



The Graham F Smith
Peace Foundation Inc.

Working for Peace Through the Arts

Referendum: Enshrining the First Nations Voice to Parliament A Community Campaign Toolkit

The Graham F Smith Peace Foundation (Peace Foundation) is committed to the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**: a gift of hope, love, and peace from First Nations Peoples given to **all** Australians in 2017 to create a better and united Australia.

We welcome the decision of the Federal Labor Government to hold a **Referendum** within the life of the current parliament to enshrine a First Nations Voice to Parliament in the Australian Constitution as proposed in the Uluru Statement.

To be successful a Referendum requires a national majority of voters in all states and territories **and** a majority of voters in a majority of states (at least four out of six states).

The Peace Foundation is dedicated to achieving a successful Referendum, in collaboration with others.

An active and determined campaign will be required to gain the Referendum. It will need to be based on accurate information and counter opposition feeding on misinformation and anxiety about change. Moreover, it will need to start **now** before misinformation and opposition become entrenched.

The Toolkit is designed to help each one of us to:

- Be informed and to act
- Join our voice with others to amplify our message
- Stand up for Recognition everywhere and invite others to join in.
- Share, participate and add to messages and actions from the Peace Foundation (members, donors, and supporters) as well as from allies, affiliate organisations, and coalitions which we support or of which we are part, using email, social media, and any other communication channels available.
- Organise and mobilise for Referendum Day – starting now!

This Toolkit contains resources we need to be informed, and get started to formulate, coordinate and execute individual or group campaign plans as follows.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart – foundation information

- **The Uluru Statement from the Heart** is the foundation document written by **the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the last day of the Convention, May 2017, inviting all Australians to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”**. It calls for structural reforms including constitutional change to establish a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling: **Voice, Treaty, Truth**.

Read the whole Statement here ulurustatemdev.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UluruStatementfromtheHeartPLAINTEXT.pdf and/or listen to Professor Megan Davis, member of the Referendum Council, read out the Uluru Statement from the Heart for the first time in history on the floor of the First Nations Constitutional Convention here ulurustatement.org/the-statement/

- **Uluru Statement** ulurustatement.org is a comprehensive website developed by the **Uluru Dialogue Team**, Sydney which was responsible for the dialogues which were fundamental in giving birth to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. It highlights the **History is Calling** movement. The 15-member team responsible for the website includes the indefatigable Co-Chairs, Pat Anderson AO, and Professor Megan Davis. This is a most impactful website. This section ulurustatement.org/the-statement/the-dialogues/ importantly describes and records the series of 12 remarkable regional dialogues held across the country which then culminated in the National Constitutional Convention at Uluru in 2017. ulurustatemdev.wpengine.com/take-action/supporter-kit/ provides supporter kits in an ever-increasing number of languages
- **From The Heart** www.fromtheheart.com.au is a website campaign for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament that is enshrined in the Constitution. It is now time for the Australian people to come together through a referendum and make this fair and practical change.

Dean Parkin is Director of **From the Heart**; Nick Eakin, General Manager, Campaign Sustainability, **From the Heart** and Kenny Bedford, Indigenous Engagement Lead. This is an excellent website.

At this site you can **sign the Uluru Statement Canvas**, access the Uluru Statement Toolkit, and view draft referendum question and projected change to constitution presented by the PM Anthony Albanese at the Garma Festival in July 2022 etc.

- **ABC Boyer Lecture Series 2022 Indigenous community leader, lawyer, academic and land rights activist Noel Pearson** explores the proposal to amend the Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia through a Voice to Parliament. **in his first lecture in the series**, which was excellent, thoughtful, and formative, he reflected on **"Who we were and who we can be"**.

View and listen on iView. **We can have a better, more unifying future in Australia** [about.abc.net.au/speeches/noel-pearson-boyer-lecture-series-who-we-were-and-who-we-can-be/](https://www.abc.net.au/speeches/noel-pearson-boyer-lecture-series-who-we-were-and-who-we-can-be/) **This is essential viewing.**

You can hear all five lectures on the Radio National website at www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/boyerlectures/we-the-australian-people/14110798

- ***Finding the Heart of the Nation* by Thomas Mayor, 2022**
This book by Torres Strait Islander Thomas Mayor is for all Australians, tells the story of the Uluru Statement from the Heart of which he was a signatory. Following the Uluru Convention, Thomas was delegated to carry the sacred canvas of the Uluru Statement from the Heart around the country. The journey took eighteen months during which he garnered support for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice, and a Makarrata Commission for truth-telling and treaties. Thomas's journey as a tireless campaigner continues, both in person and through the pages of his book which is his gift to the campaign for Voice, Treaty and Truth.

Related Short Articles

Henry Reynolds: ***Truth and Treaties: the ongoing legacy of the Uluru statement*** – published in Pearls and Irritations, John Menadue's Public Policy Journal johnmenadue.com/the-ongoing-legacy-of-the-uluru-statement/

Paul Daley: ***Australians back a voice to parliament. The moment is there to be seized*** published in The Guardian - www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2021/jun/04/australians-back-a-voice-to-parliament-the-moment-is-there-to-be-seized

Dr Shireen Morris: ***A constitutional Voice to Parliament: ensuring parliament is in charge, not the courts***, published by The Conversation theconversation.com/a-constitutional-voice-to-parliament-ensuring-parliament-is-in-charge-not-the-courts-193017

Pat Anderson and Paul Komesaroff - ***Why a First Nations Voice should come before Treaty***, published by The Conversation theconversation.com/why-a-first-nations-voice-should-come-before-treaty-192388

The landmark speech by the Hon Prime Minister, **P J Keating** MP Australian launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, **Redfern**, 10 December 1992 pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00008765.pdf

Books

Truth Telling-History, sovereignty and the Uluru Statement by Henry Reynolds. New South 2021 Henry Reynolds is an eminent Australian historian.

Telling Tennant's Story by **Dean Ashenden** won the inaugural Australian Political Book of the Year, 2022. This is a book about truth-telling.

Talking to My Country by **Stan Grant**. The book is described as very special as it **talks to every Australian about their Country**. Very appropriate to consider as we seek for a better future. First published 2016

Additional Websites

The Parliamentary website: Uluru Statement: a quick guide as on 19 June 20
www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/UluruStatement This is an interesting website from a historical point of view. It needs to be updated.

Creativespirits

www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/uluru-statement-from-the-heart#key-elements-of-the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart Creative Spirits is an extensive resource for students, teachers and those hungry to know what they weren't taught—the truth. Source: Helping you learn and teach about Aboriginal culture - Creative Spirits, retrieved from www.creativespirits.info/

Croakey Health Media was incorporated in 2018 as a not-for-profit public interest journalism organisation. Here you will find the article ***Thousands tune in to find out more about Voice and next steps for the Uluru Statement*** by Alison Barrett www.croakey.org/thousands-tune-into-find-out-more-about-voice-and-next-steps-for-the-uluru-statement/ On this web page is a link to a webcast organised by the Australian Institute featuring Pat Anderson AO and Professor Megan Davis. This is worth listening to as it explains the history of the Uluru Statement and the Voice enshrined in the constitution and the sequencing of Voice, Truth, and Treaty.

University of New South Wales – Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor

Indigenous www.indigenous.unsw.edu.au/power-voice

Listen to Professor Megan Davis's 10 minute on the importance of constitutionally protected First Nations Voice to Parliament, the Uluru Statement and what motivates her as a scholar.

Key Dates

Historically annotated dates of First Nations People who have lived on this land, known as Australia, for over 60,000 years – see ulurustatement.org/thestatement/history/

When you look at significant events for First Nations people you'll notice that they record their fight for rights, land and recognition. It is also a history of sadness, loss, and denial. See **Creative Spirits** 2022 Aboriginal calendar of significant events www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-calendar

Inspiration

The South Australian Indigenous Voice to Parliament is presently being prepared prior to its 2023 launch. These links provide information and inspiration of what is possible. Consultation on SA's Indigenous Voice to Parliament is underway now, including engagement through yourSAy (until 6 January 2023). See www.agd.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs-and-reconciliation/commissioner-for-first-nations-voice/first-nations-voice-model

See also www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-13/consultation-to-start-on-sa-voice-to-parliament/101147480 for more about the SA First Nations Voice model.

Adopt an Action Plan

Along with the knowledge and tools above, here is a selection of actions that can help to create a Community Campaign to achieve a successful Referendum which will move Australia towards a more unified future. We all have the opportunity and power to do this. Choose actions or develop your own to include in an Action Plan that you wish to adopt for yourself:

1. Be informed about the **Uluru Statement from the Heart** and talk about it with friends, family, colleagues, and acquaintances. See ulurustatement.org/

View the webinar with Pat Anderson and Megan Davis, referred to earlier, at australiainstitute.org.au/event/uluru-statement-from-the-heart-sydney-peace-prize-winner-2/ An excellent description of the extensive consultation taken over a number of years to create the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

2. Get to know the **From the Heart** website and sign up to receive information from Director, Dean Parker.

Here you can take the course on **A Voice to Parliament** fromtheheart.com.au/education . The course covers what is meant by Indigenous Constitutional Recognition through a Voice and why a Referendum is required to make it happen. This experience will take about 15 – 20 minutes. Begin your Learning Journey [here](#) and share with others.

3. Sign your name on the Uluru Statement Canvas on the **From the Heart** website. Invite family and friends to join you in the signing.
4. Share your experiences and impressions across all social media channels to which you have access; generate a conversation. Encourage others to use **Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.**
5. Write to politicians, state, federal and local government, regularly. Letters of encouragement can be useful for those who support the Voice, but it is also important to write letters to those who oppose the Voice.
6. See letter writing messages at ulurustatemdev.wpengine.com/take-action/write-to-your-mp/ which can be adjusted to meet special needs.
7. Organise groups at home, work or at social events to discuss the Voice to Parliament. See ulurustatement.org/
8. Be prepared for exchanges and opposition in discussions about the Referendum. The best approach is to be calm; ask questions; acknowledge concerns; answer honestly; respond by sharing information rather than argument and offer to seek out answers to matters unknown and respond immediately.
9. Prepare responses to:

Counter Misinformation e.g. the Statement is unrepresentative of First Nations views; the Voice will be a third tier of Parliament; it is undemocratic; it will be ineffective; we need a treaty first.

Respond to Prejudice e.g. First Nations Peoples already get more than the rest of us; they just waste opportunities; it will be a waste of time and resources – look at ATSIC(Aboriginal and Torres Islander Commission)

Deal with Anxiety about change e.g. things are ok as they are; this could corrupt democratic processes; there is too much change happening already; its structure and powers are unclear; I can't vote for something so vague.

Deal with Misdirected Anger e.g. I've got too much to worry about already; I'm sick of hearing about them; what about my troubles with the mortgage, bills; nobody listens to us; how is it going to improve things; there are more important things to worry about.

Switch people who are switched off e.g why should I care; it's got nothing to do with me.

Please Take Action

Let us together, respond to the invitation from our First Nations sisters and brothers in a nation building project to *“unite at long last the First Peoples of this country with our British institutional inheritance and our multicultural achievement, under the Constitution.”* – Noel Pearson's Boyer Lecture 2022.

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