

**6.1 NOTICE OF MOTION NO.10-2023 - SUPPORT FOR THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT - MOTION**

Submitting Councillors: Josh Fergeus, Rebecca Paterson, Anjalee de Silva and Nicky Luo

**MOTION**

*That Council:*

1. *Re-affirms our commitment to Makarrata, truth-telling, justice and reconciliation; and support for the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart;*
2. *Re-affirms our commitment to talking with our community and improving their understanding of First Nations issues, as well as strengthening our understanding of community views on these issues;*
3. *Recognises that Australia has formally endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes the collective right to self-determination;*
4. *Notes the Commonwealth Government's commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, including Voice, Treaty and Truth, and to a referendum on enshrining a Voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution;*
5. *Acknowledges that there is a diversity of opinions inside and outside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the significance and timing of the Voice to Parliament;*
6. *Notes that in line with commitments made as outlined in recommendation 1 & 2, as well as Council's existing positions in support of First Peoples and Council's Reconciliation Action Plan, that Council supports the 'yes' campaign for the Constitutional Recognition of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament, noting the continued importance of Treaty. Council will communicate this is our position to the Monash community via the Monash Bulletin, website, social media platforms and other communication channels;*
7. *Provides advice to the community on where to find reliable information regarding the referendum question, the constitutional amendment and the reasons for the proposed change, including information in languages other than English; and*
8. *Commits to consulting on these matters as part of Council's existing regular discussions with local Traditional Owner and Aboriginal community organisations.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In late 2023, Australians will have their say in a referendum about whether to change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

The Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body. It would give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have called for members of the Voice to be chosen by First Nations peoples based on the wishes of local communities.

### ***DISCUSSION***

At Council's meeting of 30 March 2021 Council resolved to publicly support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which outlines the path forward for recognising Indigenous Australians in Australia's Constitution. A First Nations Voice to Parliament protected by the Constitution is a key element of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

At the same meeting it was resolved that Council:

- Acknowledges that First Nations people never ceded sovereignty of their lands and have continuously cared for their country for over 60,000 years as the world's oldest living culture;
- Notes that the first Day of Mourning was held on 26 January 1938, the 150th anniversary of the British invasion, attended by First Nations people and non-indigenous supporters in protest of the national holiday and the treatment of First Nations people;
- Contributes to Makarrata, truth-telling, justice and reconciliation; and
- Commits to talking with our community and improving their understanding of First Nations issues, as well as strengthening our understanding of community views on these issues.

### ***CONCLUSION***

The Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament is a key moment in Australian history. Support for the 'yes' campaign is in line with Council's work on Reconciliation and the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

**NOTICE OF MOTION NO. 10-2023 – SUPPORT FOR THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT – OFFICER'S REPORT**

Submitting Councillors: Josh Fergeus, Rebecca Paterson, Anjalee de Silva and Nicky Luo  
Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

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**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Costs for the distribution of advice about the referendum on The Voice to the community, via our communication channels, can be covered within current budget allocations.

**IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES**

Staff resources and time in organising and preparing information on The Voice.

***COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES***

The launch of the City of Monash Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and the recruitment of our Aboriginal Partnership Officer has added momentum to our work with the community around First Nations issues.

***RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES***

We have increased our engagement with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander organisations that work in or close to Monash. The RAP clearly outlines deliverables around the building of strong relationships between First Nation peoples and our community. As well as the recognised NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week and Citizenship Ceremony events, we will promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. We continue to communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly and will work with our local Traditional Owner groups to collaborate on reconciliation initiatives and other opportunities to increase our communities understanding of First nations issues.

***FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS***

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) will shortly be sending boxes of hardcopy material about the Voice Referendum to every library branch in Victoria. The materials, comprised of booklets, leaflets and posters are designed as to provide a neutral source of factual information to the Australian public, to ensure Australians can make an informed vote at the referendum to be held between October and December this year. Libraries are recognised as an important conduit of reliable information to the public.

Council will distribute any documentation that we receive from Federal or State departments that contain information on the Referendum for the Voice.