

MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic Religious support First Nations People through a constitutionally enshrined Voice

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) has long been a vocal supporter of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and is proud to support a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament, as will be proposed at the upcoming Referendum on 14 October.

Australia's Religious Congregations have lived with and worked alongside First Nations People for decades, including working in remote Indigenous communities and many of them and their associated groups have publicly endorsed the voice (see list overleaf).

Peter Jones OSA, CRA President, said, "Our Congregations continue to listen to First Nations Peoples, looking for concrete ways of walking together towards a better future as a matter of justice."

"Pope Francis has urged us to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are the principal dialogue partners on large projects affecting them," he added.

Cognisant that there is not a single view among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, CRA has carefully considered Indigenous commentary on the Voice and believes that there are significant levels of support among them for the Voice. This has been demonstrated by the [endorsement of the Voice](#) by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC), as well as a [longitudinal study by Reconciliation Australia](#), the lead body for reconciliation in the nation.

Member of CRA Justice Committee, and a proud Catholic Indigenous woman of the Cubbitch Barta Clan in the Dharawal nation, Melinda Jolly said, "There was a lot of consultation within First Nations People to agree upon the Uluru Statement from the Heart. I think there are particular dissenting voices that are very loud and prominent, but that doesn't mean they are in the majority. Sometimes majority voices can be overcome by loud minorities."

Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director, said, "A constitutionally enshrined Voice will enliven the Catholic Social Thought principles of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity, by allowing First Nations Peoples to advise government on the matters that directly impact them."

"The current status quo for our First Nations Peoples is simply not acceptable, with 15 out of 19 'Closing the Gap' targets persistently not on track to be met. We cannot continue with 'business as usual' and expect things to improve. A constitutionally enshrined Voice will be an imperative step for making genuine progress," she added.

CRA Council endorses a Yes vote as a vote for justice at the upcoming Referendum, for an urgently needed step to achieve concrete results for our First Nations Peoples.

[Watch the recording of CRA's seminar: 'Lift Your Voice' to learn more about a constitutionally enshrined Voice.](#)

Read [Just Now](#), CRA's periodical focussing on justice issue – this edition is dedicated to the Voice.

Read the individual media statements from some of Australia's Religious Institutes and ministries here, the list includes:

[Augustinian Fathers](#)

[Brigidine Sisters](#)

[Christian Brothers](#)

[Daughters of our Lady of the Sacred Heart](#)

[Good Shepherd](#)

[Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea](#)

[Jesuit Refugee Service](#)

[Kildare Ministries](#)

[Loreto Sisters](#)

[Marist Brothers](#)

[Mercy Foundation](#)

[Missionaries of the Sacred Heart](#)

[Missionary Sisters of Service](#)

[Presentation Sisters Victoria](#)

[Redemptorists](#)

[Sisters of Our Lady of Sion](#)

[Sisters of St Joseph](#)

[Sisters of the Good Samaritan](#)

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