

# The Uluru Statement from the Heart

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## Local Government Supporter Kit



Uluru Dialogue



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Image: Professor Megan Davis and Pat Anderson AO, First Nations National Constitutional Convention 2017.

## **An invitation from the Uluru Statement from the Heart**

The **Uluru Statement from the Heart** is an invitation to the Australian people to work with First Nations people to create a better future.

It is a gift: a strategic roadmap to peace, where First Nations peoples take a rightful place in our own land. It builds on the long advocacy of First Nations people for political representation, empowerment, decision-making and control over our own affairs.

The Uluru Statement rejects purely symbolic constitutional recognition in favour of substantive constitutional reform that would make a meaningful difference for First Nations on the ground.

The roadmap set out in the Uluru Statement is **Voice, Treaty and Truth**.

We are deeply grateful to the many people and organisations across the country that have pledged their support for this important change. We are asking you to lend your voice and work with us in creating a new and better future for all of us.

**Pat Anderson AO & Professor Megan Davis**  
Co-Chairs, Uluru Dialogue

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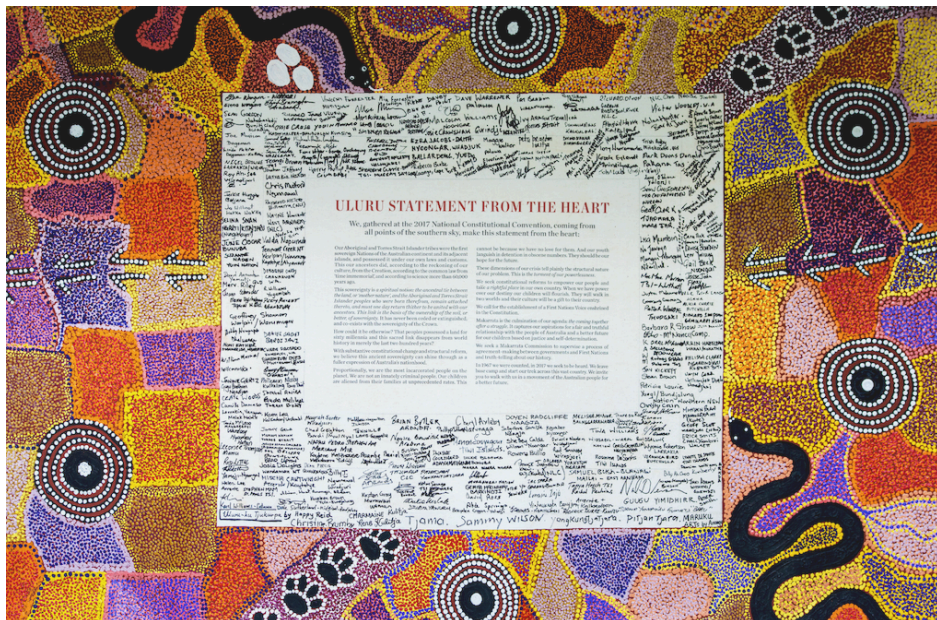


Image: The Uluru Statement from the Heart. Issued to the Australian people on 26 May 2017.

Front and Back: Uluru at the Uluru Climb Closure Ceremony, Jimmy-Widders Hunt.

# What local government can do

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Many Australians support the **Uluru Statement** and the call for a **constitutionally enshrined Voice**.

Many Australians have already shown their support – including in submissions to the 2018 Joint Select Committee, to the 2021 Co-Design Process, and by hosting events, wearing merchandise showing their support, posting on social media, and just talking to family and friends about what the Statement means.

***To all those people and organisations, we are immensely grateful.***

But there are still many people who do not know about the Uluru Statement from the Heart or are wary of supporting the Statement because they don't know enough about it. They might have questions or concerns that, if answered, would lead them to support the Statement.

For a referendum to be successful, it will need a groundswell of support – from the government, the Parliament and the Australian people. **We need to start that groundswell.** We believe that if the government and the Parliament see that the Australian people want this reform, their support will follow.

***Local governments are in a unique position to help spread the message and invitation in the Uluru Statement.***

*Local government are close to their communities, and experts in finding ways to effectively communicate with them. They can play a crucial role in building the grassroots support needed for a successful referendum to enshrine the First Nations Voice in the Constitution. And of course, as the third tier of government, they are uniquely placed to answer the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, be part of the process of structural reform and, in partnership with local Indigenous communities, help lead Australia towards a better future based on justice and self-determination.*

# Suggestions for local governments

## Practical steps you can take now

### ● **Step One: Find out more**

Find out more about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and a First Nations Voice to Parliament protected by the Constitution.

A good place to start is the Uluru Statement official web page: <https://ulurustatement.org>. There, you can sign up to the email list, and receive more information as it becomes available, including invitations to upcoming events.

You can also contact the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of New South Wales for further information, and to answer any questions you might have (email: [ilc@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ilc@unsw.edu.au)). If you would like us to work with you to present a seminar or workshop with your organisation to spread the word to a wider group, please reach out.

### ● **Step Two: Tell others you support the Statement**

There are lots of different ways to tell people that you have accepted the invitation in the Uluru Statement. Here are just some ideas for **Local Government**.

### ● **Propose a motion that your Local Government express its support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.**

You can view a suggested draft motion in **Appendix A**. When you introduce the motion, we encourage you to read out the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. You may wish to include in your motion a commitment to some of the other specific actions discussed below.

### ● **Publicise your Local Government's support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart:**

- at all of your local government offices, service centres and advertising positions such as bus shelters (materials like logos, social media tiles and posters can be downloaded at <https://ulurustatement.org>);
- through your website, newsletter, emails and any other communications;
- through the local media – see whether they are interested in running a story about why you support the Statement.



*In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.*

Uluru Statement from the Heart, 26 May 2017



● **Include information** on the Uluru Statement and Voice, Treaty, Truth at your local government offices and other service centres and on your website, in newsletters, emails and other communications, and on social media. There is a poster of the Statement, and information sheets can be downloaded at <https://ulurustatement.org>. Provide this information to your staff as well as the general public.

● **Use your networks** to inform other Local Governments of the position yours has taken, to compare notes on appropriate next steps, or to encourage those yet to express their support for the Uluru Statement and a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

● Follow our socials ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)) and share your endorsement. **Appendix B** includes social media material for you to share and use.

● **Step Three: Take ongoing actions**

Undertake a series of ongoing, tangible actions to demonstrate your Local Government's expression of support for the Uluru Statement. These actions will vary based on the resources and position of your Local Government, but they could include:

○ **Write a letter** to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Leader of the Opposition and your local federal and state political representatives outlining your endorsement and calling for them to support and action the reforms in the Uluru Statement.

○ **Encourage supporters** in your local community to do the same in their personal capacity. We have a tool that is designed to help you do this - visit <https://ulurustatement.org/write-to-your-mp> and find out more!

○ **Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** to review, reform or develop initiatives and structures to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in local government decision-making that affects them.

○ **Provide opportunities** and other support for education, research and truth telling programs run by or involving local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations in your local government area.

○ **Make representations** to the state and national local government associations encouraging them to support the Uluru Statement, and to use the position of the ALGA to speak to the state, territory and national governments about the urgency of these reforms.

○ **Sponsor community** events to raise awareness of the Uluru Statement and local Indigenous issues to learn from experts and those involved in the process that led to the Uluru Statement.

○ **Work with** the local Uluru Dialogue Youth Network and/or Uluru Supporters Group operating in your area, or support one to be established if there isn't one already, and partner with them to raise awareness and educate constituents about the Uluru Statement.

Please contact the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW (email: [ilc@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ilc@unsw.edu.au)) to let us know of your support and actions and should you require any further assistance.

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## Background to the Uluru Statement

Australia, unlike other first world countries has not yet achieved meaningful recognition of the First Nations people of this country.

The legal fiction of *terra nullius* was finally overturned with the Mabo High Court decision on 2 June 1992. This case was a landmark decision that finally recognized the pre-colonial land interests of Indigenous people within Australia's common law.

Despite on-going calls by Aboriginal people since the early days of settlement for a respectful and equal relationship, successive governments continue to ignore our calls for constitutional recognition of the rightful place of Australia's First Nations peoples.

The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* is an invitation from First Nations to "walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future." It was a call to the Australian people in May 2017 following two years of engagement and consultations with First Nations people from across the country.

The Uluru Statement calls for constitutional change to establish a new relationship between First Nations people and the Australian nation.

## First Nations Regional Dialogues

In the lead up to the *Uluru Dialogue* – First Nations Constitutional Convention, a series of three-day Regional Dialogues commenced in December 2016 and were held consecutively in Hobart, Broome, Dubbo, Darwin, Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns, Ross River (Central Australia), Adelaide, Brisbane and Thursday Island, with an additional meeting in Canberra.

The purpose of the Regional Dialogues was to engage First Nations peoples from local communities and community-based organisations in a conversation about their aspirations for meaningful recognition of the rights of the First Nations peoples, how these rights might be recognized and protected, and the reforms necessary to give lasting effect to these aspirations.

### Who participated in the regional dialogues?

First Nations participants at Regional Dialogues was decided locally - involving local traditional owners, community controlled organisations and First Nations leaders, elders and young people.

The Regional Dialogues selected their nominated representatives to attend the First Nations Constitutional Convention held at Uluru.



Image: Delegates on the floor of the First Nations National Constitutional Convention 2017.

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## Uluru Dialogue

The *Uluru Dialogue* held in May 2017 was the culmination of a series of deliberative regional dialogues held across the nation.

At that Convention, and by an overwhelming consensus, more than 250 delegates adopted the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

### What is the Uluru Statement?

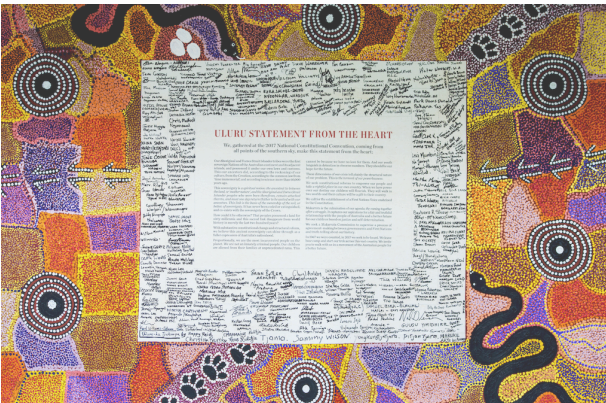


Image: The Uluru Statement from the Heart. Issued to the Australian people on 26 May 2017.

The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* is an invitation from First Nations to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”. It was issued to the Australian people in May 2017 following almost two years of work. The Uluru statement calls for constitutional change to establish a new relationship between parliament and First Nations peoples.

The delegates at the Uluru Dialogue issued the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* which calls for a First Nations Voice to Parliament, establishment of a Makarrata Commission to oversight agreement making processes and “truth-telling”.

### Voice

An amendment to the Australian constitution to formally recognize Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations.

Establishes an enduring institution that facilitates First Nation’s views to be made to the parliament and government on those issues affecting First Nations.

### Makarrata

Is a Yolgnu word meaning “a coming together after a struggle”.

A Makarrata Commission would have two roles: supervising a process of agreement making and overseeing a process of truth-telling.

Agreement making processes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australian governments and third parties have been underway for many years e.g. Indigenous Land Use Agreements, exploration and mining agreements under land rights legislation.

### Truth-telling

The Makarrata Commission would oversee a national healing process of ‘truth-telling’ to build a shared knowledge and understanding of the injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Truth-telling is about restorative justice. It is about bearing witness and honouring our collective histories and experiences so that we, together can build a shared history and commitment to ensuring a better future for First Nations peoples.



# Support for constitutional change

Over the past four years there has been an increasing level of support for constitutional change by the general public.

**95%**



In 2020, 95% of the general community agreed it is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a say in matters that affect them.

86% of the general community think it's important to establish a representative Indigenous body.

81% of the general community think it is important to protect that body within the constitution.

Source: Reconciliation Australia – 2020 Barometer

## The Voice Co-Design process

In 2021 the Voice Co-Design process invited public submissions on the design of a First Nations Voice to Parliament.

An unprecedented response from the Australian community saw **2,554 public submissions** made.

Expert analysis by the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW Sydney shows that **2,299** of the **2,554** submissions **support a referendum**.

Further to this, **one-third** of submissions expressly said that **they do not support** the approach of **legislating a First Nations Voice before constitutional reform**.

It is clear the Australian people are ready to vote “Yes” at a referendum to protect a First Nations Voice to Parliament in the Constitution.

**90%**

Of **submissions** to the Interim Voice Report **support a First Nations Voice to Parliament protected by the Constitution.**



**Uluru Dialogue**

Sign on to change the nation at [UluruStatement.org](https://UluruStatement.org)

Final analysis by the Indigenous Law Centre, UNSW.

# Frequently asked questions

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## What changes does the Uluru Statement call for?

The Uluru Statement calls for a **First Nations Voice to Parliament** and a **Makarrata Commission** to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling.

These reforms are: **Voice, Treaty, Truth.**

The first reform is the constitutional enshrinement of a Voice to Parliament (Voice). A Voice is a common reform adopted around the world by liberal democracies to improve democratic participation for Indigenous populations. In Australia, the Voice will empower First Nations politically. It will be a permanent institution for expressing First Nations' views to the parliament and government on important issues affecting First Nations.

The second reform is the Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations (Treaty), and truth-telling (Truth). Voice, Treaty and Truth provide a clear and practical path forward for First Nations' self-determination in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## Why is change necessary?

Structural reform is needed to give First Nations greater say and authority over the decisions that impact them. Structural reform means making real changes to the way decisions are made and by who, rather than simply tinkering with existing processes of decision-making and control.

First Nations peoples comprise 3 per cent of the Australian population. This means it is difficult for First Nations' voices to be heard in elections and in Parliament. First Nations have little say over the laws that impact them and their rights.

This is a problem because the Commonwealth has a law-making power based on race. The so-called 'Races Power' in the Constitution has never been directed at any other racial group in Australia - it has only ever been used to make laws about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These powers have often been used to pass laws that negatively impact First Nations without First Nations' consultation or consent.

What would a First Nations Voice be?

***"It will be a permanent institution for expressing First Nations' views to the parliament and government on important issues affecting First Nations."***

This practice ignores First Nations' peoples right to self-determination set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 19 of the Declaration recognises that before any new laws or policies affecting Indigenous peoples are adopted, 'States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent'.

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## What does the Uluru Statement say about sovereignty?

The Uluru Statement says that First Nations' sovereignty was never ceded and coexists with the Crown's sovereignty today. That sovereignty comes from a different source to the sovereignty claimed by the Crown: from the ancestral tie between the land and its people.

The Uluru Statement calls for this “ancient sovereignty” of First Nations to be recognised through structural reform including constitutional change. Enshrining a First Nations Voice is recognition of First Nations' sovereignty and First Nations' rights based on their unique political and cultural existence. Sovereignty is not undermined nor diminished by Voice, Treaty and Truth.

First Nations in other countries are acknowledged and recognised in national constitutions. This includes in Canada, the United States and Norway. First Nations in those countries have used these constitutional clauses to exercise self-determination and empower Indigenous peoples.

### Is a representative voice a new idea?

First Nations have always called for the protection and recognition of their rights. This includes calling for First Nations representation and empowerment in decision making and control of their own affairs. There is an unbroken line that runs from before federation connecting this early advocacy and the Uluru Statement.

First Nations peoples have been advocating for justice, recognition and protection of Indigenous rights e.g:

- advocacy of Tasmanian Aboriginal people at Wybalenna (Flinders Island) in 1847 to Queen Victoria regarding their treatment
- Australian Aborigines' League led by William Cooper and others in 1938 gathered to mark an annual Day of Mourning
- 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petition
- A ten-year campaign by Faith Bandler and others that led to the 1967 referendum
- 1972 Larrakia Petition
- 1979 National Aboriginal Conference
- 1988 Barunga Statement



### The 1988 Barunga Statement

Presented to Prime Minister Bob Hawke by the Northern and Central Land Councils as a declaration and request for Indigenous rights and sovereignty to be recognised.

Gifts collection, Parliament House Art Collection.

- High Court recognition of native title in 1992 Mabo decision
- the ATSIAC Report titled Rights, Recognition and Reform
- Report on the Social Justice Package by ATSIAC in 1995
- Kalkaringi Statement of 1998
- Yolngu Leaders Declaration of Sovereignty 2018
- the Kirribilli Statement of 2015.

Throughout this history, there have been consistent calls for a representative voice in decision making, the right to self-determination, treaty, and for the truth to be told about First Nations and Australian history.

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## Why a constitutionally enshrined voice? Why wouldn't a legislated Voice be enough?

The Uluru Statement calls for a Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Australian Constitution by way of an enabling provision.

Previous First Nations' representative bodies (such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)) were set up administratively or by legislation. That meant they were easily abolished by successive governments depending on their priorities. Setting up and then abolishing representative bodies cuts across progress, damages working relationships and wastes talent that could be used to solve complex problems.

In the Regional Dialogues people said they were frustrated with this chopping and changing. They wanted a long lasting and durable Voice in decisions made about their own affairs.

That is the reason the Uluru Statement calls for a Voice enshrined in the Constitution. They did not want a body that could be easily be abolished by legislation.

Backed by the people at a referendum, a Voice enshrined in the Constitution can make a lasting contribution to a better future for First Nations and all Australians.

*“In the Regional Dialogues people said they were frustrated with this chopping and changing. They wanted a long lasting and durable Voice in decisions made about their own affairs.”*

## How would the voice work?

The Uluru Statement does not detail the structure of the Voice and how it will do its job. That is a process separate from achieving constitutional change.

The Uluru Statement asks the Australian people to give their support at a referendum on a question of fundamental principle: that First Nations should have a Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

The details including the functions, powers and processes of the Voice, will be worked out between government and First Nations and put into legislation. That legislation can be amended from time to time as lessons are learnt from experience, while the existence of the Voice itself is guaranteed in the Constitution.

## Why a First Nations Voice and not designated seats for First Nations people?

The delegates at the Regional Dialogues considered alternative representation proposals, including through designated seats in the Parliament.

However, there were concerns that a small number of designated seats would be subsumed within the larger numbers in the Parliament.

Proportionate seats would give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people little concrete influence, unless there were unique political circumstances, such as holding the balance of power in a minority government.

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There were also concerns that this proposal would not be able to represent the diversity of First Nations, with only a handful of designated seats.

An institutional Voice that was truly representative of First Nations, that had a guaranteed role to speak to Parliament every time laws were passed that affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was a preferred model of representation.

**Is the Voice proposal limited because it will be advisory and will not have veto?**

No. The Voice will have powers and functions to support First Nations people across a range of matters, as agreed between First Nations and government.

Its strength for First Nations communities, as well as its value to government, will come from the legitimacy of being a genuinely representative, collective Voice. And from the mandate gained from the Australian people at a referendum.

**Will the Voice proposal introduce inequality into the Constitution and divide Australia along racial lines?**

The Australian Constitution already contains a provision that gives the Commonwealth Parliament the power to make special laws for people of any race, which in practice has been used to make laws for First Nations people. This includes important reforms, such as native title legislation and cultural heritage protection.

A former High Court Chief Justice has explained that this initial division in the Australian Constitution gives rise to the need to have a special institution to speak to Parliament when these laws are made.

*“Its strength for First Nations communities, as well as its value to government, will come from the legitimacy of being a genuinely representative, collective Voice.”*

Further, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up only 3% of the Australian population, so when the Parliament makes laws that affect them, it is only appropriate that they have a say on those laws, because the current system of democracy does not give them a voice.

**Do other countries have a First Nations Voice?**

Yes. There are many ways that this can be achieved. Norway, Finland and Sweden all have a First Nations (Sami) Parliament.

These representative bodies vary across the three countries. In Norway, for example, the Sami Parliament has a right to be consulted over legislation that affects them and authority over certain matters.

In contrast, the New Zealand Parliament has seven seats reserved for Māori people. Both mechanisms allow Indigenous peoples to have a voice in the processes of government.

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Other countries adopt different approaches. In Colombia, a constitutional provision requires the government to consult with Indigenous peoples before permitting natural resource exploitation on Indigenous land. In some cases, the Colombian Constitutional Court has determined that instances of consultation were not adequate.

These different arrangements follow international standards. Article 18 of the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, endorsed by Australia in 2009, provides that Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision making institutions.

### **What is a Makarrata Commission?**

Makarrata is a Yolgnu word meaning ‘a coming together after a struggle’.

A Makarrata Commission would have two roles: supervising a process of agreement-making and overseeing a process of truth-telling.

Agreements between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Australian governments have been negotiated for many years in Australia, for example under native title and land rights legislation.

The Makarrata Commission would allow these processes to be struck at a national level and regionally with First Nations, by providing support and momentum and helping the parties reach agreement.

Another function of a Makarrata Commission would be to supervise a process of ‘truth-telling’: a process that allows the full extent of the past injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be uncovered and revealed. Such a process would allow all Australians to understand our history and assist in moving towards genuine reconciliation.

This process may be similar in form to the inquiry that led to the Bringing Them Home report, which revealed the truth surrounding the Stolen Generations. The inquiry involved an extensive program of hearings in every capital city and in many regional centres. In 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised in Parliament for government law and policies that resulted in the Stolen Generations.

### **How will the First Nations Voice and the Makarrata Commission fit with treaty negotiation processes that are already underway in some States and Territories in Australia?**

There are several States and Territories that are commencing processes towards negotiating a treaty between the State or Territory government and First Nations in that jurisdiction. The most advanced of these processes is that underway in Victoria.

These State or Territory-based treaty-processes have highlighted three important matters.

*“Makarrata is a Yolgnu word meaning ‘a coming together after a struggle’.”*

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The **first** is the need for treaty negotiation processes to be preceded by the establishment of a First Nations institutional assembly of some description to assist the Parliament and the Government in the establishment of the processes to negotiate treaty.

In Victoria, for instance, this is seen in the creation of the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria, which is a representative body, a voice, for Aboriginal people and communities to work with the State government to create the Treaty Negotiation Framework for negotiating the rules and processes under which a Treaty or Treaties can be negotiated.

The experience in the States therefore demonstrates the importance of the *first* step of the sequence of Voice, Treaty, Truth.

The **second** is the need for a national treaty process, through the proposed Makarrata Commission. This is because, while there is some progress at the state and territory level, there are limits to the types of matters that these governments can negotiate, because some matters are the responsibility of the federal Parliament and government.

Further, state treaties are subject to federal legislative override, should a future federal Parliament seek to change the settlement. State and territory treaties cannot bind a federal government or the Australian Parliament.

The **third** is the need for a constitutionally enshrined, guaranteed voice, to continue to advocate for any settlements that are reached in a State or Territory treaty. Only through constitutional enshrinement, can there be a body that is sufficiently independent to advocate frankly and fearlessly for the interests of First Nations people.

More information can be found at [www.ulurustatement.org](http://www.ulurustatement.org).

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Please contact the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW (email: [ilc@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ilc@unsw.edu.au)) to let us know of your support and actions and should you require any further assistance.

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 [@UluruStatement](https://www.instagram.com/UluruStatement)

## Appendix A - Draft motion of support and other local government examples

Suggested draft motion for local government

That the [INSERT LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME] accepts the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and:

1. hears and supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution and for a referendum on this matter; and
2. welcomes working with the First Nations Voice once established with respect to the development of relevant local government policy and laws; and
3. looks forward to working with our constituents, other levels of governments and all Australians to take this next step in our shared future.



# Other examples

## Brisbane City Council

- 112 -

### CONSIDERATION OF NOTIFIED MOTION – ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART:

(Notified motions are printed as supplied and are not edited)

**837/2018-19**

The Chair of Council (Councillor Andrew WINES) then drew the Councillors' attention to the notified motion listed on the agenda and called on Councillor Jared CASSIDY to move the motion. Accordingly, Councillor Jared CASSIDY moved, seconded by Councillor Kara COOK—

*That This Council:*

*Following the second anniversary of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and in the spirit of reconciliation commits to walking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement for a better future.*

*Supports the call for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling.*

*Hears the continued call for a better future built on the foundations of respect and fairness.*

Chair: Is there any debate?

Councillor CASSIDY, to the motion please.

Councillor CASSIDY:

Thank you, Mr Chair. This Council has a history of leading on big social issues. In 1997, the Brisbane City Council, led by then Lord Mayor Jim Soorley, churches and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities began a series of events entitled Kul-gun Da 'Lo-bol' pa – The Journey Home to recognise the Stolen Generation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders led a procession to City Hall where they were formally welcomed by the Lord Mayor. Cultural and historical ceremonies were conducted to mark the start of a healing process. A commemorative plaque was placed near City Hall, and now of course, we have plaques right across the city. A very proud history, Mr Chair.

Recent events have offered pause for reflection on the place and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our communities. Last weekend, we commemorated Sorry Day and then reflected together throughout National Reconciliation Week. I had the opportunity to attend the Sorry Day event at Kalinga Park, once again this year. This annual event, hosted by the Noonga Reconciliation Group, growing each year, is an important time for us to reflect on the realities of our past. This year, we heard from Steven and Jennifer Hart who travelled from Cherbourg for the event.

Jennifer spoke of her pain at her child being taken from her at birth. This didn't happen 100 years ago, this didn't happen 50 years ago, this happened in 1979. Steven and Jennifer have been searching in vain for the last seven years for their daughter, a daughter they never met but lives on in their hearts. I appreciated the words of the LORD MAYOR at the Sorry Day Ceremony in King George Square last week and saw the emotion that he showed.

Yesterday, we also commemorated Mabo Day, celebrating the tremendous struggle of Eddie Mabo's cause for justice and the coming together of the Australian community in difficult circumstances following Mabo's success. Mabo is now part of the Australian cultural fabric that makes us who we are. If anyone like me remembers the iconic Australian film *The Castle*, it's the vibe of it, it's the Constitution, it's Mabo, it's justice. The sense of fairness, justice and togetherness is key to who we are. Despite the tough times, it holds us together and enables us to be able to think of and realise better futures. It's also a key to the foundation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, another momentous event in this nation's history which Australians from across the country celebrated its second anniversary last weekend.

Never before in Australian history have we seen something like the Uluru Statement. Thirteen regional dialogues from across the country culminated in the 2017 Indigenous National Constitution Convention at Uluru. At this event,

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[4592 (Ordinary) Meeting – 4 June 2019]

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians spoke to the rest of us in a way we have not experienced before. Despite the difficulties, despite the history and all of the challenges that remain, all Australians were invited on a journey to fulfil a promise of Australian nationhood and provide a better future for us all.

As Stan Grant reminded us during National Reconciliation Week, what an amazing show of faith the Uluru Statement is in the Australian community and I quote, 'A people historically locked out of this democracy are saying they want in.' What a profound statement of faith in our community that a people for whom the Constitution was written to exclude was saying that same Constitution can hold their dreams. The Uluru Statement blends the ancient sovereignty of First Peoples with the lived reality of the political sovereignty of the Commonwealth.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart now has bipartisan political support from our Federal colleagues. The momentous appointment of the Commonwealth's first Indigenous Member of Cabinet, the Honourable Ken Wyatt MP as Minister for Indigenous Australians, is another indication of the importance of this document. The Uluru Statement from the Heart asked all Australians to walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement for a better future. This was and remains an invitation in the spirit of reconciliation which has animated the best of us in our communities. The Uluru Statement from the Heart speaks to the sense of fairness, justice and togetherness that makes us who we are as a community, the glue that holds us together.

In calling for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice and a Makarrata Commission to supervise the process of agreement-making and truth-telling, the Uluru Statement from the Heart has offered an olive branch to all Australians. The facts and truth of our history should not be controversial and, indeed, need not be. Let us walk together as a Council with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in that spirit of reconciliation to enhance our community in a commitment to a fair and truthful relationship and a better future for all Australians. We have a proud history as a Council leading on these issues. Let's take that lead again.

Mr Chair, I'll finish by reading into the record the momentous Uluru Statement from the Heart in its entirety.

'We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? The peoples possessed a land for 60 millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely less than 200 years?

With substantive constitutional change in structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions for our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problems. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.'

## 13. ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

**Source:** Community Life – Healthy Communities Department  
**Director:** Robyn Stevens

### Purpose

1. To request that Council write a letter to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Australian Parliament that supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart (**Attachment 2**).

### Background

2. The Kilangitj Aboriginal Advisory Committee has requested that Council support the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Committee advises that the objectives of the Uluru Statement from the Heart reflects the nature of reform required for First Nations people and aligns with the intent and sentiment outlined in the City's Reconciliation Action Plan – Reflect.

### Key Matters

3. The Uluru Statement from the Heart was developed in May 2017 and made 50 years after the 1967 National Referendum confirming that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be counted as part of our National census. The Statement was made at Uluru on the lands of the Anangu people when 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates from 13 regional areas around the country reached a consensus position. It was a gesture of goodwill in the spirit of reconciliation and National inclusiveness.
4. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a profound call from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples asking for constitutional change and structural reform in their relationship with Australia. The statement calls for "First Nations Voice" in the Australian constitution and a "Makarrata Commission" to supervise a process of "agreement making" between Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
5. The Kilangitj Aboriginal Advisory Committee comprises of community members who actively seek to work in partnership with Council on matters that support reconciliation and that ultimately will lead to a better and deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The City has the largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in any local government area in Victoria, with a population of 1%.
6. Council has continued to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through a variety of ways (**Attachment 3**) and in 2019 developed the first ever Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) called Reflect. It is within the spirit and intent of reconciliation that this request has been made.

### Cr Mason moved, Cr Mansfield seconded -

7. **That Council endorse a letter to be sent to the Prime Minister and Parliament of Australia outlining the support of the City of Greater Geelong for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.**

Carried.

**Attachment 1**

***Financial Implications***

1. There are no financial implications associated with this action.

***Community Engagement***

2. This request has been provided by the Kilangitj Aboriginal Advisory Committee which comprises of representatives from Barwon Health, Department of Health and Human Services, Wathaurong Co-operative, Wadawarrung Traditional Owners Corporation, Department of Justice and Geelong One Fire.

***Social Equity Considerations***

3. This action further strengthens our commitment to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and provides a public statement that supports constitutional change which is the responsibility of the Australian Government. The latest Closing the Gap 2020 report continues to highlight significant discrepancies between white Australians and Aboriginal people, particularly in the areas of life expectancy, childhood mortality, school attainment and employment. More work is required to close the gap in such discrepancies that continue to cause serious harm to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

***Policy/Legal/Statutory Implications***

4. This action does not comply with any specific legislative requirements; however, it does support the intent and spirit of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2020.

***Alignment to Council Plan***

5. Key priority number 3 of the 2018-2022 Council Plan prioritises a more inclusive and diverse community. Within this priority relevant actions are: Advocating for, and helping to achieve the priorities set by local Aboriginal people.

***Conflict of Interest***

6. No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

***Risk Assessment***

7. There are no high or extreme risks arising from the subject of this report.

***Environmental Implications***

8. There are no environmental implications arising from the subject of this report.

**7 LGAQ ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROPOSED CO-SPONSORED MOTION – SUPPORT FOR THE “ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART”**

**Author** Chief Executive Officer, Brett de Chastel  
CEO’s Office

**Index** ECM/ Subject/ Liaison (Council and Government Agencies)

**Attachments** 1. Uluru Statement from the Heart

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council note the report by the Chief Executive Officer to the General Committee Meeting dated 15 July 2019 and co-sponsor, with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, the following motion to the Local Government Association Queensland annual conference for consideration and debate:

*“That the Local Government Association of Queensland recognises the Uluru Statement from the Heart and:*

- 1. Hears and supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ call for the establishment of a First Nation’s Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution and for a referendum on this matter;*
- 2. Looks forward to working with our constituents, other levels of governments and all Australians to take this next step towards reconciliation; and*
- 3. Requests that the Australian Local Government Association consider expressing similar support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.”*

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**REPORT**

The Local Government Association Queensland (LGAQ) Conference is held annually and provides a forum for all Queensland Councils to come together to table and debate contemporary issues of importance to their local areas and communities as well as identify issues that are likely to be relevant to other local Councils.

A current issue of both local, state and national importance is the call from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for constitutional change and structural reform in their relationship with the broader Australian community.

Our Council has been asked whether we would co-sponsor a motion to the LGAQ conference with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council on this issue. Cherbourg has a long history with Noosa and our Council. For many years, the former Noosa Council provided mentoring, support and assistance to Cherbourg Council and some of the native title claimants of the Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) people reside in Cherbourg. It would be an ideal outcome for a proposed LGAQ conference motion on a matter such as this to be co-sponsored by both an indigenous Council and a non-indigenous Council.

As a progressive Council and as a Council looking to build stronger working relationships with our local indigenous community, it would be appropriate for our Council to co-sponsor a motion with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council to the LGAQ annual conference.

## Background

In May 2017, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people forged a consensus around the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This consensus followed a process of consultation and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia through deliberative dialogues in 13 regions.

Each dialogue had approximately 100 representatives from local traditional owners, Indigenous community-based organisations and Indigenous leaders. These dialogues in turn selected their representatives to attend the First Nations Constitutional Convention at Uluru. At this Convention, Indigenous leaders articulated how meaningful constitutional recognition and structural reform could take place. At the conclusion of the Convention, in an overwhelming consensus, more than 250 delegates adopted the “Uluru Statement from the Heart”.

This is the first time that there has been a national consensus on the constitutional change that is desired by Indigenous Australians.

More details on the development of the “Uluru Statement from the Heart” can be found here: <https://www.1voiceuluru.org/>

## What does the Uluru Statement call for?

The Uluru Statement rejects symbolic constitutional recognition in favour of substantive constitutional reform and calls for three fundamental changes: Voice, Treaty, Truth.

The first reform is the constitutional enshrinement of a First Nations Voice. The Voice will empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples politically. It will be a permanent institution for expressing First Nations’ views to the parliament and government on important policy decisions affecting their rights.

The next reform after the Voice is established is Treaty, followed by Truth. These reforms involve establishing an independent Makarrata Commission to oversee the negotiation of treaties and truth-telling processes.

## What is Makarrata?

Makarrata is a Yolngu word meaning ‘coming together after a struggle’. It is both the ideal that underpins the Uluru Statement and its call for Voice, Treaty, Truth and the mechanism by which the relationship between First Nations and the people of Australia can move to one based on fairness, truth, justice and self-determination, a relationship where Indigenous cultures can flourish and the Australian nation can reach a fuller potential.

## Why support the Uluru Statement?

There have been a large number of major organisations that have publicly provided support for the Uluru Statement. This includes a significant number of major businesses and organisations including major legal, accounting and mining firms – BHP, Curtin University, Herbert Smith Freehills, IAG, KPMG, Lendlease, National Rugby League, PwC Australia, PwC’s Indigenous Consulting, Qantas, Richmond Football Club, Rio Tinto, Swinburne University of Technology and Woodside are some of the more well-known ones.

The lack of constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples is one of Australia’s longest standing unresolved issues.

The historic consensus achieved at Uluru means that now is the appropriate time for a national discussion on the best way forward.

**Joint Submission of Motion to the LGAQ**

As the Uluru Statement from the Heart is about Indigenous recognition and reconciliation, it is both important and symbolic that this motion to the LGAQ Annual Conference be co-sponsored by the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council and Noosa Shire Council.

The Noosa Council CEO has discussed this motion with his counterpart at Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council who is in agreement with this approach. Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council are also passing a resolution to co-sponsor this LGAQ motion.

**Previous Council Consideration**

Nil.

**Finance**

There are no financial implications for Noosa Council.

**Risks & Opportunities**

Ultimately, it will be up to the Queensland councils to determine whether or not they wish to support this proposed motion at the LGAQ annual conference. It is reasonably likely that this will occur.

Our Council co-sponsoring this motion with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council could also act to re-establish some long-standing regional relationships with that Council. It may also enhance the development of our ongoing relationship with the native title claimants, some of whom reside in the Cherbourg community.

**Consultation****External Consultation - Community & Stakeholder**

Warren Collins, CEO, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council  
 Professor Megan Davis, Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous, UNSW (via Dr Gabrielle Appleby).  
 Alan (Fox) Rogers, Former Director Community Services

**Internal Consultation**

Kerri Contini, Director Community Services  
 Kim Rawlings, Director Environment and Sustainable Development

Departments/Sections Consulted:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Chief Executive Officer</b> Executive Officer Executive Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Community Services</b> X Director Community Development Community Facilities Libraries & Galleries Local Laws Waste & Environmental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Corporate Services</b> Director Financial Services ICT Procurement & Fleet Property Revenue Services
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive Services</b> Director Community Engagement Customer Service Governance People and Culture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Environment &amp; Sustainable Development</b> x Director Building & Plumbing Services Development Assessment Economic Development Environmental Services Strategic Land Use Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Infrastructure Services</b> Director Asset Management Buildings and Facilities Civil Operations Disaster Management Infrastructure Planning, Design and Delivery



## Appendix B – Tell people about your support for a Voice to Parliament

*IT'S TIME* to demonstrate the strong public support that already exists for a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution and to make our collective voices heard.

### On your website

Add the Uluru Statement logo to your website with the following text.

*(Your organisation) accepts the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and supports a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution. (insert hyperlink to official Uluru Dialogue website [UluruStatement.org](http://UluruStatement.org))*



Download [here](#)

### On your email signature

Consider inserting the following text along with one of our email banners below. *(I /or organisation name) accept the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and support a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution.*

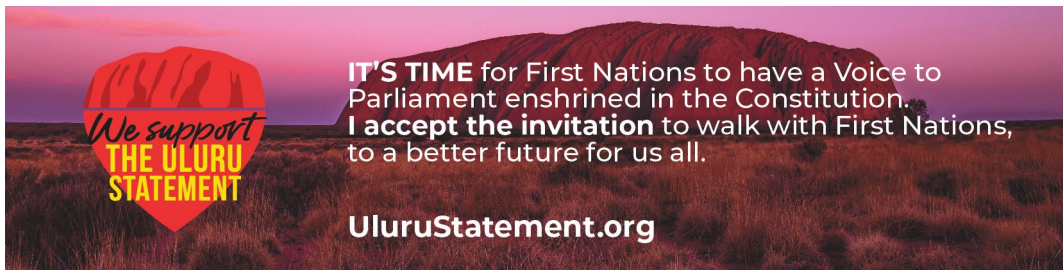
Choose a banner, copy and paste it to your email signature. Encourage our colleagues, friends and family to do the same.



Download [here](#)



Download [here](#)

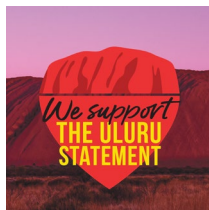


Download [here](#)

## On your social media

Below are some tiles you can use across your social media to show your support. Make sure you tag us [@UluruStatement](#).

### Profile pictures



Download [here](#)



Download [here](#)

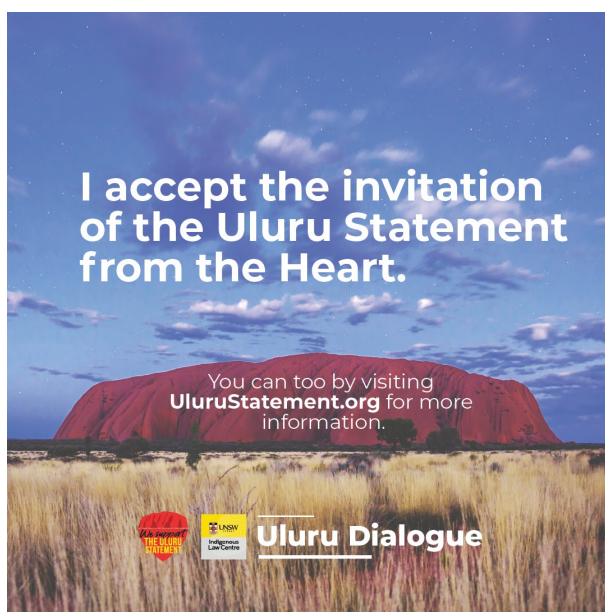


Download [here](#)

*"I accept" posts*



Download *here*



Download *here*



Download **here**

*"IT'S TIME" posts*



Download **here**



Download *here*



Download *here*

A photograph of Uluru, a large sandstone rock formation in Australia, during sunset. The sky is a gradient of purple and pink, and the rock is illuminated with a warm, reddish glow. The foreground shows sparse, dry vegetation.

Led by the Uluru Dialogue  
Supported by the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW  
Sydney.

**[UluruStatement.org](http://UluruStatement.org)**