



AMCS' Position on the Voice Referendum

The Australian Marine Conservation Society supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart as a collective call from First Nations Peoples for all Australians to walk together for a better society.

Australia's Constitution does not currently mention Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the first peoples of this continent. A key element of the Uluru Statement is recognition and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution. We believe that Constitutional recognition is not only fair and just, but it is well overdue.

The Australian Marine Conservation Society supports writing 'Yes' in the upcoming Voice Referendum as an act of First Nations recognition and representation. We believe that decisions are better and fairer when people directly affected by them have a say. The Voice will empower First Nations peoples to have a say on laws and decisions that directly affect them.

AMCS acknowledges that First Nations people have cared for land and sea Country since time immemorial. As an organisation dedicated to protecting our coasts, oceans and wildlife, we have much to learn from First Nations people's intimate knowledge of ecosystems. First Nations custodianship is foundational to the future health of Australia's unique coastal and marine environments.

Writing 'Yes' at the referendum is a step towards advancing the rights of and amplifying the voices of First Nations people. First Nations voices are indispensable in shaping policies that affect the environment and we need to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are listened to, and learned from in decision making. We support a First Nations Voice to Parliament because decisions about the protection and management of our shared natural heritage will be better if made together.

We recognise and respect that First Nations peoples have diverse perspectives and political views on the Referendum, and we acknowledge that First Nations communities and their complex systems of governance must be included in the democratic processes in this country.

The steps towards First Nations' rights and self determination are ongoing.

AMCS is committed to reconciliation and actively supporting First Nations peoples' rights and aspirations to manage Sea Country, which is fundamental to our marine conservation efforts.

The Voice referendum is a pivotal moment to advance equality, social justice and meaningful representation.

It demands our resolute commitment to building a fairer, more inclusive and more united society, where all voices are heard and valued.

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