



22 February 2023

A First Nations Voice is a historical step towards true reconciliation The Voice will provide a simple, fair and unifying message

The IEU is committed to support a 'Yes' referendum outcome to enshrine a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution.

The government's planned referendum, to be held later this year, provides an historic opportunity for the Australian community to embrace the true spirit of reconciliation. Our First Nations People deserve to be heard and listened to on laws that directly impact them and their communities.

Our union has previously committed our support for the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) when it was developed in 2017. It's now time for the next step - a successful 'Yes' referendum outcome needed to enshrine a constitutional voice.

Australian Unions have a long tradition of [fighting to support the rights of First Nations Peoples](#). The IEU has proudly stood in support of greater recognition and respect for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, within their workplaces and the broader community.

Unions believe in greater consultation, representation and inclusion. A First Nations Voice aligns with these core values and would provide a permanent line of communication and engagement between Indigenous people and the government.

A [set of principles for the Voice](#) (see overpage) has been developed by the Referendum Working Group and clearly details how the Voice will operate within a simple and well-considered model.

The IEU represents First Nations workers across schools, indigenous community colleges, training institutions and early childhood education centres. These members, along with all indigenous people, deserve a voice on proposed laws and policies that affect them.

For too long Parliament has imposed laws on Indigenous people without proper consultation. A Voice to Parliament is a common-sense and modest proposal.

The United States, New Zealand, Canada and many other nations have constitutional recognition of their Indigenous people. A mature and developed democracy such as Australia has no excuse to fail this long overdue change.

A Voice will help tackle discrimination and inequality. It will help refocus the collective effort needed to [Close The Gap](#) of disadvantage, including [urgent action on failing education targets](#).

The IEU proudly commits to supporting our First Nations members and their communities by supporting the 'Yes' campaign.

Australian Government: <https://voice.niaa.gov.au/>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

The Voice will be an independent, representative advisory body for First Nations people. It will provide a permanent means to advise the Australian Parliament and Government on the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on matters that affect them.

*A set of principles that describe how the Voice will work were agreed to by the **First Nations Referendum Working Group**.*

The Voice is a body that will:

- *provide independent advice to Parliament and Government*
- *be chosen by First Nations people based on the wishes of local communities*
- *be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*
- *be empowering, community led, inclusive, respectful, culturally informed and gender balanced, and includes youth*
- *be accountable and transparent*
- *work alongside existing organisations and traditional structures.*

The Voice will not have a program delivery function, or a veto power.