

ONE TOGETHER, NOT TWO DIVIDED

10 REASONS TO VOTE 'NO' TO THE DIVISIVE VOICE

www.fairaustralia.com.au

FAIR
AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

Australia is the greatest country in the world. We've enjoyed a peace and prosperity that's the envy of nations from all corners of the globe. **But we're not perfect and there is no issue that exemplifies our shortcomings as the ongoing disadvantages faced by our Indigenous brothers and sisters.**

We understand the gap in health and economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a national problem that needs solving and **we believe the promise of Australia is in our capacity to find solutions together, not separately.**

The upcoming Voice referendum will ask you a basic question: do you want to change the Constitution?

The Constitution is our founding document, our national rulebook.

It has underpinned our success, and it gives us the tools to solve the problems we face together. Not apart.

There is nothing modest about changing the Constitution because when you change the Constitution you're changing the foundation of the country. There's no reason to do it otherwise.

In 1967 Australians voted overwhelmingly to change the Constitution so that Indigenous Australians were "recognised as part of the Australian population"¹, to make Australians one together.

The proposed Voice undermines 1967 by enshrining division in our constitution.

Instead of being one and equal, we become divided, with separate voices, separate powers, separate votes.

At its core, the Voice is divisive.

And that's why we're voting 'no'!

Because we're not going to help our Indigenous family by separating them.

We need to do it together.

As Australians. One and free.

¹ The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *The 1967 Referendum*, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/1967-referendum>



CONTENTS

WHY VOTE 'NO'? HERE ARE 10 REASONS WHY

| | |
|--|-----------|
| It's not 'modest' | 4 |
| It undermines 'recognition' | 5 |
| It will divide us | 6 |
| It's expensive | 7 |
| It's a Canberra politician's Voice | 8 |
| It divides Indigenous Australians | 9 |
| It's a package deal | 10 |
| It undermines our one-vote democratic system | 11 |
| It won't Close the Gap | 12 |
| It's a platform for radical activists to attack our values and institutions ... | 13 |
| Conclusion | 14 |

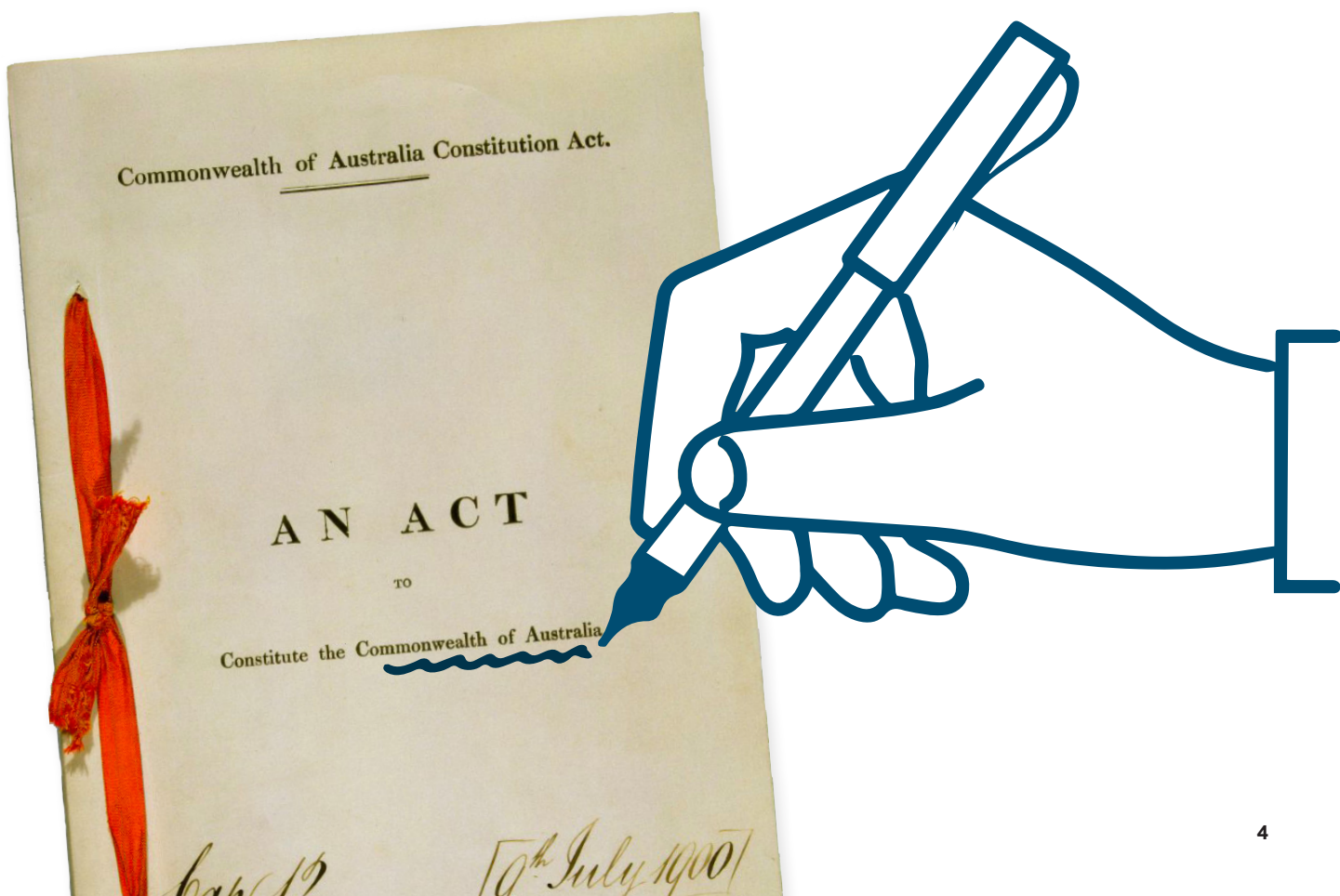
IT'S NOT 'MODEST'

The first and most fundamental question that will be asked of Australians on the referendum day later this year is the same one asked at every referendum: do you want to change the constitution.

Whatever words come next, whatever the issue at hand is, this is the most important question. Do you want to make a change to the document on which our whole system of government and our democracy rests?

THERE IS NOTHING MODEST ABOUT CHANGING OUR NATION'S RULEBOOK.

You don't change the constitution if you don't want to change the country. So give no credence to claims the Voice is a modest proposal. By definition, it can't be.



IT UNDERMINES 'RECOGNITION'

The push for constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians has widespread support. But instead of proposing a constitutional change that is confined to recognition, Canberra politicians and activists have gone much further.

In fact, they've undermined the idea of recognition by tying it to the Voice.

Rather than asking Australians to change the constitution to recognise Indigenous Australians as our country's First Peoples, we're being asked to establish an undefined body with ambiguous powers; one that has a form of oversight over the Executive Government and the Public Service, and lets Canberra politicians decide how it works.²

**THE REFERENDUM MAKES RECOGNITION
CONDITIONAL ON APPROVING THE VOICE –
AND THAT'S NOT FAIR TO ANYONE.**

² National Indigenous Australians Agency, Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/referendum-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-voice>



IT WILL DIVIDE US

The Voice is fundamentally divisive.

IT PUTS RACIAL SEPARATION IN YOUR CONSTITUTION BY GIVING A VOICE TO ONE GROUP, BASED ON RACE, THAT NO OTHER GROUP HAS OR WILL HAVE.

Not only that, it's dividing us already with the way pro-Voice activists call anyone who has questions about the referendum racist or against reconciliation, which is just not true.

Australians are united in wanting to see better outcomes for Indigenous Australians, we're united in wanting reconciliation, and it's divisive to claim otherwise.

Just as it's divisive to put such a profound separation in our constitution.



IT'S EXPENSIVE

Australians rightfully support government efforts to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Aussies. It's a scandal that so many Indigenous communities are suffering.

BUT WITH CURRENT FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS ISSUES TOPPING \$100 MILLION A DAY³, IT'S FAIR TO ASK THE QUESTION: HOW MUCH MORE?

With millions of Australians facing a cost of living crisis, the government should be focused on making sure the support provided to Indigenous Australians is working, not wasting many millions of dollars more on holding a massive national vote.

And that's before you even consider the cost of setting up the Voice itself, along with whatever agency and staffing level will be needed to support it, plus the elections for the Voice itself.

With the economic problems we face as a country, it's not the time to be embarking on an expensive vote to change the rulebook of the nation. Instead, let's focus on getting good outcomes with what we're spending now.

³ Productivity Commission. (2017). Indigenous Expenditure Report 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/indigenous-expenditure-report/2017>

Note: The estimated annual expenditure is \$33.4 billion (adjusted for inflation up to 2022) which translates to roughly \$104.7



IT'S A CANBERRA POLITICIAN'S VOICE

The divisive Voice is the pet project of the politicians in Canberra. While many Indigenous Australians were involved in the development of the Uluru Statement which has led to the Voice proposal, it was heavily influenced by highly urban activist groups.

There is no better illustration of this than the refusal of the Government to listen to warnings from the actual Indigenous people on the ground – including an elected Senator, Jacinta Nampijinpa Price – on the issue of crime in Alice Springs. Instead, the voices that were listened to were the ones in Canberra – the very same ones shouting the loudest about the divisive Voice.

THE REALITY IS, MANY OF THE PEOPLE PUSHING FOR THE VOICE ARE THE VERY SAME PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE EXISTING NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS GROUPS WHO HAVE BEEN IN GOVERNMENT JOBS, IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND WHO SIGNED DEALS LIKE THE "CLOSING THE GAP" FUNDING AGREEMENTS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IT IS THE SAME PEOPLE WHO HAVE FAILED TO CLOSE THE GAP WHO ARE NOW DEMANDING THE DIVISIVE VOICE.

Not only that, the wording of the referendum gives the government full authority to make up the rules for the Voice in any way they want. They can make it as powerful as they want – or they can make sure it's only got the people they agree with on it.

That's why ultimately this is a politician's voice, not a voice for Indigenous people.



IT DIVIDES INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Despite claims the voice was borne out of a consensus of Indigenous Australians, the fact is throughout the Uluru Statement process there has been dissent and disagreement between Indigenous leaders and communities and there still is.

Indeed, seven delegates and around thirty of their supporters actually walked out of the Uluru convention that came up with the Voice because they did not agree with the proposals contained in the Uluru statement.

NO ONE EXPECTS INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS TO THINK THE SAME OR HAVE THE SAME PRIORITIES AND POLICY POSITIONS, YET WE ARE BEING ASKED TO PUT IN PLACE A VOICE THAT SPEAKS FOR ALL OF THEM.

Even in the Parliament right now, Indigenous senators like Jacinta Nampijinpa Price and Lidia Thorpe both oppose the Voice – and their opposition is for completely different reasons.

If it creates division among Indigenous Australians, how much more will it divide all of us?



IT'S A PACKAGE DEAL

The Labor Government took to the election a commitment to implement the full Uluru Statement. That statement is very clear that the Voice is just a first step. Next comes Treaty and Truth-Telling.

TREATY OPENS THE DOOR FOR SEPARATE PARLIAMENTS AND INDIGENOUS-ONLY SEATS IN PARLIAMENT, MORE POWERS OVER EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE, AND CO-SOVEREIGNTY BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS. THIS ISN'T AN EXAGGERATION: THESE ARE THINGS BEING ASKED FOR RIGHT NOW IN THE VICTORIAN TREATY PROCESS.⁴

Truth-telling means reparations and surrendering control of things like water and land resources – just as has happened in New Zealand.⁵

The Government and pro-Voice activists have been very clear that this is the path they want to go down and the Voice is the first step. It's nothing short of a complete upending of our system of government and democracy.

⁴ National Indigenous Australians Agency, Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/referendum-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-voice>

⁵ John Storey, The Institute of Public Affairs, *The New Zealand Māori Voice To Parliament And What We Can Expect From Australia*, February 14, 2023



IT UNDERMINES OUR ONE-VOTE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM

The Voice establishes in the constitution a body that has the right to advise Parliament and, as Indigenous Australians Minister Linda Burney said, "... an unflinching source of advice and accountability. A body with the perspective and the power and the platform to tell the government and the parliament the truth about what is working and what is not".⁶

That's not something other Australians have or will have. It is by definition an extra right and an extra democratic power for one group of Australians over another.

IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WHICH HAS PASSED A LAW TO CREATE ITS OWN STATE-BASED VOICE, INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS WILL LITERALLY BE HANDED TWO BALLOT PAPERS ON ELECTION DAY – ONE FOR THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT AND ONE FOR THE VOICE.⁷

The great achievement of the 1967 referendum is that it made Indigenous Australians equal citizens before the law counted just the same as everyone else. It brought Australians together as one people who face their problems together, not apart.

The divisive Voice reverses that by enshrining extra powers for one group, based on race, in our founding document.

⁶ Tom McLroy, *The Australian Financial Review*, *Coalition wants Voice funding to protect against foreign interference*, March 6, 2023

⁷ First Nations Voice Bill 2023, Parliament of South Australia



IT WON'T CLOSE THE GAP

The crisis in Alice Springs and in Indigenous communities across the nation proves that we need to fix the problems facing Indigenous Communities now, not after a long, divisive referendum. If the Government wants to have a formal consultative body, they can legislate one. *Or they can talk to the 11 Indigenous members of parliament, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Coalition of Peak Indigenous bodies, or any of the 300 other official groups representing Indigenous Australians.*

The reality is there are many Indigenous voices advising the government on the issues that affect them but the government isn't listening. It needs to focus on outcomes, not process.

"WHAT WE NEED IN CANBERRA IS EARS. NOT A VOICE."

– JACINTA NAMPIJINPA PRICE

Achieving better outcomes in employment, education, safety, and health must be the priority and it must start now. To spend time and money on a divisive Voice is a distraction Australia can't afford.



IT'S A PLATFORM FOR RADICAL ACTIVISTS TO ATTACK OUR VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS

While many supporters of the Voice have good intentions, there are also many radical activists who oppose many parts of our national identity who know the divisive Voice gives them power to make changes ordinary Australians don't want.

Many of the people behind the push for a Voice are open about using it to change our political institutions and our national culture. Others have said there's no reason the Voice shouldn't be delaying legislation and policy to have their say.

WHEN THE ULURU STATEMENT TALKS ABOUT CO-SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION MAKE NO MISTAKE: IT ISN'T MAKING A SYMBOLIC POINT. IT MEANS SEPARATE LAWS, SEPARATE ECONOMIES, SEPARATE LEADERS. THAT IS: SEPARATE COUNTRIES.

To be clear, these aren't necessarily Indigenous people who want this. Many non-Indigenous extreme activists also want to change Australia as we know it. These are the activists who also want to increase your power bills, overhaul your kids' education, and stop you speaking freely in your own home.

There's a reason most activists support the Voice: they know it's compatible with their goals.

CONCLUSION

Australians are reasonable people. We want to see everyone get ahead and we are all on the same page in wanting our Indigenous family to have better outcomes across the board.

So the answer is not division. It's to live up to the promise of 1967. To the promise of Australia's founding. That we are one together, not two divided.

The voice isn't recognition, it's not reconciliation. It's the Voice of Division.

**WHEN YOU VOTE 'NO'
TO THE VOICE OF DIVISION,
YOU'RE SAYING 'YES'
TO AN AUSTRALIA THAT'S UNITED.**

**A NATION AND PEOPLE IN
IT TOGETHER – AS MATES,
AS FAMILY, AS ONE.**



FAIR
AUSTRALIA

www.fairaustralia.com.au

Authorised by Matthew Sheahan, Advance Aus Ltd,
Units 1-4, 15 Tench Street, Kingston, ACT 2604.