

NLC Opening Statement

Thank you Chair.

I would like to make an Opening Statement.

Joe Martin-Jard, CEO Northern Land Council.

This year is the Northern Land Council's 50th Anniversary.

We are one of the oldest representative Aboriginal organisation in Australia.

NLC has been at the forefront of the fight for a representative form of engagement with governments for a long time.

The focus on the Constitution follows calls over many years by our constituents to be heard.

The Yirrkala Bark Petition in 1963 and the Barunga Statement in 1988 are part our proud history.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2017 is another.

We hosted the Darwin dialogue in the lead up to the historic meeting at Uluru.

The NLC Executive and Executives of all four NT land councils passed a resolution at Wave Hill in August 2022 supporting the Uluru Statement and a Voice to Parliament in the Constitution.

The NLC is proud to be a signatory of the Uluru Statement.

We need a Voice to start the conversation about Treaties with First Nations.

First Nations peoples of Australia have never ceded sovereignty.

Eminent constitutional lawyers agree.

The Northern Land Council agrees.

We appreciate there are diverse views in all groups.

We understand detail is important.

We have always acted on principle, of land rights, Voice, Treaty, Truth.

The Northern Land Council joins with all Australians who support a Voice to Parliament and who will vote Yes in the Referendum later this year.

Thank you.