all around the country, Voice supporters are sparking thousands of conversations.

By listening, welcoming discussion, sharing our experiences, and approaching this as a conversation rather than a debate, we have a much better chance of bringing as many Australians as possible along with us. The more people know about the concept of a Voice, the history of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and what Indigenous people are asking for and support it, the more likely they are to also support it.

Our vision:

- Together we can build a stronger and more united nation.
- Whether your family has been here for five years, or 5000 generations we can walk together to create a better future.
- Because we all know that better decisions are made when we listen to the people who are affected by those decisions. Be that at work or in the community.

Conversation framework

The idea of a Voice to Parliament is a new concept for a lot of people. Rather than assuming the people you're having a conversation with know how it all works, we have to use **simple, everyday language**. People are unlikely to change their perspective just because someone has "corrected" them - regardless of how much they like or respect that person.

It's important to be as **open and understanding** as possible in your approach, even if you are very passionate about this issue. It helps – especially if you know the person well – to take a moment before the conversation to remind yourself of your intention, so that you don't slip into more typical conversational patterns.

While it's important to use your **personal story to connect** reasons you're supportive to your conversation partner's values, it's just as important to ensure that you're touching on the **themes that we know are the most powerful** in terms of generating support.



Conversation Themes

Indigenous constitutional recognition through a Voice to Parliament is:

Fair

A fair go for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Practical

Will help close the gap & improve the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Simple

Something Australians intuitively understand

Unifying

An opportunity to bring our nation together



Remember:

- **Speak from the heart: emotional connection over intellectual debate**
- **Use simple language and avoid jargon**
- **Focus on strengths and avoid deficit language e.g. things can be better vs addressing disadvantage**
- **Belief in your own support is more important than knowing every single detail**
- **Be open and welcoming of discussion and make it easy to engage: many people are awkward**
- **If in doubt, keep it simple!**

The ask:

1. Do you believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be recognised in the 122 year old constitution?
2. Do you believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be listened to on issues that affect them and their families?
3. Will you vote Yes?



Section 6: FAQs

What is the 2023 Referendum?

This vote will give all Australians the chance to come together and consider a change to our Constitution that will honour the rights, history, and ongoing relationship of Indigenous Australians with this land.

What are we being asked to vote on?

We are being asked to decide: *Should we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution, with a Voice?* A Voice will provide advice to the Federal Parliament about policies, through a consultative process that delivers meaningful structural change. This is why a **“Yes”** result is important.

What is a Voice to Parliament?

Constitutional Recognition and a Voice to Parliament would be a small group of First Nations people chosen by their communities. They would provide advice to the Federal Government on new policies that might affect First Nations people. They are an advisory group. They don't sit in Parliament or have the power to make or vote on laws.

How will this support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People?

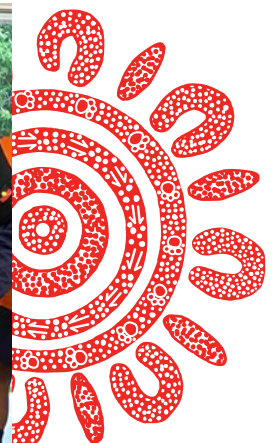
Despite decades of best intentions, politicians don't always have the best solutions. The answers are in communities – and a Voice will give those communities a say directly to our government representatives.

What is the Constitution and why does it matter?

The Constitution sets out the basic legal rules on how Australia is governed. It “establishes the powers of each of our three branches of governance – the Parliament, the Cabinet and the Courts” and how they interact with each other.

The Constitution can only be changed by a referendum - a vote of everyone in Australia.

The Constitution is 122 years old and still does not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first peoples.



Why does the Voice need to be in the Constitution?

For too long, Governments have created - but then defunded or abolished - different bodies intended to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's. Because these bodies were legislated by the Parliament, they could easily legislate them away.

But if the Australian people collectively demand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice recognition in the Constitution, only we, the Australian people, can remove it.

Parliament will still be able to make changes to the form and function of the body through legislation if they need to, but the only way they can remove the Voice entirely would be through another referendum.



Isn't this only symbolic, don't we need meaningful change?

A Constitutionally-enshrined Voice will be above the usual party politics - representatives will be solely focused on the issues and will be directly accountable to Indigenous people on the ground. This isn't the only thing that needs to be done, but it's an important practical first step towards getting things right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the future.

Won't this give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders privileges that other Australians don't have?

This will not create special privileges for Indigenous people that others don't have. Rather it is a first step towards building a stronger relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians and closing the gap.

Won't this hurt our one vote democratic system?

This will strengthen Australia's democratic systems by providing an avenue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate more fully in the democratic process. It's to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are listened to in the policymaking process, and create a more targeted approach with successful outcomes, not to replace or override the existing democratic system.

Will this have veto power and control our elected government?

No. It will be a representative advisory body that gives advice on policies made specifically for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It will have no power beyond that. This is simply about Indigenous people being heard.



**AUSTRALIAN
SERVICES UNION
FOR YES**

Join the campaign

scan the QR code below
or go to yes.ausunions.io/asu



By your side