

مجلس الأئمة القديري الأسترالي

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



22 September 2023

Australian Muslims Say YES to the Voice

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and the Australian Muslim community have been at the forefront of supporting the Voice to Parliament.

The Voice will be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory body which would give advice to the government about issues that affect First Nations people.

More than a referendum, this is an opportunity for Australians to make history. A **'YES'** vote will recognise the long history of indigenous connection to this land and also establish a practical path to achieve better outcomes for First Nations people.

Therefore, ANIC and the Australian Muslims strongly support the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the establishment of a Voice to Parliament to provide First Nations peoples with an enduring means to make representations about policies that relate to them.

Muslims and Indigenous people have a longstanding history of interaction in Australia. This historical relationship has been characterised by trade, socialisation, intermarriage, and exchanging ideas for centuries. This interaction can be traced back to the early 1700s when Muslims first arrived in Australia through Makassar fishermen searching for sea cucumbers along the continent's northern coast.

This history is marked by mutual respect, pride, and dignified relationships. The Voice will contribute to shaping a positive future for all Australians, and Australian Muslims should be a part of this significant change.

We strongly urge the Australian Muslims in all states and territories, representing 3.2% of the total Australian population, to vote **YES** in the upcoming referendum on **14 October 2023**, to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice and support their brothers and sisters from First Nations people.

We also urge that Australian Muslims not be misled by the misinformation and attempts by many to exploit the uncertainty and lack of knowledge which people may have about the concept of the Voice. Indeed, you should take steps to understand and seek knowledge, rather than let people create a sense of fear, anxiety and uncertainty.

In promoting an understanding about the Voice and providing a forum for answering questions, ANIC will continue to facilitate workshops and presentations for the community.

Australian Muslims say **YES** to a longstanding, rich and respectful history of Muslims and First Nations people.

Australian Muslims say **YES** to acknowledgment, justice and fairness for First Nations people.

Australian Muslims say **YES** to establishing a Voice for the First Nations people.

For any media inquiries, please contact ANIC's Spokesperson, Bilal Rauf, on **1300 765 940** or spokesperson@anic.org.au.