

Get the facts
about **the Voice**

94.9
main
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Community Toolkit - Resources and Information on the Voice Referendum.

94.9 MainFM is a community radio station based on Djarra country in Castlemaine, broadcasting music, community news, talks and specialist programs and events throughout a large area of Central Victoria. MainFM is a not-for-profit organisation which is owned and operated by and for the community.

The values of MainFM align with creating a caring community. We encourage everyone to stay informed by centering the voices of First Peoples, especially those locally and to take a respectful and curious approach to the diversity of opinions.

MainFM's role in the lead up to the Referendum is to disseminate accurate information and facilitate robust and respectful discussion amongst our community. We are taking careful consideration to ensure disinformed / misinformed fear based approaches and attitudes are minimised.

MainFM has developed this Community Toolkit, to make accessible a wealth of information, resources and facts you can refer to in order to ensure you are informed and empowered to make your decision.

The Question you will be asked to vote Yes or No on;

“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?”

What is the Voice referendum?

On Saturday, 14 October 2023, all eligible Australian citizens aged 18 years and over will vote on whether Australia should change its Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia by establishing a body called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Why is it happening now?

In 2017, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country came together and considered all the options for recognition. They wrote the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which called for a Voice for First Nations peoples to be added to the Constitution.

In 2022, the Australian Government agreed to have a referendum to let Australians decide whether to establish the Voice in the Constitution. This is why Australians are now being asked to vote on it.

How to Vote

How to complete the ballot paper

<https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/vote/completing-the-ballot-paper.html>

Find your polling place

<https://aec.gov.au/referendums/vote/find-my-polling-place.html>

Local Voices

Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation

“We encourage others to vote dja, and to have conversations with your friends and family about why a yes vote is so important.”

<https://djadjawurrung.com.au/dja-dja-wurrung-corporation-says-dja-to-voice/>

Active Groups in Castlemaine

Yes23 Castlemaine

https://www.yes23.com.au/castlemaine_meet_up

Castlemaine & Surrounds Yes23

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100095063430192>

Mount Alexander Shire Council Resources

Mount Alexander Shire Council - Resources

<https://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-information/First-Nations-Voice-to-Parliament>

10 questions about the Voice to Parliament - answered by the experts

<https://theconversation.com/10-questions-about-the-voice-to-parliament-answered-by-the-experts-207014>

How to talk to children about the Voice

<https://thesector.com.au/2023/07/05/how-can-i-talk-to-children-about-treaty-and-the-voice/>

Yes or No? Here are the key arguments for and against the Voice

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/yes-or-no-here-are-the-main-arguments-for-and-against-the-voice/2h82rx9tj>

What is the Argument for YES?

The Yes campaign believes it is no longer acceptable for Australia to be one of the only colonised countries in the world that does not recognise indigenous people in its founding document.

The Voice was recommended after a years-long engagement with Indigenous communities across Australia.

- Indigenous people should have a say in policies that affect them.
- If the government listens to Indigenous people as it creates policies about them, the policies will be better.
- It will be permanent, and future governments won't be able to remove it.
- Ensuring the Voice can speak to "executive government" means its central role is entrenched, regardless of future governments.
- It will be gender equal and include youth members, meaning more voices from Indigenous communities will be heard.
- It has been carefully devised and given the green light by legal experts.
- Fixed terms mean representatives will always be accountable.
- The Voice would be a good mechanism through which to negotiate Truth and Treaty processes with the Commonwealth.
- Parliament, and by extension the Australian people, would still hold the ultimate say over what becomes law.

What is the Argument for NO?

- It's symbolic, and fixing systemic issues facing Indigenous communities would require a body with actual power.
- Governments can ignore its advice if they don't like it.
- The Voice adds race to the constitution.
- Because the Voice will be designed by parliament, future governments could change or sideline it.
- Indigenous people already have a voice via an unprecedented level of Indigenous representation in parliament.
- Truth and Treaty should come before the Voice.

Sources to go to for Information

ABC – The Yes and No campaigns explained

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/voice-to-parliament-referendum>

SBS Voice Referendum Portal

A dedicated destination for all Australians to access news, information and multilingual resources about the Indigenous Voice to Parliament Referendum from across the SBS network, including National Indigenous Television(NITV).

www.sbs.com.au/voicereferendum

SBS / NITV The Point

As Australia heads toward a Referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, National Indigenous Television's (NITV) current affairs program, The Point: Referendum Road Trip with John Paul Janke and Narelda Jacobs, is the home of First Nations perspectives informing all Australians in the lead up to the vote

<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/news-series/the-point>

First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria supports all elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty, Truth. They are working hard to advance all three in Victoria and we're urging people to vote YES in the upcoming referendum for a national Voice to Parliament.

Speech: Listening to First Peoples will improve lives by Marcus Stewart

This is an edited extract of a speech delivered by proud Nira illim bulluk man of the Taungurung nation and outgoing co-chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, Marcus Stewart, at an event at Trades Halls in support of the YES vote for a national Voice to Parliament.

<https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/news/speech-listening-to-first-peoples-will-improve-lives/>

How to be a Respectful Ally to Indigenous Australians

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/voice-referendum-how-you-can-be-a-respectful-ally-to-indigenous-australians/y1qb000w>

Reconciliation Australia - Guiding principles of the Voice

Senior Counsel and referendum working group member Tony McAvoy outlined the principles to that might be held about the proposed advisory body.

1. The Voice will give independent advice to the Parliament and Government
2. It will be chosen by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on the wishes of local communities
3. It will be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, gender-balanced and include youth
4. It will be empowering, community-led, inclusive, respectful and culturally informed
5. It will be accountable and transparent
6. It will work alongside existing organisations and traditional structures
7. It will not have a program delivery function
8. It will not have a veto power.

See more information on the [Voice Design Principles](#).

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/support-a-voice-to-parliament/>

Sources to go to for Information

Reconciliation Australia - Common myths and misbeliefs

Right now, there are a number of myths and misconceptions in circulation about the Voice, potentially causing confusion among interested people.

Shelley Reys has created this video for those who want to understand the innate value of a Voice but more specifically, have their concerns addressed with factual information, without judgement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nla61MfEtiY&t=1s>

Other sources on myths and disinformation

- The [Australian Electoral Commission](#) has its own [disinformation register](#) which lists prominent pieces of disinformation.
- RMIT has listed [seven common confusions about the referendum](#).
- Watch [Fact-checking the Voice Debate](#) from RMIT FactLab & AAP FactCheck.

Reconciliation Australia - Get up to speed with the info below

Check out the links below for resources and information suitable for you and your family, or community and sporting groups, students and workplaces.

- Read the official Referendum 2023 Yes/No Pamphlet from the Australian Electoral Commission <https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/files/pamphlet/your-official-yes-no-referendum-pamphlet.pdf?v=1.0>
- Learn more about an Indigenous Voice to Parliament through the Interactive Digital Learning Platform at ulurustatement.org
- Read information on the Uluru Statement from the Heart <https://ulurustatement.org/training/#/>
- Watch this video explainer on the Voice to Parliament from ABC News Video Lab <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-11/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-voice/102208504>
- Watch Minister Burney's Press Club Speech and follow-up questions <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-05/linda-burney-outlines-key-priorities-for-voice-to-parliament/102561482>
- The Solicitor General's Advice on the Voice to Parliament <https://theconversation.com/solicitor-general-confirms-voice-model-is-legally-sound-will-not-fetter-or-impede-parliament-204266#>
- The Voice and human rights from the Australian Human Rights Commission https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/voice-referendum-understanding?mc_cid=423ca18cd5&mc_eid=eb1a4d3745
- Read about the 100-year history of calls for representation and a voice <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/support-a-voice-to-parliament/100-years-of-calls-for-voice/>
- To understand the referendum from a human rights perspective: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/voice-referendum-understanding>
- To understand the history of Aboriginal Representation - check out ANTA's (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) fact sheet <https://antar.org.au/resources/voice-a-history-of-representation/>

Sources to go to for Information

- See how you can start a conversation group

<https://togetheryes.com.au/>

- Read the Indigenous Voice Co-design report

<https://voice.gov.au/>

- Read the 2018 Joint Select Committee Report

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Former_Committees/Constitutional_Recognition_2018/ConstRecognition/Final_Report

- Read the 2022 Australian Reconciliation Barometer

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/australian-reconciliation-barometer/>

'No' vote

There are two types of No campaigns;

The progressive Blak Sovereign No position, held by First Nations People like Lidia Thorpe.

Arguments for this progressive 'No' vote include that the Voice won't deliver meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or that Truth and Treaty should be prioritised ahead of, or alongside a Voice to Parliament as outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The conservative 'No' campaign includes 'Australians for Unity.'

Read about the two sides to the 'no' campaign - the conservative 'no' campaign and the Blak Sovereign 'no' campaign in the below article from 'The Conversation'

<https://theconversation.com/there-are-two-sides-to-the-no-campaign-on-the-voice-who-are-they-and-why-are-they-opposed-to-it-212362>

"One of the drivers behind this "no" campaign is Fair Australia, an arm of the lobbying group Advance Australia. Advance counts former Prime Minister Tony Abbott as an advisory member and is backed by wealthy donors. These groups are harnessing social media to push their arguments, which mainly revolve around two themes: "dividing" the nation, and the lack of detail masking a hidden agenda. This side of the "no" camp has faced many accusations of spreading misinformation. Senior Indigenous politician Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price is the Liberal party's spokesperson against the Voice and the main Indigenous voice in the conservative "no" camp. Liberal Party leader Peter Dutton recently appointed Price as the new shadow minister for Indigenous Australians."

YES 23 - 'Yes' Vote

- Recognising and respecting 65,000 years of Indigenous culture for the first time in Australia's 122 year-old constitution.
- Listening to advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about matters that affect their lives, so governments make better decisions.
- Protecting the Voice from politics and bureaucrats by putting it in the constitution, giving it the security it needs to provide meaningful and honest advice.
- Over 80% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community support this proposal. It has been designed and agreed on by Indigenous leaders over many decades.

https://www.yes23.com.au/vote_yes

Read the Uluru Statement From the Heart

<https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>

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? 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 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 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.