

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

A statement from the AWA Board on the upcoming vote for the Voice to Parliament.

25 September 2023

The Australian government has announced that the referendum on The Voice to Parliament will be held on 14 October.

The Board of AWA supports recognition and reconciliation with Australia's First Nations people.

Most of us only get one or two opportunities in a lifetime to vote in a referendum. It's a privilege and deserves care and consideration. The referendum requires us to vote yes or no on the following question:

A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?

The call for an Indigenous Voice to parliament was made in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, developed after many years of consultation amongst First Nations people.

If the referendum is passed, the proposed Constitutional change describes the role of the Voice in these words: "The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people". Details of the practical operation of the Voice would be defined by legislation, as is usual.

Part of AWA's 10-year aspiration is for water to be recognised by all as essential to Indigenous connection to Country. For this reason, our Board Directors will all be casting a 'Yes' vote in the referendum as a step toward this objective. The AWA Board believes and firmly supports the view that the Voice to Parliament will give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities a means to help inform policy and legislation that impact their daily lives.

At the same time, we fully respect everyone's right to make their own decision on the referendum.

If you have questions or are undecided, we encourage you to seek out information from reliable sources. Your vote on this important decision really matters.

The official government information can be found at: voice.gov.au

Other useful information sources include:

- aec.gov.au (Australian Electoral Commission)
- reconciliation.org.au (Voice to parliament)
- abc.net.au/news/voice-to-parliament-referendum *and* Fact Check - ABC news

Irrespective of the outcome of the referendum, AWA will continue to embrace the spirit of Reconciliation and walk with First Nations people towards a prosperous future for all Australians.

For media enquiries, please contact:

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About the Australian Water Association

Australian Water Association is Australia's biggest water network inspiring and driving a sustainable water future, with a membership of over 5,000 individual and corporate members.

www.awa.asn.au