

Submission

Yes to the Voice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum

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Author Details

Name: Martin Page

State: Victoria

Electorate: Indi

Submission for Yes

To the Joint Select Committee on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum,

My name is Martin Page, and I am a white middle-aged male. Despite being part of a privileged group here in Australia, I 100% know we MUST have a strong representative voice for First Nations. Personally, this should not require a vote from us, it should just happen. It is right, it is fair. Supposedly we are the 'fair country' .. as long as you are a white male middle- or high-income Christian. Look to our New Zealand neighbours and friends, and see how they have done a better job, not perfect, but Mauri culture and language is part of their culture.

I recently finished a Criminal Justice degree, and subjects of that degree were First Nations Justice, and Criminal Justice in Society. These subjects opened my eyes to a world of lies, abuse and inhumane treatment of our First Nations that most Australians are unaware of. To say I was horrified about how First Nations ARE treated (not WERE, it's not the past) by our governments is an understatement. This is THEIR country, Terra Nullius is and was a land grab scam, and our First Nations people continue to be mistreated and abused in ways few white people would ever have to worry about.

Our First Nations have a rich culture and history of over 65,000 years, the oldest continuous people on earth, and we disregard and mistreat them. I am proud to live in their country, and want to celebrate their voices and diversity, learn from their knowledge and wisdom, and grow as a nation. It is time to shake off the shackles of our past of colonialism and become a compassionate, inclusive, and modern society, not the fearful redundant dinosaurs we have become.

I'm particularly concerned about the Liberal Party's recent decision to not provide a totally free vote for their MPs. This is un-democratic, and has already led to Ken Wyatt resigning, another First Nations voice gone. Democracy is the Voice of the people, not the voice of the Party, join the People's Republic of China if you want that.

Cultural experts, legal experts (including former High Court judges) have confirmed that a Voice to Parliament is a legally safe way to constitutionally recognise First Nations Australians, and 80% of Indigenous Australians support constitutional recognition in the form of a Voice to Parliament. Much of the legal debate is “Related to the potential for the High Court to determine that the executive government — including the public service — could be legally obliged to consult and consider the recommendations of the Voice on a range of issues before making a decision, and a failure to do so could lead to High Court action”¹. This is NOT a problem. As the First Nations (note the word first) of Australia, considering their voice, should not be optional. We are voting on this to give our First Nations a voice, not the appearance of one. Our politicians consider the view of powerful lobby groups, but not the rightful inhabitants of this country.

Please support the vote for yes. It may not be the perfect solution, but we cannot wait another 122 years to improve. Make our younger generations proud to be Australian, and start the next phase of equality. I no longer want to be ashamed by my governments actions towards our First Nations people.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Page

Wodonga, Victoria

¹ Nicole Hegarty, “Legal experts worry the words ‘executive government’ could lead to Voice referendum court battles,” (ABC News, 2023)