

Westjustice endorses the stance taken by the Federation for Community Legal Centres and supports a **Yes** vote in the upcoming referendum.

The Uluru Statement is a generous invitation from First Nations people to support their journey to self-determination. One step in supporting this process is enshrining a voice to parliament.

Westjustice supports the calls from First Nations people for voice, truth and treaty.

As the community legal centre servicing Melbourne's west, we see firsthand the legal ramifications of colonisation and racism and we support the yes campaign to ensure First Nations people are listened to about issues that affect their own communities, and given a chance to propose their own solutions.

Statement on the Voice to Parliament from the Federation of Community Legal Centres

The Federation of Community Legal Centres (Federation) is the peak body for Victoria's 47 Community Legal Centres.

One of the roles of Community Legal Centres is to educate and inform the communities we are part of about rights, responsibilities and the ways our laws operate.

Community Legal Centres across Victoria are sharing information about how the referendum for the Voice to Parliament will operate, with the communities they work with. Community Legal Centres are encouraging Victorians to understand the referendum process, and listen to the cases for and against the Voice to Parliament to make an informed decision, in particular drawing upon the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations and Elders. Through this work, Community Legal Centres are supporting Victorians to understand how to exercise their vote about the Voice independently, in line with their own beliefs.

We have listened carefully as questions have been raised about the legality of the Voice to Parliament and what it means for our constitution. As legal practitioners, we can see that the Voice proposal has been tested deeply by constitutional experts, and we are confident that what is being proposed will not create legal challenges for our democratic systems.

The 1967 Referendum asked Australian society to grapple with whether they believed Aboriginal peoples belonged in this country and whether they had a future within it. Australians overwhelmingly voted yes to both questions. The upcoming referendum, whilst asking you to answer whether our shared Constitution should recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, is in effect asking society to grapple with the question of whether Aboriginal people should be able to speak on matters that affect them or whether should silence prevail.

One of the Federation's five principles is to stand with First Nations Peoples. We celebrate the strength, leadership and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We recognise the ongoing injustices perpetrated against them, and consider a Voice to Parliament to be one step towards correcting the historical legal injustices that have occurred, and continue to occur, as a result of colonisation in Australia.

Through the Uluru Statement from the Heart, all Australians have been invited to "walk with" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in a journey to voice, truth and treaty.

The Federation responds to this invitation by supporting the 'Yes' vote for the Voice to Parliament in the 2023 referendum.