

**MAY 27 –  
JUNE 3  
2023**



**Edmund Rice Centre**  
for Justice & Community Education

**NATIONAL**

# **RECONCILIATION WEEK**



**A Resource Kit for Teachers**

# **BE A**

# **VOICE**

**for**

# **GENERATIONS**

# NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2023

Organised by [Reconciliation Australia](https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au), [National Reconciliation Week](https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au) is an annual initiative held between May 27 and June 3, providing opportunities for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and the importance of reconciliation. This year's theme, [Be A Voice For Generations](https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au), challenges us to listen to the invitation made by the [Uluru Statement From the Heart](https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au) by advocating for the establishment of a [First Nations Voice to Parliament](https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au). The theme encourages all Australians to be a **voice for reconciliation** in tangible ways in our everyday lives.

Find out about events occurring in your area at <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/calendar/>.

A wide range of helpful resources can be found at <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/>.

<b>KEY DATES</b>	<b>May 26</b> The day before National Reconciliation Week is <b>National Sorry Day</b> , when we remember and honour the <b>Stolen Generations</b> .	<b>KEY DATES</b>	<b>May 27</b> The anniversary of the <b>1967 Referendum</b> when Australians voted to allow Indigenous Australians to be counted in the census.	<b>KEY DATES</b>	<b>June 3</b> The historic <b>Mabo decision</b> (1992) in which the High Court recognised that First Nations Peoples <b>retained native title</b> over their lands.
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NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2023 27 MAY — 3 JUNE

# BE A VOICE FOR GENERATIONS

NRW.RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU #NRW2023



## HOW TO TAKE PART

There are many ways for you and your school to take part in this wonderful week. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **cultures**.
- Learn about the **history** of Australia and **why we celebrate** National Reconciliation Week.
- Listen to **music** that was made by First Nations Australians.
- Appreciate **films** and **art** made by First Nations Australians.
- Use our resources in your classroom to help **educate** children on National Reconciliation Week and the Uluru Statement From the Heart (see following pages of this resource).

# TWINKL SCHOOL RESOURCES

A useful online resource for teachers can be found online through [Twinkl](https://www.twinkl.com). This website contains a wide range of information, ideas, resources, PowerPoint presentations and fact sheets directly connecting to National Reconciliation Week.

Explore this extensive collection of online resources at

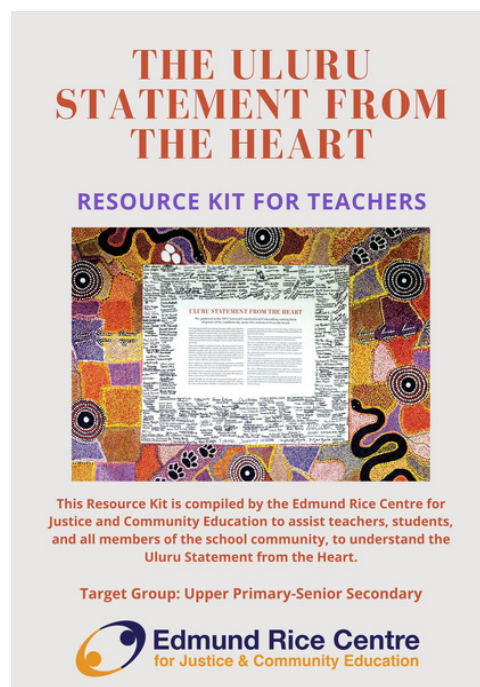
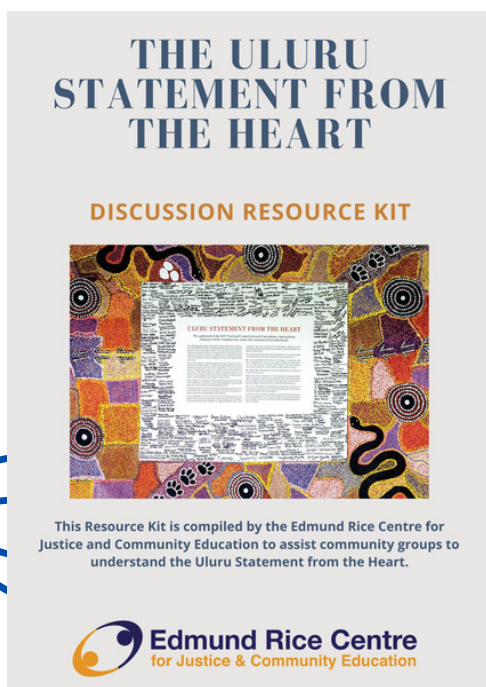
<https://www.twinkl.com.au/event/national-reconciliation-week-2023>.

# ERC RESOURCE KITS FOR SCHOOLS

The [Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education](https://www.erc.org.au) have developed resources to assist in enriching understandings of the **Uluru Statement From the Heart**. These **Resource Kits** serve as useful educational tools to engage students and school communities with First Nations rights advocacy. Offering **background information** and a **diverse range of activities and ideas for engaging students** with the Uluru Statement From the Heart, these resources provide an **accessible introduction** to the context behind the upcoming Referendum. Focused on the importance of **listening to and promoting First Nations voices**, these resources connect directly with the theme of National Reconciliation Week 2023.

Our **Discussion Resource Kit** and **Resource Kit for Teachers** can be found at

[https://www.erc.org.au/constitutional\\_recognition](https://www.erc.org.au/constitutional_recognition).



# RESOURCES TO USE WITH STAFF

National Reconciliation Week is an invitation for all of us to engage with matters of importance to First Nations Australians. The following resources provide great opportunities to learn more about and advocate for the **First Nations Voice to Parliament**.

Get a comprehensive summary of the Voice to Parliament in **Everything you need to know about the Indigenous Voice Referendum** (7:30 Report) at

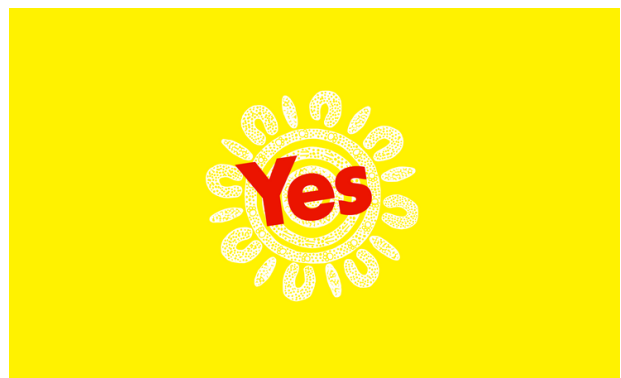
<https://youtu.be/RCnv3G0rDLo>



## TOGETHER, YES KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Focused on garnering community support for the First Nations Voice to Parliament, **Together, Yes** is bringing people together through **Kitchen Table Conversations** to encourage **listening, learning and community education**. National Reconciliation Week is scheduled to be a high-point for this campaign nationally. We encourage you to learn more about the **Together, Yes** campaign and consider signing up to become a **Conversation Host**. It's a powerful way you can participate in the upcoming Referendum to enshrine a First Nations Voice in our Constitution.

Find out more about the **Together, Yes** campaign at <https://togetheryes.com.au/>.



## YES 23 – ADVOCATING FOR A FIRST NATIONS VOICE

Australia's Constitution still doesn't recognise our First Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It's well and truly time for change. Led by Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition Ltd., **Yes 23** is a primary force in the **YES Campaign**, providing valuable campaign and educational resources, as well as volunteer opportunities.

Find out more about **Yes 23** at <https://yes23.com.au/>.

# ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

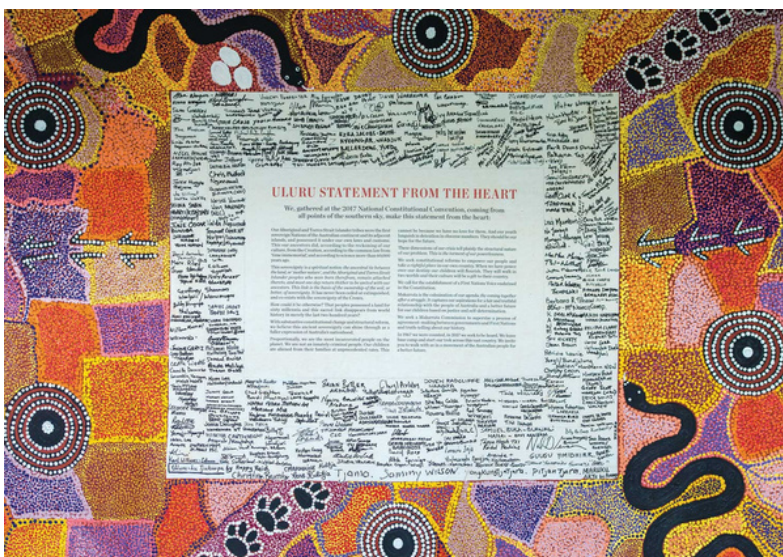
The idea for a **First Nations Voice to Parliament** enshrined in the Constitution comes from the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**. In May 2017, over **250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates** from all over Australia gathered in the shadow of Uluru and put their signatures on a **historic statement** called the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

This document **recognises the ancient and spiritual sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes** as the **first sovereign Nations** of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, dating back **more than 60,000 years** ago. The Statement goes on to **recognise the adversity faced by First Nations Australians**, such as their **disproportionate rates of incarceration** (greater than that of any other group on the planet), and the **alienation of their children from their communities** at unprecedented rates, whilst noting that: **"they should be our hope for the future"**.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is **addressed to the Australian people**, not politicians. It invites the nation to **create a better future** by proposing **three key reforms**, namely:



The first of these reforms was to call for **the establishment of a First Nations Voice** enshrined in the Constitution. Accordingly, the Uluru Statement concludes:



"In 1967 we were counted. In 2017, we seek to be heard."

You can read the Uluru Statement From the Heart and access other useful resources at <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>.

# WHAT IS THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT?

At the end of 2023, a Referendum will be held across Australia. This Referendum will ask all Australians of voting age whether the Australian Constitution should be amended to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the creation of a Voice to Parliament.

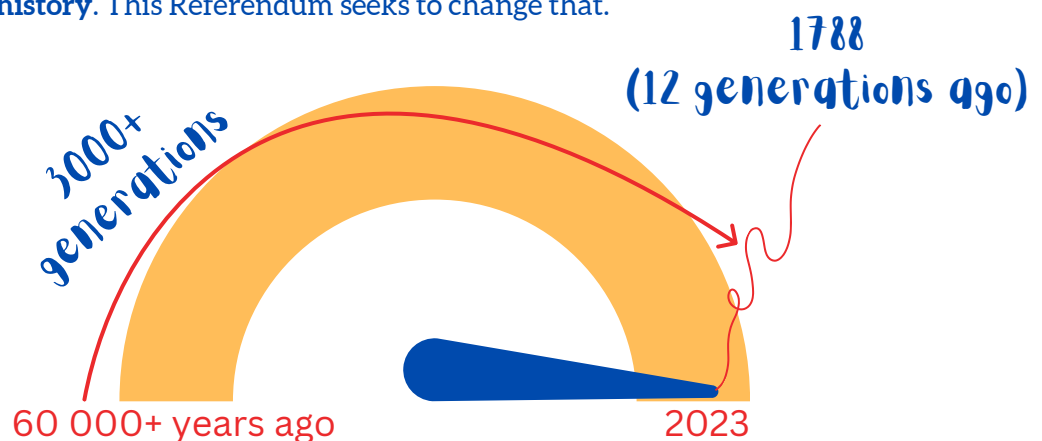
The Voice will be a platform to represent and amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. It will enable them to make representations directly to the Federal Parliament and the government on laws and policies that are likely to affect them and their communities.

First Nations peoples have experienced profound and continuing dispossession and disadvantage as a result of British colonialism. The aim of the Voice is for First Nations voices to be heard more clearly in Canberra, so that better laws and outcomes can be achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on issues such as education, health, housing, criminal justice and employment.

It will be up to Parliament to decide if the advice of the Voice should be followed. The Voice will not have a veto over legislation or decisions of government. Parliament will decide how the Voice will work in practice – who can sit on it, how its representations will be made, and what effect they will have, etc. – by implementing legislation if the Referendum is successful. The Referendum is only about the principle of whether there should be a Voice to Parliament.

Most importantly, the purpose of the Voice is also to recognise Australia's First Nations peoples in the Constitution. Written without consulting First Nations Australians, our Constitution does not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples despite their occupation of the Australian continent for over 60,000 years. Not once does our Constitution acknowledge First Nation Australians as the oldest continuing culture in human history. This Referendum seeks to change that.

To put time into context, First Nations Australians have been in Australia for over 3,000 generations, non-Indigenous Australians have only been here since 1788, for just under 12 generations.



"We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."

# HOW DOES A REFERENDUM WORK?

Constitutions are not documents set in stone, and are capable of change. All Australians own the Constitution. This means that the only way that the Constitution can be changed is by holding a Referendum. At the Referendum the proposed alteration must be approved by a 'double majority'. This means:

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

It is compulsory to vote in a Referendum for all Australian citizens who are aged 18 and older. If you are already on the electoral roll, you do not need to enrol again. If you are unsure - check your enrolment status at <https://check.aec.gov.au/>.

The Referendum for the First Nations Voice to Parliament is likely to be held in October 2023, though the date is yet to be confirmed. The Referendum question will look like this:

## 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?

YES

NO

More information on how a Referendum works can be found at <https://aec.gov.au/Elections/referendums/index.htm>.

Remember to look out for your First Nations friends!



Remember to look out for your Indigenous friends, colleagues and students as we go through the Referendum process this year. Check in with them to see how they are going. It is important for them to know that they are valued and supported regardless of what happens with the Referendum.



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**Reconciliation Week 2023 Resource Kit for Teachers**

First produced by the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education in 2023.