



# Christian Life Community

Australia

## **Christian Life Community Australia calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution.**

Christian Life Community (CLC) is a lay international Catholic organisation that shares a common way of life based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. We have members from all walks of life. CLC helps members integrate faith and life in order to make decisions for more effective action.

The strong leadership of Pope Francis in his latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (All Brothers) calls us to action. The Encyclical aims to promote a universal aspiration towards fraternity and social friendship. The COVID global health emergency has helped demonstrate that no one can face life in isolation and the time has truly come to *“dream then as a single family”* in which we are *“brothers and sisters all”*.

We ask that Australia’s full cultural heritage is recognised to include the oldest continuous culture on earth, our First Nation people. We recognise the continuing gift of their cultures to the life and spirit of Australia and believe that this should be recognised in our Constitution. We are mindful that sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

We strongly support the “Uluru Statement From the Heart” campaign to achieve a successful referendum to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament in the Constitution. We wish to foster a shared pride in aboriginal cultures and help to heal the wounds of the past.

We are pleased to hear about the government’s Interim Co-Design Report. We understand that co-design means the current proposals are not complete and that it is most important that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contribute their experience and ideas into the consultation process, as it is critical to their future.

So we ask for the following to be considered:

1. The Government must honour its **election commitment** to a referendum once the model for the Voice has been settled.
2. Enabling legislation for the Voice must be passed **after** a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament.
3. The membership model for the National Voice must ensure previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have **the same chance of being selected** as established leadership figures, to be fair and equitable.

We understand that the interim report means that the legislative design has now entered the public consultation phase.

We look forward to the words of the Constitutional enshrinement being developed to take to the Australian people at a referendum. There is a strong mood for change to recognise these proud and resilient First Nation people.

We see a vital two-step process unfolding - the **legislative** design of the Voice and its **constitutional enshrinement**.

A Voice enshrined in the Constitution is long overdue; it is only fair and just to recognise our Aboriginal Australians as the world's oldest civilization who have much to teach us in management of the environment and walking softly on the earth.

We ask that our First Nation people be recognised in the Australian constitution without further delay.

We make this submission as we believe that this constitutional recognition will unify our nation so that we can walk proudly together into the future. This will be a historic moment in time and a chance to forge new relationships in a shared future for Australians.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to present a submission in response to this Interim Voice Co-Design Report.

Jennifer Gardner, Fr Iain Radvan SJ, Ann Hoare, Paris Huffman, Khachig Kabakjian, Debbie Dela Paz, Anna Munari, Stephen Game.

Christian Life Community Australia Executive

Email: [admin@clc.org.au](mailto:admin@clc.org.au)

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Submitted 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021