



Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the Administration of the referendum into an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

24 April 2023



In development of this submission, we pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present and recognise that the land we live and work upon was never ceded. FECCA proudly supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice protected by the Constitution.

FECCA acknowledges that our work on behalf of multicultural Australia has learnt from and been enriched by First Nations peoples and organisations. We are committed to continuing to listen, learn and support First Nations peoples in the journey to a more inclusive society.

Foreword

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry.

For enquiries, please contact FECCA CEO Mohammad Al-Khafaji at [REDACTED]
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Who we are

FECCA is the national peak body representing people from multicultural communities and their organisations across Australia. Through the membership of state, territory, and regional councils, we represent over 1,500 community organisations and their members.

What we do

For over 40 years, FECCA has proudly worked alongside culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the broader Australian society and the Commonwealth government to build a successful, productive and inclusive multicultural Australia where everyone, no matter their background or how long they have lived in this country, can belong equally and reach their full potential.

FECCA draws on the lived experiences of the people and their descendants that have migrated to Australia and the expertise of its extensive and diverse membership to develop and promote inclusive, innovative and responsible public policy that reflects the needs and perspectives of multicultural Australia to build a strong, innovative and inclusive nation that harnesses its greatest strength, the diversity of its people.

The FECCA network is FECCA's greatest strength. Through our network we can enhance the capacity of governments to strengthen public policy to meet the needs of the diverse Australian population. FECCA is a proven trusted partner to both communities and government, operating as a sophisticated conduit by mobilising communities to work with government to develop and enrich public policy through community-led expertise and action.

A prosperous nation

A prosperous future for Australia hinges on moving forward as an inclusive nation that harnesses the strength and diversity of its greatest asset, its people.

To build a stronger, more cohesive nation where the diverse cultures of all its people are not just celebrated but woven into the fabric of our society, we must first acknowledge and address the historic and current inequalities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key messages

FECCA is a proud supporter of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full and gives its full support to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice enshrined in the Constitution in the upcoming referendum.

We understand constitutional recognition through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice is the form of recognition chosen by the Indigenous community. We support this self-determined position as we know from our experience with multicultural communities, that community-led solutions are the most effective because communities have the greatest knowledge of the strengths and needs of their communities and what is needed deliver genuine and sustainable outcomes.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice will mean the Government will have better quality information about First Nations communities and issues, delivered directly from communities themselves. Information from communities will result in better quality laws and policies, better targeted investment and ultimately better outcomes for First Nations people across many sectors. The Voice needs to be able to speak to both the Executive and Parliament. Without being able to do so the Voice will not be able to deliver meaningful change.

FECCA supports the proposed amendment to the Constitution and believes the proposed wording delivers on the mandate of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We believe the final amendment and referendum question are fit for purpose, legally sound and should not be changed.