

Submission to the inquiry into

The Administration of the referendum into an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

My submission relates only to items a and b.

It is my contention that the ubiquity of internet access throughout the community and the absolute control over what information is presented at a specific **Uniform Resource Locator (URL)**, specifically in the context of delivering government information, the government's absolute ownership of the .gov.au second level domain space offers the perfect platform for presenting whatever guidance for the proposed referendum is decided to be offered. The government's "front door" on the world wide web is

australia.gov.au

Currently the site offers

"The latest official news, updates and advice from the Australian Government."

There is a site search facility which yields "No results" to a search for "Voice". That is a drastic misuse of the medium.

In reference to the terms of reference:

Item a

By confining dissemination of information to a central source - **australia.gov.au** - which is under the management of the government information technology department will guarantee protection against the potential for foreign actors to seek to influence the outcome or public debate on the referendum question. Other parties may and will publish related material but if ALL responses to requests to government for "details" are directed to **australia.gov.au** then the source of information is contained.

Item b

By directing all requests for information to **australia.gov.au** the detection, mitigation, and obstruction of potential dissemination of misinformation and disinformation, including via social media or technology platforms is manageable.

The need for a written document is superseded by a single URL disseminated through all media.

That URL can be utilised to deliver and possibly even collect whatever information is relevant to the debate. Any external references being consulted by participating parties need to cite **australia.gov.au**

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Item a

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Item b

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That URL can be utilised to deliver as well as collect whatever information is relevant to the debate. Any external references being consulted by participating parties need to cite **australia.gov.au**

Item c

The potential application of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme to the referendum and its participants is removed by appropriate management of **australia.gov.au** as the source of all related information. This enables the possibility of total the control over what information is disseminated. Currently the site claims to be “The latest official news, updates and advice from the Australian Government.” There is a site search facility which yields “No results” to a search for “Voice”. That is a drastic misuse of the medium.

Item d

By confining any and all debate to be through the government's own site gives the the the potential application and administration of foreign donation laws to the referendum and its participants;

Item e

The AEC seems to have the application of authorisation requirements to the referendum and its participants under control.

Item f

The ongoing integrity and assurance processes of the Australian Electoral Commission need to be given whatever support is needed

Item g

Related matter:

The ubiquity of internet access provides the scope for dissemination of information. The only broadcast requirement is to direct participants to **australia.gov.au**

