



Monday 28 August 2023

EREA Supports the Voice to Parliament

Dear Members of EREA Community,

In November 2022, EREA endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart, stating:

“We stand in solidarity, alongside our First Nations peoples, in their calls for a Voice and acknowledgment enshrined in the Australian Constitution...

The establishment of a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for the purpose of truth-telling is at the centre of this justice. We support this road to Treaty.” [EREA Endorses Uluru Statement of the Heart - Edmund Rice Education Australia.](#)

With dialogue and momentum building, many school communities and those in the wider community are further engaging in thought about the upcoming referendum on the Voice to Parliament. This is resulting in questions from school representatives as to the best approach to do this within their community. Enquiries are based on a genuine desire to provide learning opportunities for staff and young people about this important decision facing the nation and be consistent with an EREA approach of respect, deep listening, dialogue and solidarity. Therefore, I encourage you to share a message such as this, and the accompanying resources, with your school communities.

Within the EREA Acknowledgment of Country, we accept: *“the invitation contained in the Uluru Statement From The Heart to listen to the First Peoples of Australia and work together for reconciliation, justice, equity, and healing.”* The Voice to Parliament is an authentic outcome of this invitation which will have deep and lasting impact on the future of First Nations peoples within Australia and the reconciliation of this nation.

In living out the commitment to justice and solidarity (The Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition), to Truth Telling (Stretch RAP Respect Action 10) and to deep listening (EREA Learning Statement), we support and encourage school communities to continue their reconciliation learning journey, including what a Voice to Parliament could look like and the possible impacts that could be felt by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people as a result of having an enshrined voice.

We need to be reminded that all Australians have a unique opportunity to vote on a proposed amendment to the Constitution that recognises Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this country. This recognition will be seen through the establishment of a Voice which will be an independent, representative body for First Nations peoples speaking on behalf of issues effecting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. Specific and accurate details regarding this democratic process should be explored and encouraged in your community through the [Australian Government website.](#)

We stand in solidarity with like-minded organisations including: the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC), Reconciliation Australia, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), Caritas and the Edmund Rice Centre. All of these bodies have commenced a process of positive dialogue within their organisations.

The link to the official EREA endorsement of the Uluru Statement from the Heart is located at the conclusion of this email. Schools are encouraged to disseminate information to their staff and communities that is inclusive of this statement as well as this [Resources Pack](#), which includes a kit designed by the staff at the Edmund Rice Centre. In this instance, EREA encourages schools across our network to provide opportunities for further dialogue and by connecting with messages of support towards the Voice to Parliament.



Dr Liam Smith
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EREA

Ms Philomena Billington
President
EREA Council of Trustees

Reference:

[EREA Endorses Uluru Statement of the Heart - Edmund Rice Education Australia](#)