



Animal Justice Party



ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE FIRST NATIONS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

The Animal Justice Party is committed to the principle of equality, and therefore wholeheartedly endorses the First Nations Voice to parliament, which will accord Australia's First Nations people the recognition, representation, and respect they deserve.

Currently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not recognised in the Constitution as the original inhabitants of Australia, an historical omission that would be redressed by the passing of the Voice referendum. As the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney, noted:

“The Australian Constitution is the only constitution of a first world nation with a colonial history that does not recognise its first people.”

The Animal Justice Party affirms its support for the proposed constitutional amendment needed to effect the Voice at the referendum later in 2023, when Australians will be asked to vote on the following 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?”

The Voice is the outcome of the Uluru constitutional convention of First Nations people held in May 2017, which culminated in the Uluru Statement from the Heart calling for *“the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.”*

Recognition of Australia's First Nations people in the Constitution is a crucial, long-overdue step – but the Voice will also function as an advisory body providing independent advice to the Australian parliament and government on matters affecting indigenous people. As such, it will work alongside the government in an ongoing dialogue on the issues of concern to First Nations people, which will flow through to better policies and outcomes.

Importantly, the Voice representatives will be chosen by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will reflect their local communities, be gender-balanced, and inclusive of First Nations youth. The Voice has been designed to be empowering, community-led, inclusive, respectful, and culturally informed.

Reconciliation Australia has undertaken biennial research surveys of Australians' attitudes to reconciliation, which show consistent, strong, majority support for the Voice and its protection within the Constitution.

Further reading on the Voice to Parliament

- <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement>
- https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/UluruStatement
- <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/support-a-voice-to-parliament>
- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-10/fact-check3a-is-australia-the-only-first-world-nation-with-a-c/11583706>