

FAQ sheet

Voice Referendum – 14 October 2023

What is this referendum about?

It's about whether we should change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing a body called the:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Why is it happening?

- Australia has been talking about recognising First Nations Peoples in the constitution for more than a decade.
- In 2017, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country came together, and considered all the options for recognition. They wrote the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart', calling for a Voice for First Nations Peoples to be added to the Constitution.
- In 2022, the Australian Government agreed to hold a referendum to let Australians decide whether to establish the Voice in the Constitution.

What is the Constitution?

The Constitution is a national rule book that tells people how the country works.

The Constitution tells everyone:

- what the laws are
- how the government works
- what people in the government can do.

When you change the Constitution, the changes last a long time.

How will the Voice work?

- The Voice will give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters affecting the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The intention is for the Voice to work alongside existing groups and organisations.
- It would be accountable and transparent.

What type of things will the Voice provide advice on?

- How Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in Australia
- How the laws affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- How the government can help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Who would be in the Voice?

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.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want the Voice to include:

- lots of different people who come from different places around Australia
- both men and women
- young and old people
- all the people in the Voice must be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

When will the Voice referendum be held?

Saturday 14 October 2023

Do I have to vote in the referendum?

Voting is compulsory for all eligible Australian citizens aged 18 years and over.

What will the referendum ask?

The referendum will ask if we should create the Voice. You can vote 'Yes' or 'No' to the Voice.

What happens after we vote?

If most people vote Yes, new rules will be added to the Constitution. This means the government would need to create the Voice.

It also means we would need to give people in the Voice a chance to speak on important issues.

What happens if I do not vote?

If you do not vote and don't have a valid and sufficient reason, you may be fined. The AEC will write to you at the address listed on the electoral roll and ask you to provide a reason why you did not vote.

What are my voting options?

You can vote at any polling place on voting day. Polling places are usually located at local schools, churches and community halls, or public buildings. The locations of these polling places will be available on the AEC website. Postal voting, early voting and mobile polling will also be available for the referendum.

More detail about voting services will be made available in the lead-up to the referendum.

Can I vote electronically?

No. The AEC conducts referendums in accordance with the Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984. The introduction of Electronic voting would require legislative change, which is a matter for Parliament.

Telephone voting is available those who are blind or low vision, and for those living in Antarctica.

For further information on voting in the referendum, visit:

<https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/aec/faqs.html>

I am not sure how I will vote – where can I find more information?

The Voice referendum has sparked robust debate across the country, so there's a lot of disinformation on both sides of the argument.

We recommend you only trust credible information sources such as:

[The Australian Electoral Commission \(AEC\)](#) that provides a register listing prominent pieces of disinformation the AEC has discovered regarding the announced referendum on the Voice to Parliament. It also provides details of actions the AEC has taken in response. Visit the disinformation register here:

<https://www.aec.gov.au/media/disinformation-register-ref.htm>

[The Australian Government website](#) that contains information and resources including videos, booklets and fact sheets with up to date information on the Voice and the referendum. <https://voice.gov.au/>

[The Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) that can be found here;

<https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>

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