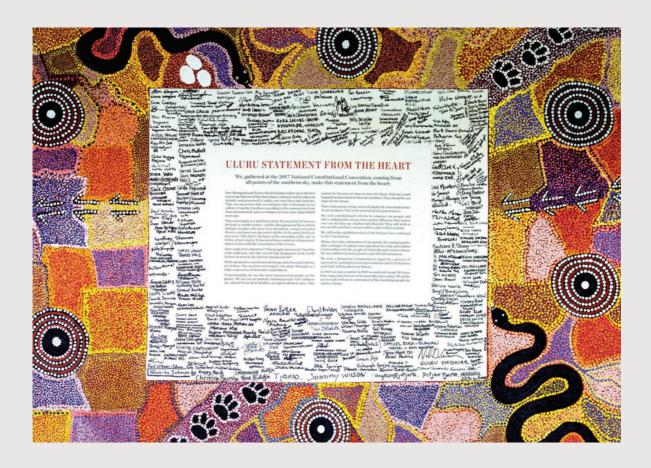
# THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

#### DISCUSSION RESOURCE KIT



This Resource Kit is compiled by the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education to assist community groups to understand the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



#### CONTENTS

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART  Outline for Discussion  Introduction		3 4 4			
				"Nothing About Us Without Us"	4
				The Uluru Statement from the Heart Activities	4
	Helpful Websites	4			
The Uluru Statement from the Heart		5			
	What is the Uluru Statement from the Heart?	5			
	The Referendum Council	6			
	Explaining the Uluru Statement from the Heart	7			
	What Does the Uluru Statement from the Heart Call For?	11			
Voice to Parliament		11			
	A Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution	11			
	Co-Design of the First Nation Voice	12			
A Ref	ferendum to Change the Constitution	13			
Changing the Constitution		14			
A Journey of Solidarity		14			
ER 4 Uluru Artwork		15			
	ER 4 Uluru Artwork Explained	15			
	ER 4 Uluru Artwork Activities	16			
	Further Actions	16			
Resources		17			
	Video Clips	17			
	Websites	17			
	Books	17			
	Songs	17			
	Further Reading or Discussion	17			

#### The Uluru Statement from the Heart

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 coexists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and 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 aliened 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 of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. 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.



#### **Outline for Discussion**

- The Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Introduction
- Uluru Statement from the Heart Activities
- What is the Uluru Statement from the Heart?
- Explaining the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Voice to Parliament
- Changing the Constitution
- ER 4 Uluru Artwork
- Further Activities

#### Introduction

The Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education believes that people can change their world through education. It begins with awareness raising, which leads to advocacy and social action. For the Edmund Rice Centre, community education is fundamental to understanding the shape and nature of our unequal world, to interacting with that world as well as imagining and shaping a different world.

This Discussion Resource Kit is intended to raise awareness and understanding of the Uluru Statement from the Heart so that compassionate Australians can act to support the healing of our nation.

#### "Nothing About Us Without Us"

To understand the stories and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is vital that wherever possible local First Nations peoples are invited to participate. In the case of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, it is highly recommended that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who understand and believe in the goals of the Uluru Statement should be invited to lead the discussions. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation to share the story while listening with the ears and the heart. And then to decide: "What is it that I can do to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart?"

#### Uluru Statement from the Heart Activities

- Read the Uluru Statement from the Heart (See Page 3)
- View video clip by Midnight Oil Uluru Statement from the Heart (Read by First Nations collaborators)
- View the Power Point slides (Pages 7-11) explaining terms related to The Uluru Statement from the Heart.
- For information about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the reforms of a Constitutionally enshrined First Nation Voice and a Makarrata Commission, see <a href="https://www.ilc.unsw.edu.au/uluru-statement-heart">https://www.ilc.unsw.edu.au/uluru-statement-heart</a>
- For further information about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, see
   <a href="https://law.unimelb.edu.au/">https://law.unimelb.edu.au/</a> data/assets/pdf file/0005/2791940/Uluru-Statement-from-the-Heart-Information-Booklet.pdf

#### **Helpful websites**

- www.fromtheheart.com.au
- www.ulurustatement.org
- View film clip <a href="https://vimeo.com/190037231">https://vimeo.com/190037231</a>

First Nations peoples and Reconciliation: Interview with Senator Patrick Dodson and ERC Director Phil Glendenning - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTZHsxl-U50">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTZHsxl-U50</a>

#### What is

#### The Uluru Statement from the Heart?

The Uluru Statement from the Heart originated from a series of regional dialogues with Indigenous peoples conducted by the Referendum Council between December 2016 and May 2017. Dialogues were held in Hobart, Broome, Dubbo, Darwin, Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns, Ross River, Adelaide, Brisbane, Thursday Island and Canberra. The Referendum Council dialogues culminated in a First Nations National Constitutional Convention on 23-26 May 2017 at Uluru in Central Australia. This convention produced the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an Indigenous roadmap for Constitutional recognition and to reform the relationship between Indigenous people and Australian Governments. It expresses the desires of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for substantive reform to the Australian Constitution according to Indigenous priorities.

To learn about the journey to the Uluru Statement of the Heart, see:

https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/the-journey-to-the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart

The key elements of the Uluru Statement are:

(1) Enshrining a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution (Voice).





(2) The establishment of a Makarrata Commission to supervise agreement-making with Government (*Treaty*).

(3) The Makarrata Commission to oversee
Truth-Telling about Australia's history of
colonisation

oionisation (*Truth*).



#### The Referendum Council

The Referendum Council was established by the Australian Government in December 2015 and was the continuation of a process for Constitutional change to recognise Indigenous peoples in the Australian Constitution. In November 2010 Prime Minister Julia Gillard established an expert panel to report on possible options to enable Indigenous Constitutional recognition and to advise on the level of support for each option. In its 2012 report the expert panel identified strong community support for changing the Constitution to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Referendum Council was appointed to advise the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition to lead a dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and engage with the broader community about Constitutional recognition and reform. In undertaking its work, the Referendum Council had to pay close attention to previous processes which included: the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 2015, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Act of Recognition Review Panel 2014 and the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians 2012.

In its report of 30 June 2017, the Referendum Council made **two recommendations**:

- (1) That a referendum be held to provide for an Indigenous representative Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament in the Australian Constitution.
- (2) That all Australian Parliaments enact legislation to articulate a symbolic statement of recognition.

A Constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice would provide a guarantee that a First Nations Advisory Body would have power under the Constitution to advise Parliament on Indigenous matters. However, such recognition requires the Australian Constitution to be amended by referendum. This means the people of Australia would vote to insert words into the Constitution to recognise such an advisory body.

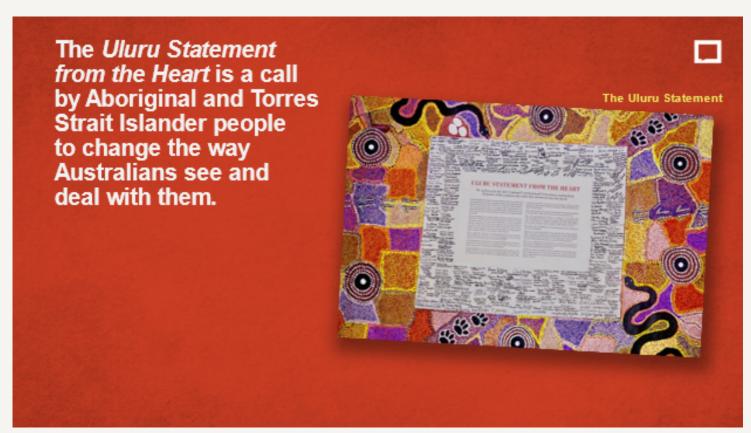
A Declaration of Recognition can be made through legislation passed by Federal, State and Territory Parliaments. It would only be a symbolic and unifying statement of recognition expressing Australia's shared history, heritage, and aspirations. It would bring together Australia's First peoples heritage and culture, Australia's British institutions, and Australia's multicultural society.

To view the final report of the Referendum Council, see: <a href="https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report.html">https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/final-report.html</a>



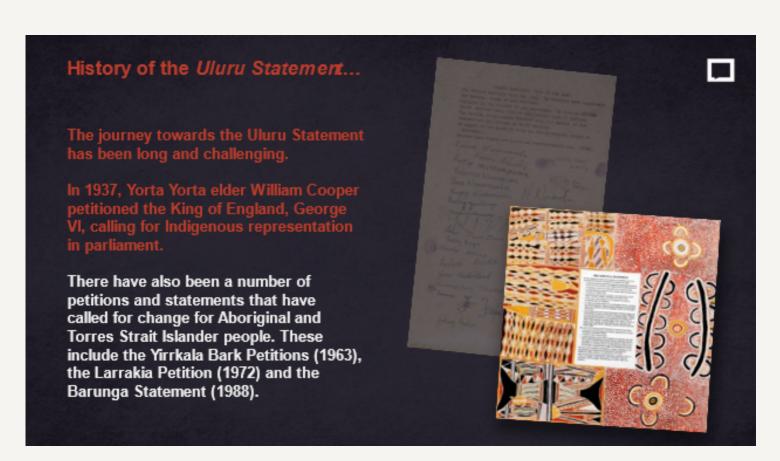


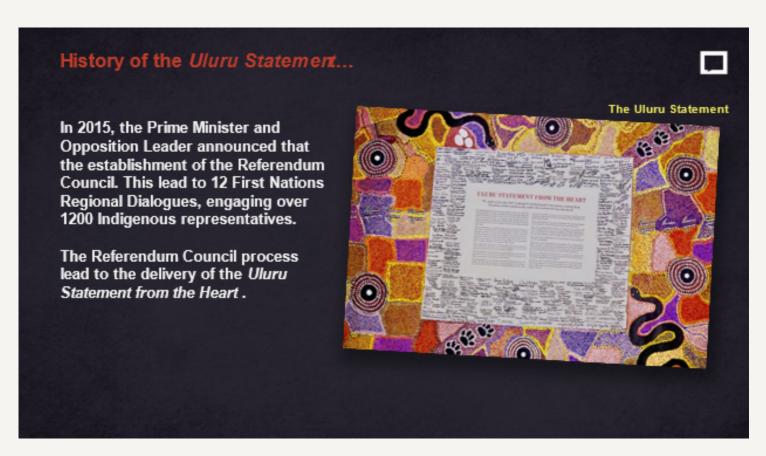




It is a call for fair and practical change, to include them in the Australian Constitution and give them the recognition that they deserve, having been in Australia for over 60,000 years.



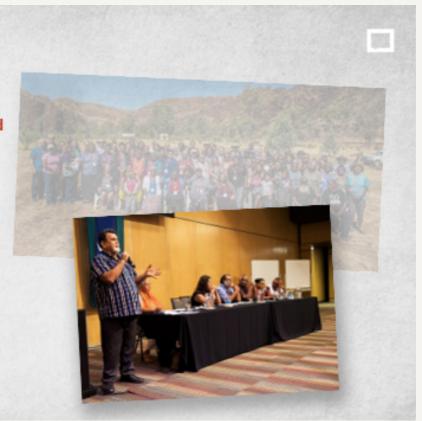




#### A Voice to Parliament

A Voice to Parliament was proposed by the *Uluru Statement* and is intended to be enshrined in the Constitution. It will...

- Give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders a say over the policies and programmes that impact them, such as health and education.
- 2. Give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders a say over the legislation that the Government could introduce that impact them.



# A Makarrata Commission would be established to supervise a process of agreement-making or treaties between Governments and First Nations people, and undertake a process of truth-telling about our history. A Makarrata Commission would be established after a Voice to Parliament is enshrined in the Australian Constitution. This is because a Voice would be able to advise the Government on the best format and way to establish a Makarrata Commission.

### What Does the Uluru Statement from the Heart Call For?

- (1) A representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander body to be enshrined in Australia's Constitution. This will be a representative First Nations Voice to Parliament to allow Indigenous People a permanent participatory role in Australian democracy. The importance of a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament is to address Indigenous powerlessness and ensure that Indigenous peoples are formally consulted about laws and policies being made about them in Parliament, but importantly it is to ensure that Government can no longer abolish a national Indigenous representative Voice as has happened in the past. The First Nations Voice would provide advice to the Parliament on Indigenous matters. It would respect parliament, have no veto, and would operate through political processes.
- (2) A Makarrata Commission to supervise the process of agreement-making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Government, and to facilitate Truth-Telling about Australian history. 'Makarrata' is a Yolngu word from Northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory meaning an act of peace making or reconciliation between individuals or groups after a struggle. The core meaning of the word is that wrong has been done and it needs to be made right. An agreement-making mechanism or Treaty were proposals strongly endorsed by the Indigenous dialogues. A Makarrata Commission would be like a tribunal and could be established by the Australian Government. The need for Truth-Telling about Australia's history of colonisation was also emphasised in the Indigenous dialogues. Indigenous peoples regard Truth-Telling as an essential element of reconciliation. The Commission would provide a pathway for truth and reconciliation.

#### A Voice to Parliament Enshrined in the Constitution

- (1) Constitutional enshrinement means that the core functions of the First Nations Voice will be included in the Constitution, and this will enable the parliament to pass legislation to determine the composition of the Voice, its powers, and procedures. Therefore, the Voice would be entrenched in the Constitution to provide legitimacy and ensure that the Voice has legitimacy as an institution of Australian democracy. However, legislation would control how the Voice is constituted and how it operates. But Constitutional enshrinement requires a referendum.
- (2) The Voice to Parliament will allow Indigenous Australians to contribute to provide advice on matters of national significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This will include the establishment of a Makarrata Commission. The Voice will enable Indigenous people to have a say over legislation, policies and programs that relate to their social, spiritual, and economic wellbeing. Indigenous people will bring their knowledge and experience about the impact of legislation and policy on their communities.
- (3) The Voice must be enshrined in the Constitution to insulate it from partisan politics and help compel the Government to listen to Indigenous Communities. To be enshrined in the Constitution it must be supported by Australians voting 'Yes' at a referendum and would be designed to provide input before the passing of legislation and policy. A Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, will provide legitimacy and authority of the Voice so that its role is taken seriously by Parliament and Government. It will also prevent Parliament from abolishing the Voice.

#### Co-design of the First Nations Voice

- Following the Referendum Council recommendations, the Commonwealth Government rejected the idea of a
  constitutionally recognised First Nation Voice to Parliament on the basis that it was a radical change and not
  consistent with fundamental principles of Australian Democracy. Indigenous people were outraged at the
  Government's attitude because the Voice was only considered to be an advisory body to the national Parliament
  and therefore could not limit the power of Parliament.
- In March 2018 the Commonwealth Government established a Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Select Committee looked at matters raised in the Uluru Statement from the Heart including the establishment of the First Nation Voice, The Makarrata Commission, Truth-Telling and other proposals for constitutional change. In its final report of November 2018, the Select Committee made four recommendations to the Australian Government: to (1) initiate a process of co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the First Nations Voice; (2) consider legislative, executive, and constitutional options to establish the Voice; (3) support the process of Truth-Telling; and (4) consider the establishment of a National Resting Place to be a place of commemoration, healing and reflection.
- In October 2019, following the 2018 Select Committee recommendations, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, announced a two-stage Indigenous Voice co-design process to develop a model to enhance local and regional decision-making and provide a Voice for Indigenous peoples. Stage one of the co-design process was to develop the proposals or presentation to the Australian Government and stage two to consult on proposals with all Australians to inform a final proposal to the Australian Government. In November 2019, the Minister established a Senior Advisory Group to guide the process and ensure the co-design process represented the best interests of Indigenous peoples.
- In January 2020 a National Co-design Group was established to develop models for a national Voice including a link to local and regional voices. In March 2020 the Minister established the Local & Regional Co-design Group to articulate effective regional mechanisms for improved local and regional decision-making by Indigenous peoples in partnership with governments.
- In July 2021 Indigenous Voice Co-design Process Final Report was provided to the Australian Government. The model of an Indigenous Voice outlined in the Final Report involves 35 Local & Regional Voices and an overarching National Voice that will provide advice to Parliament and Government. Local and Regional Voices will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance arrangements at the regional level and will draw its members from local communities, groups, and organisations within the region. The National Voice will comprise 24 members who will be selected by Local & Regional Voices. There will be two members from each state and territory as well as the Torres Strait Islands. There will be a third member representation for remote areas due to their unique needs for NSW, NT, QLD, WA, and SA and one for mainland Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2022 the newly elected Labor Government promised to implement the Uluru Statement by formally
  enshrining an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and establishing a Makarrata Commission responsible for
  Treaty making and Truth-Telling processes. These promises have been reiterated by Prime Minister Anthony
  Albanese at the Garma Festival of Traditional Cultures in July 2022, announcing Australia's first referendum in
  twenty years in an attempt to change the Constitution to appoint an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.
  - For further information on the Co-design process and the model for an Indigenous Voice, see the Final Report: <a href="https://voice.niaa.gov.au/">https://voice.niaa.gov.au/</a>
  - For a review of the Indigenous Voice Co-design process, see: <a href="https://aph.org.au/2022/03/review-of-the-indigenous-voice-co-design-process-final-report-to-the-australian-government/">https://aph.org.au/2022/03/review-of-the-indigenous-voice-co-design-process-final-report-to-the-australian-government/</a>
  - For more information on the promises made by the Labor Government, see:
     https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/may/19/labor-promises-to-move-quickly-on-indigenous-voice-to-parliament-referendum-if-elected

#### Co-design

In the Final Report the Senior Advisory Group made seven recommendations to the Australian Government. These are:

- (1) An Indigenous Voice to be progressed by implementing the Local and Regional Voices and National Voice as outlined in the Final Report.
- (2) The importance of involving all levels of Government in Local & Regional Voices to be recognised and formal commitments to be negotiated with governments as soon as practical.
- (3) It is important to ensure sustainability and security for an Indigenous Voice and this requires funding certainty and appropriate safeguards as part of any enabling legislation.
- (4) Recognise the need to work in partnership to progress implementation. This includes ensuring the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Indigenous Voice.
- (5) Recognise the need for a comprehensive communication strategy to support community understanding, ensure transparent and consistent and prepare for implementation.
- (6) Note that submissions (88%) received in the consultation process expressed support for the enshrinement of the Indigenous Voice in the Constitution.
- (7) The Final Report to be released to the public.

#### A Referendum To Change the Constitution



The Constitution can only be changed by a majority of Australians. Hence the Constitution cannot be altered without approval of the people of Australia. Therefore, to recognise and enshrine a First Nation Voice in the Constitution a majority of Australians in Australia and a majority (at least two thirds) of votes in each state must vote 'yes' in a referendum to change the Constitution.

Before a referendum is held both houses of a Commonwealth Parliament must pass legislation outlining the proposed changes to the Constitution. The referendum must then be held no sooner than two months and no later than six months after the legislation is passed by Parliament.

The Governor-General issues a writ for a referendum to be held and it will be like an election held on a Saturday. After the legislation for a referendum is passed by Parliament the 'yes' case is prepared by parliamentary members and senators who support the proposed change and a 'no' case is prepared by members and senators who oppose the proposed change.

#### Changing the Constitution

Section 128 of the Constitution states that any proposal to amend the Australian Constitution must be passed by an absolute majority in both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. Further, at a referendum the alteration to the Constitution must be approved by a 'double majority'. This means by:

- A national majority of voters in the states and territories.
- A majority of voters in a majority of states (at least four out of six states).

The votes of people living in the ACT, NT or any Australian external territories count towards the national majority only.

For further information about changing the Constitution to recognise First Nations peoples, see: <a href="https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/constitutional-reform-fact-sheet-recognising-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-people">https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/constitutional-reform-fact-sheet-recognising-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-people</a>

For information about referendums, see: <a href="https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/having-your-say/elections-and-voting/referendums-and-plebiscites/">https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/having-your-say/elections-and-voting/referendums-and-plebiscites/</a>

#### **Questions**

- What did you learn?
- What questions do you have?

#### A Journey of Solidarity

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is written as an invitation to the people of Australia to come together with First Nations peoples to achieve constitutional recognition and structural reform in the relationship between the Commonwealth Government and Indigenous Peoples through Voice, Treaty and Truth-Telling. The aspirations of First Nations Peoples are for a fair, truthful and reconciled relationship between First Nations and the people of Australia.



#### ER4 Uluru Artwork



#### ER4 Uluru Artwork Explained

This artwork is by Aboriginal artist David Riley. David attended St James College in Brisbane. The artwork symbolises the Edmund Rice Network joining with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support the invitation arising out of the "From the Heart Uluru Statement." The background on the canvas uses dot art to symbolise the various homelands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that make up Australia.

Silver dots - fresh water people

Blue dots - salt water people

Green dots - grassland/forest people

Ochre dots - desert people

The 6 large circles symbolise the presence of the Edmund Rice Network in the 6 Australian states whilst the 2 smaller circles represent the Edmund Rice presence in the ACT and NT. In these yarning circles people are gathering to listen to the invitation of the Uluru Statement. Small white dots join all the circles in the spirit of collaboration and support for the goals of the Uluru Statement. The black dots signify the on-going relationship with First Nations people - journeying together in solidarity towards the large circle in the centre which symbolises the Federal Parliament of Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be included in the central circle in decision-making about their lands, their spiritualities and any matters that affect them. The circle of Government is now enlarged by the inclusion of the First Nations peoples having a Voice to the Parliament. Gold, silver and black colours signify the country as a whole is enriched by the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in sharing power.

#### ER4 Uluru Artwork Activities

- Play video clip David Riley explains what his artwork ER 4 Uluru means: https://youtu.be/ 7x qQL4syM
- Document Explaining the Uluru Statement from the Heart (see pages 7-10)

#### **Questions**

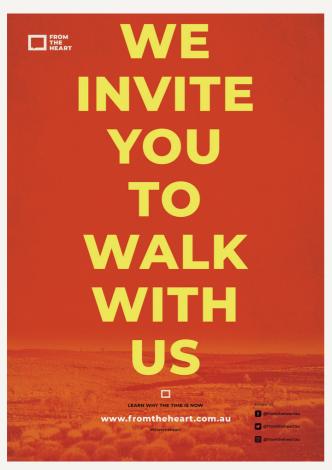
- What do you like about David Riley's artwork? What symbols speak to you?
- How did you feel when you looked at David Riley's artwork and read the explanation of the artwork?
- Why do you think Indigenous art is important in spreading a message?
- What key messages did you identify in David Riley's artwork?
- How do you think you are connected as a member of the Edmund Rice Network?

#### **Further Actions**

- Discussions with First Nations people who understand and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
- Promote the Uluru Statement from the Heart on social media using content at
   <u>www.fromtheheart.com.au/resources/toolkit</u> e.g., "We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and call on Australians to support a Voice to Parliament enabled by the Constitution."
- Sign the Uluru Statement Canvas From The Heart
- Send a letter to your Federal MP in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

#### **Questions**

- Is there anything about the Uluru Statement from the Heart that you would like to further investigate?
- How would you like to respond either as a group or individual?
- How can you raise awareness and promote the Uluru Statement from the Heart with your family and friends as well as in your school, workplace, and community?
- Can you think of some creative ways to promote the Uluru Statement from the Heart using the arts?





#### Resources

#### **Video Clips**

- <u>Uluru Statement read by Pat Anderson, Troy Cassar Daley, Stan Grant, Adam Goodes, Ursula Yovich (Midnight Oil)</u>
- <u>Uluru Statement Explained by Dean Parkin Finding Our Heart A story about the Uluru Statement for young Australians Bing video</u>
- Story book read for young children: Finding Our Heart A story about the Uluru Statement for young Australians - Bing video
- General Calls for renewed focus on Uluru Statement of the Heart four years on 7.30 (abc.net.au)
- Sharing Story /Truth Telling <u>Ellen Fanning shares her family history: How one family started to reckon with their part in Australia's dark past</u> (ABC News)
- Return to Uluru author speaks about his book involved with 1937 shooting of traditional man at Uluru: <u>The cold</u>
   <u>case secret in a Brisbane garage Conversations ABC Radio</u>

#### Interactive Digital Learning Platform - https://fromtheheart.com.au/education/

• From the Heart and the Uluru Dialogues helps to build awareness and understanding of the referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The content takes about 15 minutes to go through and includes videos and interactive questions.

#### **Websites**

- Uluru Statement from the Heart Information: ulurustatement.org
- Uluru Statement from the Heart Information: fromtheheart.com.au
- Uluru Statement: What does the Uluru Statement mean? From The Heart
- Voice to Parliament: News | Indigenous Voice (niaa.gov.au)

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#### **Books**

- Cronin, D 2021, *Trapped by History: The Indigenous-State Relationship in Australia*, Rowman & Littlefield, London/New York.
- Davis, M amp; Williams, G 2021, *Everything You Need to Know About the Uluru Statement from the Heart*, University of New South Wales Press Ltd, Sydney.
- Gorrie, V 2021, Black and Blue, Scribe Publications, Brunswick.
- Mayor, T 2022, *Finding the Heart of the Nation*, Hardie Grant Explore, Richmond.
- Mayor, T & illustrator Douglas, B 2020, Finding Our Heart: A Story about the Uluru Statement for Young Australians, Hardie Grant Explore, Richmond.
- McKenna, M 2021, *Return to Uluru*, Black Inc., Carlton.
- Reynolds, H 2021, *Truth-Telling*, NewSouth Publishing, Sydney.

#### Songs

- Uluru Statement from the Heart/Come On Down Midnight Oil
- Songs from the Makarrata Project Midnight Oil

#### **Further Reading or Discussion**

- <u>Uluru Beginners Booklet</u>
- Interim Report on the Proposed Models for the Voice to Parliament









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