

THE 'WHY' OF THE VOICE:
Compelling Statements
Inspired by Indigenous
Mindsets



CHARTER FOR
COMPASSION
AUSTRALIA

Dr Lynne Reeder
March 2023



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Background

The Voice to parliament was a key recommendation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a document written and endorsed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in 2017 to change the Constitution to improve the representation of Indigenous Australians.

The petition called for an advisory body, called “the Voice”, to advise parliament and the federal government on Indigenous policy matters, including health, education, economic disadvantage, and social matters.

Embedding that Voice in the Constitution will recognize the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia’s history, and importantly would also mean that it can’t be shut down by successive Governments.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart called for ‘...the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution’.¹

In outlining the historic opportunity this year provides us – Prof Andrew Gunstone Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Reconciliation, and Director, National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth, and Justice at Federation University Australia – states that:

‘In 1967, the most successful Constitutional referendum in Australian history was passed that enabled the Commonwealth Parliament to make laws for Indigenous peoples.

However, in the 55 years since this referendum, a succession of Commonwealth governments has failed to genuinely address a range of critical issues in Indigenous Affairs. These governments have also established a number of Indigenous advisory bodies only to later abolish them when it was politically expedient.



In 2023, another referendum will be held to enshrine a First Nations Voice to Parliament in the Constitution. This is critically important, not just symbolically to recognise Indigenous peoples, but also practically. It will ensure Indigenous peoples are heard on the issues that impact them and will protect this process from the political whims of governments.

Decades of national and international evidence clearly demonstrate that Indigenous policies have a significantly higher chance of success when Indigenous peoples are genuinely engaged in the design and implementation of these policies.’



Deep Dreaming Australia a Continent for Compassion

The Australian Compassion Council brings the work of the global Charter for Compassion to Australia, with its overall vision of Deep Dreaming Australia: A Continent for Compassion.

A continent for compassion couldn't be dreamed into being without the essential inclusion of Indigenous Australians and much of our work is guided by the creative Indigenous Mindsets of Kinship Mind, Story Mind, Dreaming Mind, Ancestor Mind, Pattern Mind.

Using the five mindsets as articulated by Tyson Yunkaporta in his book *Sand Talk* we feel provides a respectful starting point for this project to engage with the Voice by honouring different ways of relating and valuing all Indigenous forms of knowing.

We recognise the political and divisive nature of the Voice to Parliament – and so have focused more on the Why of having indigenous voices heard and not on the details of

what that looks like at a political level. We know that referendums by their nature require agreement to a general proposition and once that has been agreed then the detailed is worked out in the parliament.

We respectfully acknowledge that there are many Aboriginal Australians who for a range of reasons disagree with the Voice to Parliament and we acknowledge their perspective. The reason the Charter for Compassion, Australia supports the Voice is that we believe that everyone has a right to be heard particularly when it comes to government policies that affect quality of life. But in the bigger picture we also hope that this referendum will provide a turning point in Australia's story as we reach across our common humanity to discover a history that provides us all with a new sense of wonder and amazement.

About the Charter for Compassion, Australia's Project - *the Why of the Voice*

This project invited indigenous and non-indigenous Australians to develop compelling statements on the Why of the Voice by using one of the five mindsets as their starting point.

These statements have been captured in this book to create a positive campaign designed to engage the wider Australian community to connect to the Voice from their hearts and not just their minds.

This project has been supported by one of the Charter's main partners - Initiatives of Change. IofC has direct contact with the Co-chair of Reconciliation Victoria, Uncle Shane Charles, and Executive Officer Margaret Hepworth, and Uncle Glen Loughrey.

Margaret Hepworth firmly believes that the *'...The Uluru Statement from the Heart is one of the most generous offerings to Australians we have yet seen. The Voice will bring that generosity into Action. The Voice gives rise to Spirituality, Justice*

and Healing - for First Peoples, and indeed for the whole country - the land and all people supported within the land's embrace. It is time to move with our conscience and walk together for a better future. Imagine that!

Initiatives of Change is a world-wide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, who are committed to the transformation of society through changes in human motives and behaviour, starting with our own. The participants in this volume all have some connection to the Charter for Compassion, Australia; Compassionate Ballarat; Compassionate Gold Coast; or Initiatives of Change.



Indigenous Voices – Global Recognition

The Voice will not only give indigenous peoples the opportunity to be heard at a political level – it will also provide Australians with different cultural backgrounds new opportunities to listen to the wisdom inherent in Indigenous knowledge.

In 2023, using Tyson Yunkaporta's mindsets as the basis for this project is significant, because this year several international books have been published that not only reflect on the importance of Indigenous thinking to the challenges facing our world more generally, but to Tyson's book *Sand Talk*, specifically.

These international books include – Jeremy Lent's: (2023) *The Web of Meaning: Integrating Science and Traditional Wisdom to Find Our Place in the Universe*; and Daniel Siegel's (2023): *Intra-connected: As the Integration of Self, Identity, and Belonging*.

Both these books explore the contribution of Indigenous thinking to contemporary science in its investigation of how we can better deal with complexity through systems thinking. In his book Daniel Siegel draws attention to how wider Indigenous teachings are underpinned by a

wholeness that is 'imbued with reverence, respect and responsibility for our interdependence', noting that:

Indigenous knowledge reminds us that deep learning invites an evolution, perhaps a revolution, in consciousness. With the internal embraced, we move to the relational; we integrate identity, broaden belonging. What arises is a synergy of self, an emergency of something from Me to We that is integration made visible: kindness, compassion, love².

Daniel Siegel is an American neuroscientist, and in this his latest book he explores how Indigenous thinking can support interdependent approaches to social development. He contends that one of the key contributions Indigenous thinking offers our disruptive world is the wisdom of systems thinking where we can relate to each other, all living beings, and the earth through a prism of oneness.

In his book, he quotes Tyson saying that '...learning from his Indigenous elders, we first bring spirit (respect) then heart (connect), then head (reflect) and then hands (direct) as we join in the work of being custodian of our shared belonging to one another and to the lands upon which we live³.

²Siegel, D (2023) *IntraConnected: As the Integration of Self, Identity, and Belonging*, Norton, NY pgs49/50

³ Ibid pf 43

As a mental health expert Dr Seigel is aware of the damage that isolation and separation can cause in human development and instead encourages us not only to live more connected lives, but to have that connection underpinned by the benefits that come from deeply understanding our human interrelatedness.

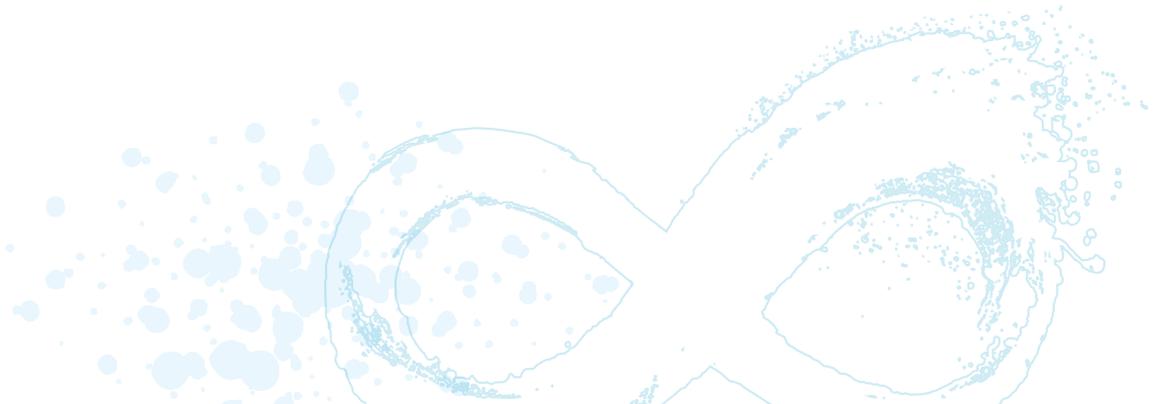
Together MWe can make this integration of self, identity, and belonging our common ground, linking timeless wisdom with timely action in our magnificent, intra-connected world⁴.

Similarly, Jeremy Lent in his book *The Web of Meaning* makes the case for a higher level of human integration, one that is based on the understanding that the health of a whole system requires the flourishing of each part that constitutes it, and surmises that, when indigenous cultures viewed all of nature as family, they were in touch with a profound truth that has since been scientifically validated by evolutionary biology.

This is because, Indigenous worldviews recognise '...the intricate interdependencies of all elements of life, weaving together individuals, communities, nations and the natural world'⁵.

⁴ Ibid pg269

⁵ Lent, J (2023) *The Web of Meaning Integrating Science and Traditional Wisdom to Find Our Place in the Universe* Profile Books, London, UK pg251



Compassion and the Voice

The Charter for Compassion, Australia undertook this project to honour our Deep Dreaming of Australia as a Continent for Compassion, and to provide an understanding of how the evidence base of compassion can support us in engaging more thoughtfully with the referendum vote.

While compassion as a value has been recognised in contemplative traditions for centuries, it only in recent times that compassion as a motivation has been the subject of systematic research and analysis by neuroscience, psychology, and management theory.

One definition of compassion is the willingness to see suffering with the resourced capacity to take action to alleviate that suffering. This year we are being asked to see the suffering of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters and to give them a voice to government – so that governments can better understand and specifically tailor policies that affect them.

One of the things that can get in the way of us being generous to others – is that outlined in recent compassion studies which show that when individuals are stimulated by threats, they are less likely to be compassionate, and more likely to be oppositional, which is counter to the frame of mind needed for us to be cooperative. Stan Grant in a recent article commented on this point when he stated:

Already the political battle lines are being drawn. The voices and the faces of those who suffer are being silenced and erased. We have bypassed compassion and moved straight to combat.

In all of the discussion about the Indigenous Constitutional Voice there is the one word missing – Compassion. In all of the column inches, in the voices on the airwaves where is compassion? How can we begin to move toward healing, truth or forgiveness without first compassion?⁶

The evidence base of compassion is providing new insights into how we can improve our capacity to 'see' the suffering around us and respond to alleviate that suffering.

Compassion science is examining what motivates humans to care for one another, and how this positive motivation can be extended to improve the whole of humankind. The importance of this research is that overall findings show that cultivating compassion and prosocial motivations are associated with improved well-being and the development of more beneficial social environments.

Prof Paul Gilbert, Director of the Compassionate Mind Foundation, UK says that the research basis of compassion is vital because, '...the motivation of compassion pushes us

⁶<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-05/voice-to-parliament-debate-stan-grant-compassion-is-needed/101928250>

to understand how we have structured the world, and to ask how can we structure it better, not because we may suffer, but because others are suffering’.

Two of the components of compassion include curiosity and wonder, and recent studies have found that wonder and awe can increase feelings of connectedness, increase critical thinking and scepticism, and increase positive mood.⁷

Accessing our curiosity and wonder about what we can learn from 60,000 years ago could help us in letting go of the fear that prevents us from learning from Indigenous Australians.

It is only in very recent times that we have learnt more of Indigenous knowledge and practices such as how cool fire burnings can help with major bush fires. We have learnt more of Indigenous astronomy and of Aboriginal language, art, and music – but that journey is only at the beginning and there is so much more to learn about and apply for better ways of sustainably engaging with the earth and with each other.

It is important to recognise that this knowledge is more than an ancient artefact – it still has implications for today. Indeed, Tyson Yunkaporta’s work focuses on applying Indigenous methods of inquiry to resolve complex issues and explore global crises.

And in history, there are so many Indigenous stories that have not been reported and are only now just being given a voice. One such story comes from Lior, Nigel Westlake and Dr Lou Bennett who have created a new song cycle that pays tribute to Yorta Yorta elder William Cooper and his march that led a protest against Nazi Germany’s treatment of Jews outside the German consulate in Melbourne in 1938.

Their original Compassion Song Cycle drew on ancient Hebrew and Arabic texts and was a sweeping orchestral meditation on peace and cross-cultural understanding.

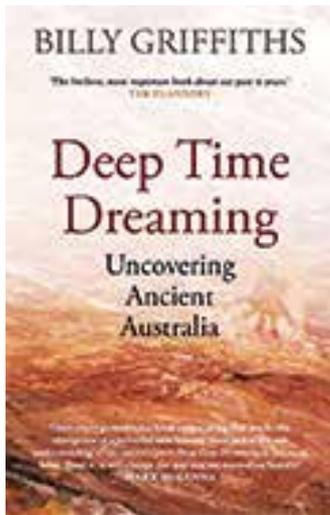
And as Nigel and Lior looked to create a follow-up, Lior began searching for a story and when he heard of William Cooper’s story he thought, ‘this is an embodiment of so much of what these ancient texts and Compassion were speaking about’ – this extraordinary act of courage, empathy, compassion.

Lior states that ‘...this is an iconic moment in Australian history and a type of aspirational beacon, if you like, both on a personal level (and) on a societal level as well.’ Like Compassion, aspects of Ngapa William Cooper (the new song cycle), do



resonate with the present day: from Ukraine and the Levant to current conversations around the upcoming voice referendum. Compassion is one of those things that we constantly need to remind ourselves of.⁸

If we can approach the referendum with admiration of Aboriginal culture that might get us to the heart of the Why of the Voice in a way that a rational dry discussion will not. In his book *Deep Time Dreaming* Billy Griffiths has written of



the wonder of Aboriginal culture by noting that:

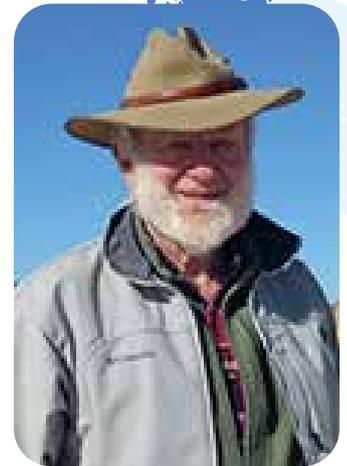
To dream of deep time it is to seek to understand and revivify the human history of a place from the fragments that have survived the vicissitudes of time.

It is an act of wonder – a dilation of the commonplace – that challenges us to infer meaning from the cryptic residue of former worlds.

It is a scale of thinking that asks us to respect past as a living heritage and to recognise the possibilities and responsibilities it generates⁹.

And in his amazing spiritual encounter with the remains of Mungo man and Mungo lady that are 40,000 to 42,000 years old, making them the oldest human remains found anywhere in Australia – Jim Bowler the geologist who found them has reflected:

As a largely European culture, now sharing a continent with a people who had at least 60,000 years of continuous occupation, we have an extraordinary opportunity to produce a synthesis of the old and the new, of the material and spiritual, of humanity and nature. The key to that synthesis involves opening our minds to mythologies and cultures that remain alive in Australia as in no other place on earth¹⁰.



We trust that the heartfelt statements in this book will support us in coming to the Voice from our calm and creative selves – where we can see the possibilities of engaging with an Australian history that is 60,000 years old.

⁸<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/mar/02/an-extraordinary-act-of-courage-the-aboriginal-activist-who-proteted-against-nazi-germany>

NB: Lior has been an important contributor to the work of the Charter for Compassion in Australia over many years.

⁹Griffiths, Billy (2018) *Deep Time Dreaming: Uncovering Ancient Australia*, Black Inc, Carlton, Aust pgs8-9

¹⁰<https://candowisdom.com/change/jim-bowler-mungo-man-message>

Compelling Statements on the 'Why' of the Yes Campaign

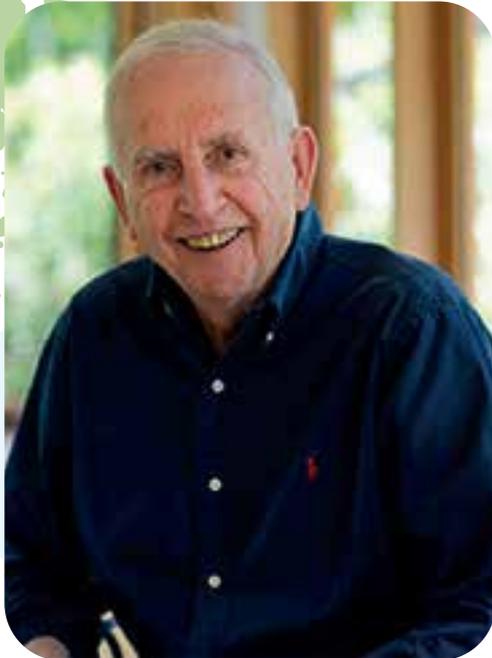
The statements in the following pages have been arranged under each of the relevant mindsets and each mindset has been described on the front page of those statements.



KINSHIP MIND

Relationships and connectedness

Kinship Mind is a way of improving and preserving memory in relationships with others – it's about "relationships and connectedness... there are no isolated variables – every element must be considered in relation to other elements and the context'. In Aboriginal worldviews, nothing exists outside of a relationship to something else. An observer does not try to be subjective but is integrated within a sentient system that is observing itself



Hugh Mackay, AO - Psychologist, Author, National Ambassador - Australian Compassion Council

We humans – all of us – exist in a shimmering, vibrating web of interconnectedness and interdependence.

To deny that is to deny the deepest truth about our humanity.

The proposed Indigenous Voice to the Australian parliament is an opportunity for this nation to acknowledge that, from the time of European settlement, we failed to acknowledge our kinship with First Nations people.

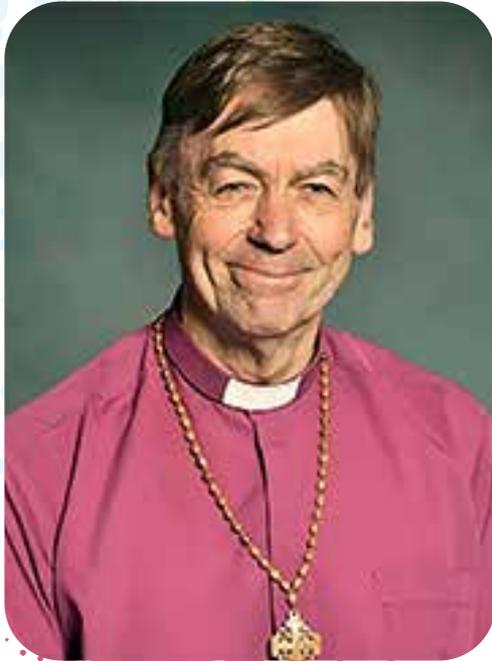
The Voice will right that wrong by declaring, at last: 'We are listening.'

We hear you.

Only you can tell us how, together, we can address the problems created by the collision of our cultures.

We are one with you.'

Bishop Philip Huggins - Director, Centre for Ecumenical Studies, Australian Centre for Christianity, and Culture



A First Nation elder of faith summarizes Jesus Word and Spirit as: 'Love everyone; Forgive everything.'

The forgiveness element is crucial as we listen to the Statement of the Heart and the request for Voice.

We all make mistakes. We have all made mistakes.

The question is what we then do. Asking for and offering forgiveness allows us to begin again.

Forgiveness, including of ourselves allows us to make a fresh choice to heal and not to do further harm.

Holding on to hatred and resentment is as Nelson Mandela once said, like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.

We are all in this together.

On our beautiful continent gifted with life through forces entirely beyond our control here on the ground in the web of life, along with the kookaburras and koalas, the waratahs, and the wallabies.

It is all a gift, and the invitation is to respond with a loving being.

The Referendum on Voice is a most beautiful opportunity to practice the deepest and most practical wisdom.

Yes, 'love everyone; forgive everything'



Dr Mark Croweller AFSM – Director Ethical Intelligence; Member Australian Compassion Council

This year we have the opportunity to formally recognise our kinship with the oldest continuously living culture on earth and in so doing, heal the nation's heart.

We also have the opportunity to 'walk together along the last mile of reconciliation', listen deeply to the wishes of the ancestral spirit of the land, sea, and sky, and move forward in the true spirit of kinship that should have been our original destiny.

Let's not miss this opportunity for the sake of ourselves and the millennia of generations that will follow us.

For if we miss this opportunity, we commit all of us to a future of otherwise avoidable suffering.



Dr Mary Hollick – Compassionate Ballarat Steering Group

Our first peoples have reached out to us, again, with unconditional grace and an invitation to share their deep knowledge of the connectedness and profound relationships that hold creation together.

The Voice is a gift from time immemorial to us, an invitation to deepen, enrich and repair our relationships with each other, our country, and our world.

It is in remembering from where we have all come, acknowledging our universal kinship, that will underpin our ability to flourish, together.



David Deutscher – Former Surgeon, Member Expert Advisory Group Compassionate Ballarat

There is a wonderful African notion - that of Ubuntu – “I am because we are”.

All of us as Australians “are” because of the heritage of our Aboriginal fellow citizens and the democracy passed to us from our European ancestors.

Our modern beginnings were tough – for both Indigenous & European Australians alike.

That we can now redress our stark and lingering inequalities through the Voice to Parliament, a long process but given impetus with John Howard & Noel Pearson in 2007.

That we can move forward together as “WE, the people of Australia”, in one space and in mutual kinship is a sacred and historical opportunity.

An opportunity not only for us, but for all our children, to our children’s, children’s children.

This is a vision whose time has come, and we have the chance to say to future generations “we acted with courage so we all can be fully Australian.”



Dr Larissa Bartlett – Mindfulness Researcher, University of Tasmania; Advisory Group, Mindful Futures Network

As humans we all have common needs: for safety, connectedness, and health.

We have capacity to learn, adapt and create when our needs are met.

In Australian society, the needs of the original custodians of this land we live upon have been unmet for too long.

We know better now and cannot unsee the far-reaching consequences of colonial blindness.

It is time for us - as a nation - to listen and to act to meet these basic needs for ALL of our people.

I believe that we will stand more firmly and confidently as our uncertain future unfolds, if we truly listen and learn from those who have tended to and lived upon this unique country for millennia.

We will be better together, through The Voice.



STORY MIND

Role of narrative in memory and knowledge transmission

STORY-MIND is how we “...compare our stories with the stories of others to seek greater understanding about our reality. It’s about the role of narrative in memory and knowledge transmission. This is how songlines have worked in Australia for millennia to store knowledge in stories, and it includes yarning.



Dr. Shane Howard AM – Musician, singer, song writer

At its heart, this is an Aboriginal country.

First Nations people watched ice ages come and go.

Ancient Songlines re-enact the deep history of the oldest continuous culture and spirituality on Earth, calling us to address the fundamental lie at the heart of our national story.

Aboriginal philosophy and cosmology offer a great gift if we but listen and give voice.

Colonisation was brutal for Aboriginal people and the hurt is deep. It marks when they began to lose just about everything.

When I wrote the song, 'Solid Rock', I dreamt of a country respectful of our ancient history and honest about our modern history. I wanted to be proud of my country.

Now, we have the chance, to be an honourable example in a confused world.

'Voice' is the first aspect of a triptych: 'Voice, Treaty, Truth.'

What possible good could come from a 'No' vote?



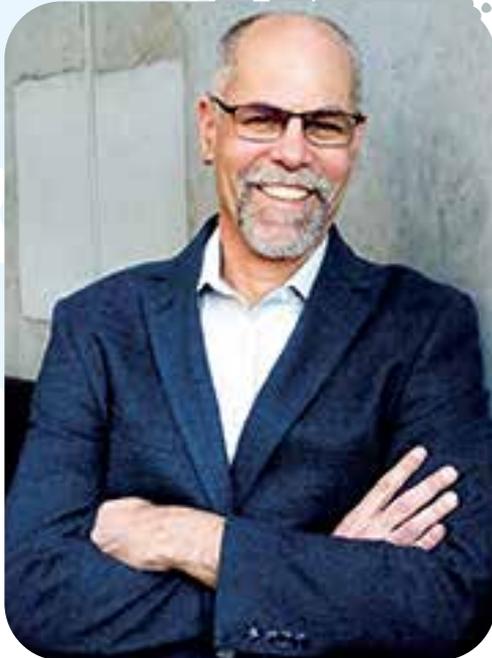
Dr Lynne Reeder - National Lead, Charter for Compassion Australia, Global Coordinator Charter for Compassion's Science and Research Sector

This year offers us all the opportunity to honor the wisdom of 60,000 years by listening to the stories that were mapped in the land and reflected in the night sky.

Can we choose to develop cultural humility, that will enable us to develop deeper and more compassionate ways of interacting and connecting to each other and to our earth.

Making those empathic choices will allow us to co-create the meaningful and profound approaches to our mutual interdependence.

In this year can we take a generosity of spirit with us to the referendum?



Michael Bartura – Associate, Asian Leadership Institute, Member Australian Compassion Council

The Voice discussion – and subsequent decision – is an opportunity for us as people, as country, as a nation, to come together in an inquiry that we are yet to embrace but must truly uphold to move forward:

How are we related?

How are we interconnected?

Our destiny, clearly, is mutual and interdependent.

Yet so far, we have not managed to generate a shared destiny in a way that is fair, free, and befitting the complexity of our culture and history.

And although all narratives are part of the story modern Australia is, we long overlooked its founding legend – 60,000 years of untold dreamtime.

Our original storytellers merit a Voice.



Assoc Prof Anya Johnson – Body, Heart and Mind in Business Research Group, University of Sydney Business School; ACC Scholars

The stories we tell are the narrative that shapes our thinking and our way of engaging in the world.

They shape who we are, who we want to be and how others see us.

We remember the stories of how our country came to be – and how that makes us feel.

This is our chance to change that story, to feel more connected to our past and feel proud and optimistic about our future.

Joanna Giannes - Principal HEAL

What is a story without a voice?

What are we listening to if there is no vibration...no sound?

Even in the depths of complete silence, the sound of our heartbeat, our breath, our pneuma is present.

Let us be the generation that guards the sacred voices of our First Nation people, the heartbeat that has been central to the dreaming.

Let us midwife a new story, a larger narrative where at the arc - Compassion and Wisdom emerge for the healing of our country.





Dr Petrina Barson – Director, Centre for A Compassionate Society

To listen deeply to another person's story requires an openness of heart and a quiet mind.

You have to set aside resentments and preconceptions and be prepared to be touched by someone else's truth.

'White' Australia has struggled to listen deeply to aboriginal narratives of frontier violence, of dispossession and racism, preferring to tell ourselves simpler and more comfortable stories.

We have also ignored the wisdom of indigenous knowledge of this land that could still bring us back from the brink of ecological collapse.

By granting First Nations peoples the right to have a say on matters that affect them, the Voice to Parliament could begin to weave a new story.

I look forward to a time when our children are proud to tell the story of 2023 as the year when Australia began to heal the past, to grow into a confident and truthful identity as a nation that listens deeply.

DREAMING MIND

Connecting abstract and tangible knowledge using metaphors

Dreaming Mind is all about connecting abstract and tangible knowledge using metaphors in "...images, dance, song, language, culture, objects, ritual, gestures and more. Feedback loops between the worlds must be completed with practical actions".



Dr Ursula Stephens, CEO, Catholic Services Australia; Inaugural Ambassador to the ACC

Our worldviews are reflected in the rituals and structures we create to make sense of the world.

The Voice provides an opportunity to engage and connect with indigenous Australians to share in their dreaming - their worldview - and to develop a shared relationship for understanding and interpreting our world together.

The Voice brings a new opportunity to all Australians to engage with the rich culture of Indigenous Australians and foster a greater understanding of how a Dreaming Mind animates our social relationships, economic activities, religious activities and ceremonies, and celebrations.



Rev Dr Sarah Bachelard - Spiritual Director, Benedictus

Our nation has received the great gift of a Statement from the Heart of the first peoples of this land.

This is a wisdom text. Born of heartbreak – of long and continuing suffering yet marked by an extraordinary generosity of spirit open to the possibility that the wounds of our history might be reconciled for the good of all – the Statement from the Heart can only truly be heard and enacted when those to whom it is addressed make contact with and listen from their own heart.

The call for a First Nations Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution is thus not just another policy proposal, to be debated at the level of strategy and argument.

As well as a condition of lasting justice for Australia's first peoples, it's an invitation to our nation as a whole to grow in wisdom's way.



**Terry Ayling – ACC Member;
Compassionate Cities Lead,
Australian Compassion Council;
Facilitator, Compassionate Gold
Coast**

Like an alarm, the referendum can awaken our dreaming of a 'continent for compassion'. With the morning song of 'Yes' it will recognise the hurts, resolve to heal, and reach to revive our nation's broken heart.

ANCESTOR MIND

*Deep engagement, connecting
with a timeless state of mind
or 'alpha wave state'*

Ancestor Mind is all about deep engagement, connecting with a timeless state of mind or 'alpha wave state', an optimal neural state for learning. It is characterised by complete concentration, engagement and losing track of linear time. Ancestor mind can involve immersive visualisation and extra-cognitive learning such as revealed knowledge in dreams and inherited knowledge in cellular memory.



Dr Robert Styles - Director of Learning and Engagement, ProSocial World

For us to transcend the boundaries that divide us, to reweave our cultural fabric, to truly love and act in the service of our common ground of being, to assume our attendant responsibility as custodians of dear planet earth.

We ought to do more than listen, we ought to embody the wisdom inherent in the 60,000-year-old history of relationship gifted to us by our indigenous brothers and sisters.

Andrea Putting – Founder, Coffee and Chocolate Breaks



The lives of everyone are interwoven. We live on this land as visitors.

We have come from every country of the world to create a new culture where we can live together as one.

Let us remember those who have a history deeply connected to this land.

They have nurtured it for thousands of years.

Their spirit can be felt in every grain of dirt, every tree, every mountain, and every watercourse - if we listen.

They know this place.

They live and breathe its essence.

This place we call home.

The Voice provides us with an opportunity to recognise this history. The ancient culture of this nation is made up of hundreds of different mobs and countries that have come to work together as one.

Now we all have the opportunity to stand together as one.



Madonna Quixley – Co-founder Let's Talk Peace Ballarat; National Coordinator ACC Peace Sector

The Voice offers all Australians opportunities to learn from representatives of Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers whose ancestors preserved governance systems used to care for Country and each other from time immemorial.

The Voice formally preserves a pathway for all Australians to access ancestral wisdom connected with Country and blend it with the ancestral heritage of those who now call Australia home.

Let's grasp this inestimable opportunity with both hands - in friendship, respect, and deep affection.



PATTERN MIND

*Seeing entire systems and
the trends and patterns in them*

Pattern Mind is about “seeing entire systems and the trends and patterns in them, using these to make accurate predictions and find solutions to complex problems. It is truly holistic, contextual reasoning.



Professor Peter Yu - Vice President First Nations Portfolio -Australian National University

The proposed constitutionally enshrined Voice is a modest change to Australia's Constitution.

Yet its impact is potentially transformational for our nation. The power of its symbolism is beyond calculated measure and description.

An emphatic yes vote in the coming Referendum will be an expression of recognition on the part of Settler Australia that First Peoples are valued with special status as traditional owners in Australian nationhood.

That in itself is a fundamental basis for Reconciliation, but in practical terms the Voice as a representative body of First Peoples, can provide the systemic and developmental framework to address the legacies of colonialism that continue to torment and diminish First Nations people in Australia.

Importantly the Voice is a fundamental first step to implementing the other two dimensions of the Uluru Statement of the Heart, Treaty and Truth Telling.



Lyn Stephens - Former Director Centre for Dialogue; Founding member Women's Climate Congress

As settler people we are born into interrelating systems of law, economics, politics and culture that we rarely question.

It is time to look at and beyond the dominance of these systems and to open ourselves to the truth and ongoing impact of our history.

This is potentially enlivening for our nation, but also challenging for many of us, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Enshrining the Voice in the Australian constitution is an opportunity to decolonise the thinking and practices of all Australians by providing a space where Indigenous experience, knowledge and wisdom can be heard, respected, and included as we walk together to create a new national story for our country.

Peter Yuile - Executive Coach & Mentor; Former senior public servant; Member, Mindfulness Initiative-Australian Expert Group



The Uluru Statement from the Heart can be seen as an invitation from one system to another.

We are one country with various systems operating including an indigenous system and culture and a western system and culture.

Systems offer us scaffolding to engage with each other and the world around us.

They can adapt, change, and evolve.

If there is a spirit of openness and not fear, people and systems can enrich each other.

Miriam Rose Ungunmeer, writing about dadirri (inner deep listening and quiet still awareness) has said "We have learned to speak the white man's language.

We have listened to what he had to say.

This learning and listening should go both ways...our culture is different.

We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us; to be still and listen to us." With the same graciousness, as evident in the Uluru statement, let us welcome the Voice and the invitation to listen deeply to each other.



Dr Sue Sumskis, Member, Australian Compassion Council

Pattern mind encourages us to recognise that there is no separation between molecules, formations, environment, and planet.

Under the umbrella of complex problems, we are all connected.

All problems are connected, all people are connected, and the Earth is connected to all people and problems.

The pathways to clarity, predictions and solutions already exist within the patterns.

It is us, who are unable to see, until we open our ears, eyes, hearts, and minds to the possibilities within the patterns.

About the Participants



The participants in this project have chosen to make a difference to our journey of humanity. It is hoped that these poetic statements can inspire others to a generosity of spirit that says 'yes' to a voice for Australia's first peoples.

NOTE: These statements come from the individuals who made them – they are not speaking on behalf of the organisations with whom they are associated.

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<https://thegoannaband.com/>

Solid Rock: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8paRCDDhups>

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CHARTER FOR
COMPASSION

Global Charter For Compassion

The global Charter for Compassion is a document and worldwide movement designed to restore not only compassionate thinking but, more importantly, compassionate action, to the center of our lives. The Charter for Compassion provides an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide. Its mission is to bring to life the principles articulated in the Charter for Compassion through practical action in a myriad of sectors. The Charter for Compassion's mission is to promote and cultivate the principle of compassion and a compassionate way of life, for compassion to characterize all human societies and relationships.

www.charterforcompassion.org



CHARTER FOR
COMPASSION
AUSTRALIA

Australian Compassion Council

The Charter for Compassion, Australia is governed by the Australian Compassion Council (ACC). This Council takes overall responsibility for setting strategic directions in how Australia can evolve as a continent for compassion. Applying compassion to a continent allows for a move away from political limitations to encompass Australia as a landmass. In this way, compassion can cut across many of the racial, economic, social, and political factors that can divide Australians. The Australian Compassion Council imagines our own stories of compassion across the Australian continent; develops resources and projects; and links these stories and projects for national and global collaboration and impact.

The ACC was established in 2017 to oversee the work of the Charter in Australia and in 2023 members of the ACC comprise:

- Dr Lynne Reeder – VIC
- Terry Ayling – QLD
- Dr Mark Crosweller – ACT
- Dr Debbie Ling – VIC
- Gwen Pinnington – TAS
- Dr Sue Sumskis – NSW
- Michael Bartura – VIC

www.charterforcompassion.com.au



COMPASSIONATE
BALLARAT

Compassionate Ballarat

CB Steering group formed to develop and implement a strategic approach to develop Ballarat as a Compassionate City and to contribute to both the Australian and global Charter initiatives. It meets six times a year to review issues, initiatives, and plan projects. The Compassionate Ballarat Steering Group comprises:

- Ben Kelly, (Chair)
- Dr Lynne Reeder
- Dr Mary Hollick
- Annie De Jong
- Sam Luxemburg
- Dr Kerrie Shiell

www.compassionateballarat.com.au





CHARTER FOR
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AUSTRALIA