Voice to Parliament referendum: messaging principles and tips guide for Christian leaders and advocates

In consultation with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians, two complementary resources have been developed by Anglican Church Southern Queensland staff following requests from Christian organisations and leaders, including clergy and Christian communications professionals and advocates.

The resources are available to assist these leaders across denominations so they can more effectively write and speak about constitutional recognition through an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and the gracious invitation of the <u>Uluru Statement's</u> 250 Indigenous signatories.

These resources include:

- 1. The below messaging principles table and tips guide, which encourages Christian mission and identity; hope; agency; respectful language and dialogue; solutions and opportunity; shared values and unity; and, confidence in the Australian people.
- 2. A table of suggested responses to common questions and objections, with 'conversational', 'technical', and 'quotable quotes' options.

Accessing the resources

The resources will be updated in an ongoing way and uploaded to the anglican focus news site here:

https://anglicanfocus.org.au/2023/05/01/uluru-statement-including-voice-to-parliament-referendum-resources-for-clergy-and-lay-leaders/

Important: Because this resource will be updated regularly, please share the above link to distribute this resource, rather than emailing the resource itself. The file's version number and date are noted in the footer.

Application for Christian organisations and other faith groups

Other Christian organisations and faith groups are welcome to adapt the contents of this guide (with permission for non-commercial purposes) to tailor the resource for their respective audiences.

While this resource is intentionally 'unbranded', it is copyrighted to protect the integrity of its contents.

Please contact Michelle McDonald via focus@anglicanchurchsq.org.au if you wish to adapt this resource for your own audience.

1. Suggested messaging principles for Christians engaged in Voice to Parliament communications and conversations

Important: The content of this table is intended to be a messaging principles guide, rather than a prescriptive script or exhaustive list. Any messaging needs to be used with the specific audience, purpose and communications channel in mind (for example, formal policy documents may require legal jargon and references to international agreements or declarations).

Replace this kind of messaging	With this kind of messaging	Because
1.Peter Dutton has started a turf war	1. Dean Parkin says that "The prime minister Anthony	It is very important to avoid reinforcing political and sectarian
with Anthony Albanese by declaring he	Albanese's vote will have as much power as a carpenter	divides, including when asked about decisions/positions of
will actively campaign against the Voice to Parliament.	from Campbelltown, and opposition leader Peter Dutton's vote will count the same as a barber from	dissenting elected representatives or commentators.
	Boonah."	The Australian people decide the outcome of referenda – not
2.Far right-wing commentators want to		politicians. So, it's vital that the conversation is shifted from being
destroy the Voice.	2.The last line in the <u>Uluru Statement From the Heart</u> is	Canberra-centric to being focused on the voting power of the
	"We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future." The Uluru	Australian people who collectively 'own' the Constitution.
	Statement is an invitation to all Australian people. So	It is helpful to ground the Voice to Parliament in the Uluru
	the referendum outcome will be decided by Australian	Statement From the Heart, which is an invitation to all Australians.
	voters.	
		The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance emphasises avoiding "attacking people
	3.Aboriginal leaders, like Yiman and Bidjara elder	or organisations".
	Professor Marcia Langton, say: "it is the people, not	
	politicians, who will decide the outcome."	
	4. "The Voice referendum is an appeal to the people, not politics."	
We should not continue the un-Christian	1. Churches have been leaders in the Reconciliation	Research in other advocacy spaces shows that positive framing is
tradition of denying Aboriginal and	space for decades. This is why so many Christians are	more effective than negative framing and that being solutions-
Torres Strait Islanders an advisory Voice.	actively supporting the Voice to Parliament. Check out	focused is more effective than being problem-focused.
	this video message to Churches from Uluru Statement	
	leader Dean Parkin to find out how Churches are	Coming together for the common good is something Christians
	building upon its wonderful legacy, especially since the	understand.
	1967 referendum.	The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends showing "confidence in
	2.Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians have been	the Australian people."
	working side by side together for decades in the	the Australian people.
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	Reconciliation space. Check out this video message to Churches from Uluru Statement leader Dean Parkin to find out how Churches are building upon its wonderful legacy, especially since the 1967 referendum. 3.Christians worked with other Australians to help achieve the successful 1967 referendum, which is a watershed moment in our shared history. Check out this video message to Churches from Uluru Statement leader Dean Parkin to find out how Churches are building upon this wonderful legacy.	
The Voice to Parliament is necessary because of 230+ years of dispossession, ethnocentrism and assimilationist agendas.	 1.The Constitution is 122 years old, but is yet to recognise Indigenous Australians who have walked these lands for thousands of years. This year, Australian Christians can help fix that with a referendum to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a real say in their future. 2.The Voice to Parliament will ensure that Indigenous Australians have an early say on the making of laws and policies that impact them. 3. The Uluru Statement From the Heart says that when "When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish." 	The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends that supporters "use simple language and avoid jargon". The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends "looking forward, not back", that we "emphasise opportunity", and avoid "focusing too much on disadvantage".
Massacres, genocide, dispossession and inter-generational trauma have destroyed the cultures, languages, knowledges and health of Aboriginal peoples. This is why we need the Voice.	1."Listening and consultation are core practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We get the mutual value of listening. We understand the mutual benefits of consultation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know their peoples' needs and have ancient wisdom to share. A Voice to Parliament will ensure that this knowledge and wisdom are listened	For people who may be persuadable, what they see as too much focus on past and current human rights abuses may make them feel hopeless or directly blamed, either way resulting in them putting their heads in the sand. "Listening" is a shared value. The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends that supporters "focus on strengths and avoid deficit language e.g. things can be better vs addressing disadvantage."

	to by policy makers, thereby helping to close the gap." (MaMu educator Phyllis Marsh)	The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends that supporters avoid "focusing too much on disadvantage".
	2.The <u>Uluru Statement From the Heart</u> says that, "In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."	
	3.The current way of doing things can be done better. The Voice to Parliament will more effectively enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to influence the laws and policies that impact their communities.	
Christians need to vote 'yes' because non-Indigenous people are benefitting from the sins of the colonisers, which included hundreds of massacres, slavery, genocide, dispossession and destruction of kinship systems.	1.The Voice is the first reform of the Uluru Statement From the Heart. It is about Indigenous constitutional recognition through a Voice to Parliament so that Indigenous Australians can have a say on the laws and policies affecting their communities. Many Christians support the Voice to Parliament because it is fair,	Advocacy messaging experts say that many people who can be persuaded to support a social justice call to action often reject abhorrent facts that don't align with their current worldview. This can inadvertently impact the credibility of the messenger and message.
	practical, simple and unifying. 2.The Voice is about constitutional recognition with a practical benefit – giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a real say over the things that affect	For other people who may be 'persuadable', what they see as too much focus on past and current human rights abuses may make them feel hopeless or directly blamed, either way resulting in them putting their heads in the sand.
	them.	While some truth-telling is necessary in the Voice discourse, comprehensive truth-telling processes will happen as part of the Makarrata Commission reform in the Uluru Statement From the Heart.
		The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends "looking forward, not back", that we "emphasise opportunity", and avoid "focusing too much on disadvantage".

		The <u>'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends</u> the solutions-focused and positively-framed terms, "fair", "practical", "simple" and "unifying", which are grounded in shared values.
Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that, "Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision- making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions."	1.The Uluru Statement From the Heart, which was signed by over 250 Indigenous leaders, is an invitation to all Australians to walk with Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander peoples "in a movement of the Australian people towards a better future." 2.The Uluru Statement From the Heart says that when "When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country."	It is important to keep grounding the Voice to Parliament in the Uluru Statement From the Heart because the Statement has currency locally, was written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, appeals to shared values and provides the roadmap to treaty and truth-telling. Research in other advocacy spaces shows that talking about local statements and initiatives is more engaging than referencing international declarations or laws.
Article 24 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that, "Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right."	The Voice to Parliament will help close the gap, including the health and life expectancy gap.	Health is a shared value. Shared values are effective in advocacy communications because they authentically engage people. The "closing the gap" initiative is well known locally. Research in other advocacy spaces shows that referencing local initiatives is more effective than referencing international initiatives, declarations or laws. It's more helpful to refer to tangibles rather than abstract concepts.
The Voice is important because it will help close the gap. For example, nationally in 2021, 68.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years had attained Year 12 or equivalent qualification	"Despite reading novels from the age of six, because I am Indigenous I was automatically placed in the 'slow reader' class at school. However, here at WestMAC [West Moreton Anglican College] it's a given that every Indigenous student has skills and knowledge. They	Using narrative/personal story is a highly effective way of engaging people on the Voice and fostering dialogue. In advocacy communications (such as sermons, blogging, social media posts and reflections), it's generally much more effective to use narrative rather than facts and figures.*
(figure CtG5.1). This is an increase from 63.2 per cent in 2016 (the baseline year). Nationally, based on progress from the baseline, the target shows improvement but is not on track to be met.*	speak in hope of their futures just as other students do. They see the same possibilities, the same social opportunities and a pathway that is equitable. The college has reached this place because they have listenedAboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know their peoples' needs and have ancient wisdom to	For example, in this brief reflection Saibai Elder Aunty Dr Rose Elu writes about building upon the legacy of the 1967 referendum, using personal narrative. And, in this brief reflection MaMu educator Phyllis Marsh uses personal narrative while writing about how Indigenous peoples know their peoples' needs and understand the mutual benefits of listening.

	share. A Voice to Parliament will ensure that this	As a suggested structure way sould begin with a paragraph and date
	knowledge and wisdom are listened to by policy makers, thereby helping to close the gap." (MaMu	As a suggested structure, you could begin with a personal anecdote (25% of the text), then introduce the 'problem' (25% of the text),
	educator Phyllis Marsh)	then articulate a vision (25% of the text), and then offer collectively
		achievable solutions (25% of the text). For more information on the
		'self/story, problem, vision, us' framework – please contact
		Michelle McDonald via focus@anglicanchurchsq.org.au
The International Day of the World's	This year's <u>National Reconciliation Week</u> theme is "Be a	National Reconciliation Week is a popular event in the annual
Indigenous Peoples is celebrated	Voice for Generations". This year's theme is connected	calendars of many denominations.
globally on 9 August. It marks the date	to the Voice to Parliament.	
of the inaugural session of the Working		National Reconciliation Week (NRW) started as the Week of Prayer
Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982. We will be focusing on this day to		for Reconciliation 30 years ago, which was supported by Australia's major faith communities.
promote the Voice to Parliament this		major fatti communities.
year.		While commemorating other events may still be helpful, focusing
		on events (connected to the Voice) that are well known to Church
		communities is likely more effective.
We are doomed if the 'yes' vote is not	1.We can work together to achieve a successful 'yes'	The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends showing "confidence in
achieved.	vote in the referendum.	the Australian people" and avoiding "negativity and the risk of failure".
	2.Most Australians support the Indigenous Voice to	
	Parliament.	Catastrophising language typically disengages persuadable people.
	3.80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Panic-inducing and negatively-framed language can also foster
	support the 'yes' vote.	denial, paralysis or a sense of hopelessness, which typically lead to inaction.
		Using solutions-focused and positively-framed language effectively
		engages people and encourages hope and agency.
I support the 'yes' vote because if the	1.I support the 'yes' vote because I have grandchildren.	Drawing upon examples of successfully working together shows
referendum is unsuccessful the	I want to tell them about how I supported the 'yes' vote	what can be achieved and is aspirational and affirming.
Reconciliation journey will be set back	when they are older and how I helped to make their	Hairantanana liha ((fairan)) and ((lanan)) and (classes)
decades.	country fairer.	Using terms like "fairer" and "legacy" are helpful because they
	2.0ver 90 per cent of voters voted 'yes' in the 1967	appeal to shared values.
	referendum in what became a watershed moment in	
	referendam in what became a watershed moment in	1

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	our shared history, especially in the way it united us. I want to keep building on the legacy of the successful 1967 referendum.	The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends that supporters emphasise "confidence in the Australian people" and "emphasise opportunity" and avoid "negativity and the risk of failure".
"I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I lay my vengeance upon them." (Ezekiel 25.17 NRSV)	1. "When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'" (Matthew 5.1-2, 9 NRSV) 'Blessed' comes from a root word that means 'wholeness'. The Voice to Parliament will help heal and unify our country. The Voice to Parliament is the first reform of the Uluru Statement From the Heart, which has been described as a "powerful and historic offering of peace."	As Christians, we place a high value on peace and on Jesus as a peacemaker, as well as on unity and healing. As Christians we understand that we are all children of God, and hence brothers and sisters to one another. Rather than using scripture as a 'guilting tool', it is more constructive and respectful to emphasise our identity as children of God, to foster other-centeredness and care for one another, and, to encourage a heart's conversion. The Uluru Statement is invitational.
	Cobble Cobble woman, Uluru Dialogue Co-chair and constitutional lawyer Prof Megan Davis calls the Uluru Statement a "roadmap to peace".	
"the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." (Psalm 1.6 NRSV)	1."Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." (Philippians 2.4 NRSV) 2."What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6.8 NRSV) 3."I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord."	Rather than using scripture as a 'guilting tool', it is more constructive and respectful to encourage other-centeredness and care for our neighbour.
"A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of	(Jeremiah 9.24) "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5.22-23 NRSV)	The 'fruits of the Spirit' are widely shared values that easily tie in with the gracious invitation from the Uluru Statement's 250 signatories.

stone and give you a heart of flesh."	"So now faith, hope, and love abide." (1 Corinthians	The idea of "faith, hope, and love" abiding ties in with the hopeful
(Ezekiel 36.26 NRSV)	13.13 NRSV)	message and invitation of the Uluru Statement's 250 signatories.
		It's important to think about how persuadable people may be
		impacted by our scripture choices. Even seemingly well-known and
		innocuous scriptures may be received negatively. For example,
		using Ezekiel 36.26 may come across as though the writer/speaker
		is saying, "If you don't vote 'yes', it's because you have a heart of
		stone." The Uluru Statement is invitational.
"We must all vote yes because"	"I am voting 'yes' because"	'Owning' or 'grounding' statements foster dialogue, while phrases
		such as "we must" tend to shut down dialogue.
	"Our organisation has decided to support the 'yes' vote	
	because"	The Uluru Statement From the Heart is invitational.
	"Most Christians support the 'yes' vote because"	
Older generations will be to blame if the	Over 90 per cent of voters voted 'yes' in the 1967	While some polls show that people of retirement age are more
referendum doesn't pass.	referendum in what became a watershed moment in	likely to vote 'no', blaming language is unconstructive.
	our shared history, especially in the way it united us. I	
	want to keep building on the legacy of this successful	Appealing to the shared value of unity and building on the 1967
	1967 referendum, which many people of retirement age	legacy that many people of retirement age contributed to is
	voted in when they were younger.	respectful.
		The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends that supporters avoid
		"attacking people or organisations" and focus on showing
		"confidence in the Australian people".
"I was chatting to a racist / bigot / race-	"I was chatting to a person at the bus stop yesterday	Using offensive labels impacts the building of rapport and trust and
baiter at the bus stop yesterday who	who currently supports the 'no' vote and we got	is disrespectful and unaligned with Christian values. Using "people
supports the 'no' vote."	chatting"	who" builds rapport with the audience and is humanising,
		respectful and aligned with the Gospel message.
		The referendum is a democratic process.
		The Uluru Statement From the Heart is invitational.
		The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance recommends that supporters avoid
		"attacking people [including politicians] or organisations."

Aborigines, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, ATSI, indigenous people.

First Nations peoples, First Peoples, Indigenous peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Jagera woman / Wiradjuri people / Yolngu community / Saibai Elder.

'Aborigines' is considered to be an offensive colonial and homogenising term.

Using the term 'peoples', rather than 'people', is respectful and accurate because it connotes the different Indigenous nations.

'ATSI' is considered highly offensive, in part because it is a shorthand or derogatory term used in the law enforcement sector.

'Indigenous' must be used with a capital 'I'. While other terms are increasingly preferred to 'Indigenous', this word is often better understood than 'First Nations' in conversations with people who are new to such discourses. The 'Yes' Campaign Alliance uses the adjectives 'First Nations', 'Indigenous peoples' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interchangeably.

Referring to local language, community or family groups (such as 'Wiradjuri') or island names (such as 'Saibai') is generally considered best practice when the names are known.

'First Nations peoples' is increasingly becoming best practice because it underscores sovereignty and diversity of nations.

Choose the term that is most effective for communicating your message to your audience, while bearing in mind advice provided by your local Elders.

To sum up, these messaging principles:

- Ground the Voice to Parliament in the <u>Uluru Statement From the Heart</u>.
- Appeal to shared values.
- Are solutions focused.
- Use positive framing.
- Show confidence in the Australian people.
- Focus on strengths rather than take a deficit approach.

- Suggest being discerning when it comes to writing/speaking about human rights abuses.
- Use tangible terms and simple, jargon-free language.
- Emphasise human agency and opportunity.
- Emphasise Christian mission and identity.
- Draw upon examples showing what can be achieved when we work together.
- Suggest being discerning about scripture choices.
- Refer to local initiatives/statements/events, rather than international ones.
- Build upon positive legacies (such as the 1967 referendum and National Reconciliation Week).
- Tailor messaging for the given audience and the given communications channel.
- Use respectful language that builds rapport and trust.
- Encourage use of narrative / personal story.
- Are aligned with the Yes23 Campaign Alliance messaging (see page 6 of this guide).

2. Sample messages to replace and embrace (based on messaging principles in the table above)

i. Replace: We must support the 'yes' vote because if the referendum is unsuccessful the Reconciliation journey will be set back by decades. Christians need to vote 'yes' because non-Indigenous people are benefitting from the sins of the colonisers, which included hundreds of massacres, slavery, genocide, dispossession and destruction of kinship systems.

We should not continue the un-Christian tradition of denying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders an advisory Voice. Peter Dutton has started a turf war with Anthony Albanese by declaring he will actively campaign against the Voice to Parliament – if he gets his way, we are doomed.

Embrace: I am campaigning for the 'yes' vote in this year's referendum because I now have grandchildren. They won't understand what it is all about when we vote this year, just like I didn't understand what the 1967 referendum was about when I was five. But I want to be able to tell them about it later and that I tried to be part of making their country fairer. Over 90 per cent of voters voted 'yes' in the 1967 referendum in what became a watershed moment in our shared history, especially in the way it united us. I want to keep building on this legacy and I have faith in the Australian people who will decide the result.

The Voice is about constitutional recognition with a practical benefit – giving Indigenous Australians a real say over their future, including improving health and education outcomes. Churches have been leaders in the Reconciliation space for decades, which is why so many Christians like me are actively supporting the Voice to Parliament. (Adapted from *anglican focus* content written by <u>The Ven. Geoff Hoyte</u> and <u>Saibai Elder Aunty Dr Rose Elu</u>)

ii. Replace: The Voice is important because it will help close the gap. For example, <u>nationally</u> in 2021, 68.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years had attained Year 12 or equivalent qualification (figure CtG5.1). This is an increase from 63.2 per cent in 2016 (the baseline year). Nationally, based on progress from the baseline, the target shows improvement but is not on track to be met. Also, <u>nationally</u> in 2021, 34.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children commencing school were assessed as being developmentally on track in all five AEDC domains (figure CtG4.1). This is a decrease from 35.2 per cent in 2018 (the baseline year). Nationally, based on progress from the baseline, the target is worsening.*

Embrace: Five years ago in the interview for my current West Moreton Anglican College (WestMAC) role, I asked "Can we be bold and innovate towards closing the gap?" Since commencing in my role, the college has consistently listened to me as a pedagogical expert to design the way we approach the teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and how we teach our Indigenous students...Despite reading novels from the age of six, because I am Indigenous I was automatically placed in the 'slow reader' class at school. However, here at WestMAC it's a given that every Indigenous student has skills and knowledge. They speak in hope of their futures just as other students do. They see the same possibilities, the same social opportunities and a pathway that is equitable. The college has reached this place because they have listened. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know their peoples' needs and have ancient wisdom to share. A Voice to Parliament will ensure that this knowledge and wisdom are listened to by policy makers, thereby helping to close the gap. (MaMu educator Phyllis Marsh)

3. There are some great resources available and initiatives happening to assist with both messaging and conversations, including:

- 'The Yes Guide' for the official 'Yes23' campaign (see page 6).
- The FAQs page of the Uluru Statement website.
- The 'Together, Yes' kitchen conversations movement in support of the 'yes' vote. The 'Together, Yes' movement is endorsed by the Yes23 campaign. The conversation skills learnt are built on respect, listening and learning.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact: Michelle McDonald (ACSQ Director of News) via focus@anglicanchurchsq.org.au or Peter Branjerdporn (from the ACSQ Justice Unit) via contact@doingjustice.org.au.

^{*} These figures are based on recently released Closing the Gap status updates. While such figures are essential for policy documents, academic papers and government submissions, using narrative is likely to be more effective in informal advocacy communications, such as in sermons, blogging, social media posts and reflections.