



PEAMUN XV

# Australian Indigenous Voice

*Specialized Committee Background Guide*

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<b>Letter from the Chair</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Context and Past Events</b>	<b>4</b>
Australia's History of Racial Discrimination	4
Early History	4
The Stolen Generations	5
Missions, Reserves and Stations	6
Progress Towards Reconciliation	7
Voting Rights	7
1967 Referendum	7
Indigenous Advisory Boards & Organizations	8
Uluru Statement from the Heart	9
Amendments to the Australian Constitution	10
Constitutional Amendments: A process	10
Previous Amendments	11
Race in the Constitution	12
Public Perception and News Coverage of Indigenous Issues	13
Australian Public Opinion: Indigenous Affairs	13
Australian Public Opinion: The Voice	14
<b>The Voice</b>	<b>15</b>
What is the Voice?	15
Main Question: Should the Voice be created?	16
<b>Issues and Questions to Consider</b>	<b>17</b>
Effectiveness	17
Authority	17
Economic Impact	18
Implementation and Specificity	19
<b>Position Papers</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>A Note on Committee Direction</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Bibliography and Further Reading</b>	<b>22</b>



## Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to PEAMUN XV! My name is Harry Clark, and I am so excited to be chairing this specialized committee on Australia's Voice to Parliament. If there is one thing I've learnt from my six years of MUN experience, it's that a straightforward committee topic is never fun, nor engaging, and this one is far from it. My vice-chair Cecily Reed, staffer Lily Rampe, and I have worked hard to create a committee packed with fascinating nuance and space to explore creative solutions. We hope you come prepared for a thrilling day of passionate debate and diplomacy!

I am Australian, and The Voice to Parliament hits close to home. The Voice is a hotly contested topic within Australia, and while it may be domestic, the theme of Indigenous activism is one that plays into the culture and politics of nations all around the world. It is important to note that as of July 2023, when this background guide is published, there is no finalized date for when the referendum is to be held. As a result, it is impossible to determine if The Voice will have passed by the time of the conference. Delegates should assume that by the day of the conference, The Voice will have yet to be put to a vote.

The Voice is a complex subject concerning a country's constitution, a troubling history surrounding its indigenous people, and a referendum that will ultimately be voted on by every Australian citizen. The intricacy of this topic allows more experienced delegates to unpack the complexities and nuances of The Voice. Less experienced delegates, however, should not feel disheartened. Everyone is encouraged to come prepared with creative solutions, an open mind and a willingness to collaborate and negotiate. That is, after all, the heart of the MUN experience.

Best,

Harry Clark



## Context and Past Events

### Australia's History of Racial Discrimination

#### Early History

The Indigenous People of Australia, known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, have the oldest continuous culture on Earth. This culture, dating back roughly 75,000 years, has endured significant challenges due to a complex and troubling history of racial discrimination in Australia.

Ever since European colonization, Indigenous Australians have faced severe systemic injustices and marginalization. Upon British arrival in 1778, Australia was deemed to be a colony of settlement, not conquest, as the land was considered to be “terra nullius” (no one’s land).

*“... they were so ignorant they thought there was only one race on the earth and that was the white race. So when Captain Cook first came, when Lieutenant James Cook first set foot on Wangal land over at Kundul which is now called Kurnell, he said oh lets put a flag up somewhere, because these people are illiterate, they’ve got no fences. They didn’t understand that we didn’t need fences ... that we stayed here for six to eight weeks, then moved somewhere else where there was plenty of tucker and bush medicine and we kept moving and then come back in twelve months’ time when the food was all refreshed ...”*

- Aboriginal elder Aunty Beryl Timbery Beller

At the time of Cook’s arrival in Australia, there were over 400 Indigenous nations thriving on the continent. However, because Cooks and Banks only observed few “natives” along the coast, they incorrectly deduced that there would not be many Indigenous people inland. Following the discovery that the Indigenous people of Australia had a rich and well-established connection with the land, with a myriad of complex languages, customs and rituals, the British still made no attempt to amend the terms under which they claimed possession of Australia.



The Indigenous peoples, once isolated from the rest of the world, now suffered from the deadly diseases and viruses the European settlers brought to the country. In the eyes of the British, the Indigenous population were thought of alongside kangaroos, dingoes and the like; pests needed to be killed to expedite the development of society.

*I have myself heard a man, educated, and a large proprietor of sheep and cattle, maintain that there was no more harm in shooting a native, than in shooting a wild dog. I have heard it maintained by others that it is the course of Providence, that blacks should disappear before the white, and the sooner the process was carried out the better, for all parties. I fear such opinions prevail to a great extent.*

- Bishop Polding, 1845

A guerilla war was fought between Indigenous warriors and the colonizers, but the Indigenous effort, already suffering from widespread disease, failed to overcome the British forces.

### The Stolen Generations

The Stolen Generations was a period of time where government policies allowed for the removal of Indigenous children from their families. From the mid 1800's to the 1970's, Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes. They were placed into the care of non-Indigenous peoples, and over 480 institutions that were designed to assimilate these children into "white" society. These children were prohibited from speaking their language or practicing their cultural traditions, effectively stripped of their identities and connections to Indigenous heritage.

Today, over one third of Indigenous Australians are descendants of Stolen Children, and there are currently more than 17,000 survivors of the Stolen Generations. The loss of culture,



identity and disconnection from family has resulted in severe intergenerational trauma, the effects of which are still being felt today.

### *Missions, Reserves and Stations*

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were forced from their Country and onto missions, stations, and reserves: land set aside from the government to house Indigenous Australians. While the government justified this as a means to "protect" Indigenous peoples, it is widely recognized that their primary effect was to deepen the divide between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the country.

Missions were created by churches and religious people designed to convert Indigenous Australians to Christianity, and prepare them for menial jobs. Reserves were pieces of land set aside for Indigenous Australians but not heavily monitored by the government or other officials. These places were often remote and isolated, where government support was limited to the infrequent supply of rations and blankets. Stations, also called “managed reserves,” were tightly controlled by a government official. The station manager would often have legal guardianship of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These managers enforced regulations that governed every aspect of daily life, including curfews, work assignments, and restrictions on movement. This level of control extended to decisions about education, healthcare, and even personal relationships.



## **Progress Towards Reconciliation**

### Voting Rights

The Australian colonies were allowed self-government in the 1850s. At the time, in all but two states, all men over 21 years old could vote, including Indigenous Australians<sup>1</sup>. All women were enfranchised in 1895. The Commonwealth passed a federal act in 1901 when the first Parliament was voted in giving the right to vote to everyone except Indigenous peoples<sup>2</sup>. Indigenous peoples previously allowed to vote retained that right, but otherwise they could not vote<sup>3</sup>.

Enfranchisement began slowly in World War II, when Aboriginals fought and died for Britain alongside white Australians. Many found it unfair that they did not have any representation in the government that was sending them to war. In America in World War I, the voting age had been lowered to 18 to allow drafted soldiers to vote. The Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, passed in 1949, allowed all Indigenous men who had served in the military to vote<sup>4</sup>. Finally, in 1962, all qualified Indigenous Australians were allowed the right to vote.<sup>5</sup>

### 1967 Referendum

The 1967 Referendum proposed, among other things, that Indigenous people be counted in the Australian census and that the Commonwealth be able to legislate on behalf of Indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> “Electoral milestones for Indigenous Australians.” *Australian Electoral Commission* (Canberra), November 12, 2020. <https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> “Indigenous Australians’ right to vote.” *National Museum Australia*, May 16, 2023. <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/indigenous-australians-right-to-vote>.

<sup>3</sup> “Electoral milestones for Indigenous Australians.”

<sup>4</sup> “Indigenous Australians’ right to vote.”

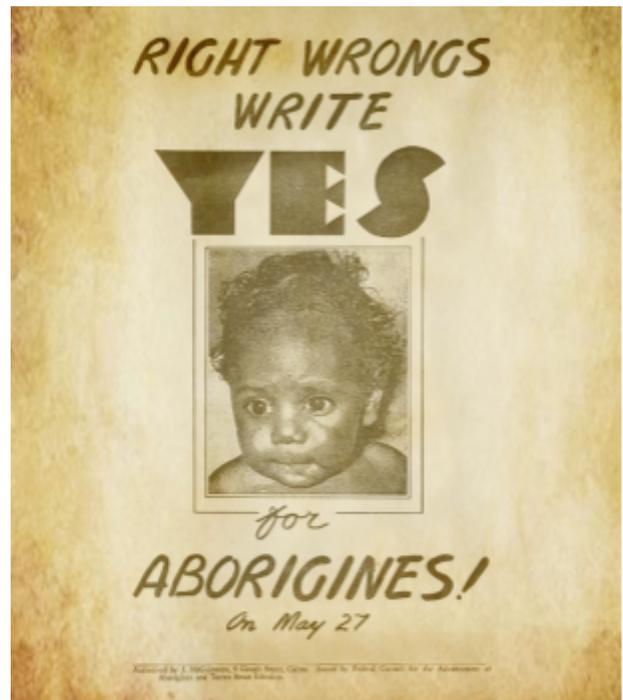
<sup>5</sup> “Indigenous Australians’ right to vote.”



Australians. It proposed to amend this clause, #51, of the Australian Constitution<sup>6</sup>. The bold text was removed by the amendment.

*The Parliament shall... have power to make laws... with respect to: The people of any race, **other than the aboriginal race in any State**, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws;*

It received the highest ever vote in support for a constitutional amendment: 90.77%<sup>7</sup>. This was a huge symbolic step, counting Aboriginals as true Australian citizens and taking responsibility for their welfare, but not much changed in Aboriginals' day-to-day lives after it was passed. In the long run, it stopped states' paternalistic laws and allowed the federal government to act to protect Indigenous rights. However, it also let white Australians believe that the racist aspects of Australian history were all wiped away in a "redemption act" and the issue was thus closed.



Poster of the 1967 Referendum. Source: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/1967-referendum>

### Indigenous Advisory Boards & Organizations

Over the course of Australian history, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have become more involved in the Australian government. Multiple government departments have Indigenous advisory committees with the purpose of representing their people in government

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<sup>6</sup> "Referendum Proposals." *The Age* (Sydney), June 21, 1944. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/206780230>.

<sup>7</sup> 8 Successful Constitutional Referendums." *Government of Western Australia*. [https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2022-03/Power%20and%20The%20Constitution\\_8%20Successful%20Constitutional%20Referendums.pdf](https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2022-03/Power%20and%20The%20Constitution_8%20Successful%20Constitutional%20Referendums.pdf)



discussions. It is reported that there are already 109 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory committees.<sup>8</sup>

Australia's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water is advised by an Indigenous Australian committee under the EPBC Act (Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999). Committee members who have expertise on the environment of Australia advise on topics such as "environment, heritage, policy and consultation."<sup>9</sup> Over the years since these types of advisory committees have formed, some have dissolved. From the 109 committees once created, at least twenty four no longer are advising.<sup>10</sup>

### *Uluru Statement from the Heart*

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was published in 2017 at the National Constitutional Convention with the purpose of improving the situation for future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In this statement, the Indigenous people of Australia stress that for about 60,000 years it is believed that their people have lived on the land that is now Australia.<sup>11</sup> They state that the bond between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the land they live on "has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown."<sup>12</sup> The statement, however, goes on to say that "[w]ith substantive constitutional change

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<sup>8</sup> Davidson, Renee and Mark Cleaver, "No, 109 Aboriginal 'agencies' are not equivalent to the Voice," RMIT University, <https://www.rmit.edu.au/news/factlab-meta/aboriginal-agencies-are-not-equivalent-to-the-voice#:~:text=The%20verdict.and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20people>. (accessed July 5, 2023)

<sup>9</sup> "Indigenous Advisory Committee operating under the EPBC Act," DCCEEW, <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/our-role/advisory-committees/iac> (accessed July 5, 2023)

<sup>10</sup> Davidson, Renee and Mark Cleaver, "No, 109 Aboriginal 'agencies' are not equivalent to the Voice," online.

<sup>11</sup> "Uluru Statement from the Heart," Referendum Council, <https://ulurustatement.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UluruStatementfromtheHeartPLAINTEXT.pdf> (accessed July 5, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> "Uluru Statement from the Heart," online.



and structural reform, we [Indigenous Australians] believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood."<sup>13</sup>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are known to be “the most incarcerated people on the planet.”<sup>14</sup> In this statement, they share the feeling of powerlessness in the current Australian government led by the Constitution. To better this situation, the statement reads:

*“We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.”*



Uluru Statement from the Heart. Source: Australian Geographic  
<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2022/05/what-is-the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart/>

## **Amendments to the Australian Constitution**

### **Constitutional Amendments: A process**

To amend the Australian Constitution, a referendum on the topic needs to attain a double majority<sup>15</sup>. This means that a majority of all the voters support the issue, as well as a majority of

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<sup>13</sup> “Uluru Statement from the Heart,” online.

<sup>14</sup> “Uluru Statement from the Heart,” online.

<sup>15</sup> “Constitutional reform: FAQs - About the Australian Constitution.” *Australian Human Rights Commission*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/constitutional-reform-faqs-about-australian-constitution>



voters in 4 of the 6 states. Voting in referendums is compulsory, as it is in national elections. Each side releases a published argument before the referendum to educate the public<sup>16</sup>. The referendum starts as a bill in Parliament, where it must pass both houses with an absolute majority before being presented to the public within 2-6 months. There have been 44 proposed changes to the constitution since 1901 when Australia became a united country, and only 8 have been successful<sup>17</sup>.

### Previous Amendments

The 8 successful amendments passed are referred to by the year of the referendum concerning them. In 1906, a referendum allowed Senate and House of Representatives elections to take place at the same time. The 1910 referendum let the Commonwealth (federal government) take over any state debt it chose<sup>18</sup>. The 1928 referendum ended per capita payments to the state governments from the Commonwealth and established a loan council controlling borrowing from the Commonwealth by states. The 1946 referendum made it possible for the Commonwealth to legislate on social services, and the 1967 referendum allowed the Commonwealth to legislate on Aboriginals and counted them in the census. A 1977 referendum allowed electors in the Territories to vote in referendums, with their vote counting towards the national majority. Another 1977 referendum established a required retirement age for judges, and the third governed Casual Vacancies in the Senate.

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<sup>16</sup> “Referendum and plebiscites.” *Parliamentary Education Office*, June 16, 2023. <https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/having-your-say/elections-and-voting/referendums-and-plebiscites/#:~:text=A%20referendum%20is%20a%20vote%20on%20a%20proposed%20change%20to,does%20not%20affect%20the%20Constitution>

<sup>17</sup> “Referendum and plebiscites.”

<sup>18</sup> “8 Successful Constitutional Referendums.” *Government of Western Australia*. [https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2022-03/Power%20and%20The%20Constitution\\_8%20Successful%20Constitutional%20Referendums.pdf](https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2022-03/Power%20and%20The%20Constitution_8%20Successful%20Constitutional%20Referendums.pdf)



All of these amendments have been important in their own way, but no successful referendum but 1946 and 1967 on social services and Aboriginals have touched on social issues. It has been noticed that to be successful, referendums require bipartisan support, widespread popular education, and a sense of personal responsibility in every citizen to pass<sup>19</sup>. The amendment to create the Voice does not fit in the mould of previous passed amendments- it does not handle federal power or citizens' votes or even such bureaucratic things as retirement age or casual vacancies. It is an ideological and social problem, looking to be resolved in a document that has very little mention of rights or social structures in the way the unprecedented United States Constitution and its amendments do. Is the Australian Constitution, after more than a century, ripe for a change in focus? Or is social change simply not its purpose?

### *Race in the Constitution*

Few constitutions around the world specifically mention Indigenous peoples in their constitution, but then again, few countries come from a colony and have been governed for 200 years by people from across the world with no relationship to those who lived on the land for 65,000 years. Canada and Norway recognize Indigenous peoples' special status in their constitution, as do the Australian states of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria<sup>20</sup>. The US Constitution's only mention of Indigenous peoples is to give Congress sole power to legislate on Native Americans<sup>21</sup>. The two mentions of Aboriginals in the Australian constitution are to allow special laws based on race and, since removed, excluding Aboriginals from the census.

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<sup>19</sup> "Constitutional reform: FAQs - Towards a successful referendum." *Australian Human Rights Commission*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/constitutional-reform-faqs-towards-successful-referendum>

<sup>20</sup> "Constitutional reform: FAQs - About the Australian Constitution." *Australian Human Rights Commission*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/constitutional-reform-faqs-about-australian-constitution>

<sup>21</sup> Miller, Robert J. "American Indians & The United States Constitution." *FlashPoint*, 2006.



Recently, the government has started doing more to recognize Aboriginal peoples. They passed the 2004 Human Rights Act allowing Aboriginals cultural rights, issued a National Apology, created federal Indigenous advisory or activism bodies, and supported the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These actions signal more thought about Indigenous rights and discrimination. It is important to acknowledge that the constitution does not focus on race and it is possible to improve Aboriginals' situation without the Constitution.

### **Public Perception and News Coverage of Indigenous Issues**

#### *Australian Public Opinion: Indigenous Affairs*

Australian public opinion on overall Indigenous affairs is positive but not enthusiastically good. 79% of Australians polled in 2022 thought that Reconciliation between Aboriginals and white Australians was important, compared to 81% in 2020<sup>22</sup>. Only 1% of people thought that Indigenous affairs were the most important issues facing Australia right now, but when specific Indigenous issues were pointed out, 86-69% of people agreed that they were important<sup>23</sup>.

The Australian National University says that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Australians have unconscious negative bias towards Aboriginals<sup>24</sup>. Aboriginals are unbiased in this respect, so supporters of the Voice believe that they are the best placed to make decisions about Indigenous peoples. 60%

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<sup>22</sup> "Australian Public Opinion on Indigenous Issues: Injustice, Disadvantage and Support for Recognition." *ANU Centre for Social Research & Methods* (Canberra), March 17, 2015.

[https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/Indigenous-Issues-ANU-Poll-2015\\_1.pdf](https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/Indigenous-Issues-ANU-Poll-2015_1.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> "Australian Public Opinion on Indigenous Issues: Injustice, Disadvantage and Support for Recognition." *ANU Centre for Social Research & Methods* (Canberra), March 17, 2015.

[https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/Indigenous-Issues-ANU-Poll-2015\\_1.pdf](https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/Indigenous-Issues-ANU-Poll-2015_1.pdf)

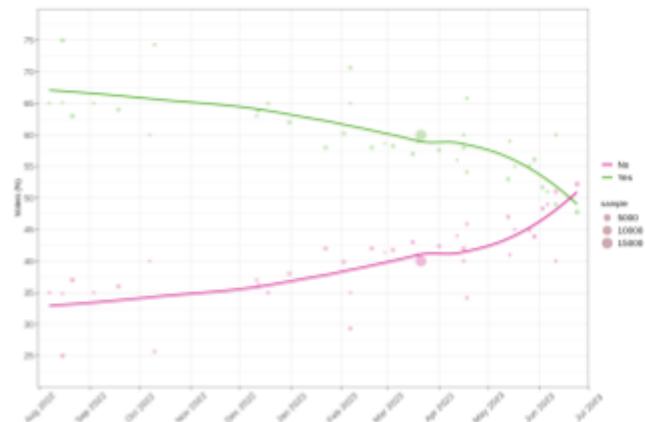
<sup>24</sup> "Three in four people hold negative view of Indigenous people." *ANU* (Canberra), June 9, 2023.

<https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/three-in-four-people-hold-negative-view-of-indigenous-people>



of Australians polled believe that the goal is for Aboriginals to assimilate into white society<sup>25</sup>. 33% believe that all injustice towards Aboriginals is in the past and that recognizing Indigenous land rights is unfair to other Australians<sup>26</sup>.

On the other end of the spectrum, 80% of people believe that Indigenous people should decide their own way of life<sup>27</sup>. Australians are on average less likely than in 2003 to believe that government assistance to Indigenous citizens has gone “too far”: 50% of people believe that it is “just right”, and 16% believe that it has gone too far or not far enough. 51% of Australians believe that other citizens and the Australian government have caused problems for Aboriginal peoples, 17% say that they have created their own problems, and 32% believe both equally. Australians are divided about data from Newspoll preferred admissions or employment to Aboriginals, and 66% support governments and employers employing more Aboriginals<sup>28</sup>.



Source: “Three in four people hold negative view of Indigenous people.” ANU (Canberra), June 9, 2023. <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/three-in-four-people-hold-negative-view-of-indigenous-people>

### Australian Public Opinion: The Voice

Support for the Voice, so strong when it was first announced, has been going down slowly. Before the Senate ratified the referendum, support for the Voice was at 60%. As of June 24, 46% of Australians say they would vote “yes” on the referendum. 36% would vote “no” and

<sup>25</sup> “Australian Public Opinion on Indigenous Issues” ANU Centre for Social Research & Methods (Canberra)

<sup>26</sup> “Three in four people hold negative view of Indigenous people.” ANU

<sup>27</sup> “Australian Public Opinion on Indigenous Issues” ANU Centre for Social Research & Methods (Canberra)

<sup>28</sup> “Australian Public Opinion on Indigenous Issues” ANU Centre for Social Research & Methods (Canberra)



18% are still undecided<sup>29</sup>. It is important to realize that most undecided voters end up voting “no”. No state has reached a majority of “yes” voters, which is a crucial part of passing the amendment, although New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia hover around 47% supporting<sup>30</sup>. Support in the Labor Party is down 6 points, whereas it is going up in other parties, with 90% support in the Green party. Only 10% of Coalition voters (National and Liberal) support the Voice. Current estimates put simplified support for the voice at 49% support to 51% with a 2.4% margin of error<sup>31</sup>. The result is still up as we head to the October referendum.

## The Voice

### What is the Voice?

The Voice is an Indigenous advisory board proposed by the government. In late 2023, all Australian citizens will be required to vote in a referendum to decide whether or not The Voice should be enshrined in the constitution. The Voice currently dominates Australian politics, and is the focus of a very complex and nuanced national debate.

As defined by the Australian Government:

*“The Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body. It would give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”*

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<sup>29</sup> “Support for ‘The Voice’ unchanged at 46% in late May.” *Roy Morgan Research*, May 30, 2023. <https://www.roymorgan.com/findings/support-for-the-voice-unchanged-at-46-in-late-may>

<sup>30</sup> Crowe, David. “Voice to parliament support slips below majority: RPM data.” *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney), June 12, 2023. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/a-tipping-point-support-for-voice-falls-below-a-majority-20230612-p5dfto.html>

<sup>31</sup> Crowe, “Voice to parliament support slips below majority”



Voters will be required to vote “yes” or “no” on a single question. The question on the ballot paper will be:

*“ A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.  
Do you approve this proposed alteration? ”*

The proposed law refers to the below lines which will be inserted into the Australian Constitution.

*“ Chapter IX: Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples  
129 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice*

*In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia:*

- 1. There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice;*
- 2. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;*
- 3. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures. ”*

### **Main Question: Should the Voice be created?**

Whether or not the Voice is created is up to the citizens of Australia. However, the debate will be broadcasted live on ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). We look forward to seeing what arguments for and against the Voice you come up with!



## Issues and Questions to Consider

### Effectiveness

The purpose of the Voice is to give the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples in Australia a voice in their government. The Australian government has a history of discrimination against Indigenous peoples and are trying to make up for it with this Voice. But what if the Voice highlights racial divisions and goes against its entire purpose?

### Questions to Consider

- Would the establishment of a specific body whose purpose is to highlight a racial group create more racism? Would more differentiation by race widen the racial divide?
- Is it discriminatory towards other marginalized groups only to have a Voice for Aboriginals?
- Should race and ethnicity be weighted over merit in the amount of say people have in the government?
- Do Indigenous people need a voice in government beyond the allotted representatives they already have? Do they have enough input in the way they are governed?
- Who will be on the Voice and how will they represent the Indigenous population? Will the Voice represent a skewed demographic?

### Authority

By passing this referendum, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples will serve as an advisory board to the Australian Parliament. The Voice will independently advise the Australian Parliament and Executive Government on domestic issues involving Indigenous Australians. Parliament is not bound to obey them or enact their suggestions, only to hear their advice. Many Australians, however, fear the impact and influence these representatives will hold



over the Australian Government. They think that this special position could lead to the de-prioritization of the needs of the rest of Australia.

### Questions to Consider

- Should the Voice have any say in Parliament's decisions? How about if the decisions directly affect or concern the Indigenous population?
- If The Voice has too much sway over parliaments' decisions, could this outweigh the other side of the debate?
- What would prioritizing the interests of a small group of people over the majority of Australians mean for them?
- Is there a point to the Voice if it has no material power?
- Could directing resources towards the Voice and consequently the Indigenous population impede the development of the rest of the country?
- What would the repercussions be if Parliament ruled against the Voice?

### **Economic Impact**

Because the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples will be advising the government on Indigenous Australians, their economic situation would be improved. The representatives of Indigenous Australians would provide an informed perspective of the best ways to help these communities' economies. Another economic impact could be negative: some worry that changes made to legislation on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples could impede the economic growth of the rest of the country. In any case, how much should the economic impact of this move affect its creation?



### Questions to Consider

- What matters more: ensuring the representation of a historically marginalized group of people or the continuing economic development of the country at large? Are they mutually exclusive?
- What effect would the Voice have on the market and development of Indigenous communities? Australia overall?
- Does the economic impact matter when compared to rights and discrimination?

### **Implementation and Specificity**

As of now, the Voice is being voted on as a referendum that would alter the Australian Constitution. This change will be voted on by the people of Australia. By directly changing the constitution, it prevents succeeding governments from modifying it in the future.

### Questions to Consider

- Should the Voice be decided by a referendum or some other form?
- Should the Voice be passed as a constitutional amendment?
- In what ways could the Voice lead to an abuse of power? How can it be created while keeping that in mind? Can it?
- Is the proposal for the Voice thought-out and specific enough?
- Should the proposal be presented as an idea, easily passed but vague, that could be shot down when it came to the details, or a fully-fledged bill that could push away prospective supporters in the details?
- Should the referendum be on recognizing Indigenous peoples in the preamble of the Constitution, another issue, or the creation of the Voice, or both?



## **Position Papers**

At PEAMUN XV, we believe that position papers are crucial in encouraging delegates to have a thorough understanding of their delegation and the topic. In addition, they will help you think of solutions and possible talking points. However, it is not required for our one-day conference. If you would wish to submit one, please email to to [hclark@exeter.edu](mailto:hclark@exeter.edu) and [creed@exeter.edu](mailto:creed@exeter.edu) before the conference begins. Feedback from the dais will be available upon request, though the timing of feedback is at the chair's discretion due to the potential for the volume of requests to exceed the dais's capacity.

## **A Note on Committee Direction**

This specialized committee will be a combination of general assembly and crisis styled committees. Delegates are expected to write directives as committee progresses and bring them to the dais as soon as they have them available. Details such as signatory and sponsor cap as well as other directions will be announced by the chair.

Within the committee, general assembly Model UN parliamentary procedures will apply. Delegates may motion for moderated caucuses and unmoderated caucuses; since it is a hybrid of a "crisis" committee, delegates may also motion for what's called a Round Robin, a variation of a moderated caucus where every delegate in the committee gives a speech in order around the room. The chair dais will assume the role of the Australian government. Since the Australian government has convened this advisory committee, the Australian government (the dais) will accept your proposed resolutions should they pass.

Crisis updates will be used. Delegates will be expected to enter into a period of debate to address the crisis as well as modify/create directives to address the crisis in question. Delegates



are expected to adapt to a crisis without prior notice from the chair; directives may also be issued in fast succession to mirror the quick-moving nature of international affairs. The chair and vice-chair will be sure to solicit feedback from delegates to adjust the pace of the committee throughout the conference, as well as provide feedback.



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