



INDIGENOUS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a referendum and why do I have to vote on it?

The only way to change the constitution is to have a referendum, a national vote by the Australian people.

The constitution outlines how Australia is governed — it dictates how laws are made, how politicians are elected, and how the states, territories and commonwealth co-exist.

Why are we having a referendum on the Voice?

Many advocates say it is no longer acceptable for Australia to be one of the only colonised countries that does not recognise its Indigenous people in its founding document, the constitution.

When is the Voice referendum?

In under five days Australians of voting age will head to the polls to vote in the referendum on the Voice to Parliament is on Saturday, October 14.

What's involved in voting in the referendum?

For voters, the referendum is similar to voting in an election. You need to attend a polling place on the day of the referendum or organise to vote early, if you cannot vote on the referendum date.

Is voting in the referendum compulsory?

Voting in referendums is compulsory for Australians 18 years of age and older.

How to vote in the 2023 Australian Referendum.

Use the [Yes23 site](#) to enter an address to find your local AEC polling booth for early voting and on Referendum day, Saturday 14 October from 8.00am.

I'm unable to vote on Saturday 14 October, can I vote early?

Yes, [you can vote early](#) or [apply to vote by post](#) if you are unable to get to a polling place on voting day.

When does early voting close?

Early voting closes at 6pm on Wednesday 11 October.

When do applications for voting by post close?

Apply to vote by post before 6pm on Wednesday 11 October.



What is the Voice and how would it work?

The Voice is short for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament — a proposed body made up of Indigenous Australians from around the country who would advise the parliament and executive government on matters relating to Indigenous peoples.

Why does the Voice need to be in the constitution?

Advocates say it's a way for Indigenous people to have a say over what happens to them and their communities. Having the Voice in the constitution ensures it cannot be removed by future governments.

What will the Voice do?

The Voice would be an advisory body only — it would not have the power to make laws or override government decisions.

If the referendum is successful, parliament will decide how the Voice will function and pass legislation to bring it into practice.

Where did the idea come from?

The upcoming referendum is the latest step in a decades-long conversation about Indigenous constitutional recognition.

A key turning point came in 2017 when 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates from across the country met at Uluru for the First Nations' National Constitutional Convention.

They reached a consensus on a 440-word document called the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#).

The statement called for three things: A Voice to Parliament, Treaty and Truth-telling.

Where can I find detailed information about the Voice?

A [comprehensive report by Professors Tom Calma and Marcia Langton](#) provides some light on what the Voice might look like. In their proposal, the Voice would have two parts:

- Local and regional: 35 local Voices representing districts around the country, each one designed and run by their communities.
- National: A committee with 24 members (two from each state and territory, five from remote communities, two from the Torres Strait, one representing Torres Strait Islanders living on the mainland), serving four-year terms.

Do Indigenous people support the Voice?

First Nations people have a wide range of opinions about the Voice. Experts have said that 80 percent of First Nations Australians support the Voice.

What do the Yes and No groups say about the Voice?

ABC News has fact checked both Yes and No arguments, which you can [read here](#).