

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament



The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia is committed to working together to uphold the dignity and sacredness of every human person, especially those people whose basic human rights have been denied if not totally rejected; including those of our own Indigenous people who have suffered tremendous upheavals and alienation since white settlement.

Having been subjected to domination and exploitation, inequity and discrimination, dispossession and indifference, the 'Voice' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continues to be marginalised in the political process. Together with this, they have not been appropriately acknowledged as the first custodians of Australia, who inhabited this land for many thousands of years before Australia's more recent history.

The basis of our position is found in the Christian teaching about the dignity of the human person created in the image and according to the likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:26) which declares unequivocally that all human beings—irrespective of colour, race, or religion—are creatures of God and therefore of inestimable worth.

For this reason, it is incumbent upon all of us to walk together, and in a spirit of reconciliation and healing, advance forward towards a movement which will see First Nation's people be able to hope for a better future.

This is precisely what is being asked of all Australian people to consider in the 'Statement from the Heart': "proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families... This is the torment of our powerlessness. We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people to take a rightful place in our own country."

Together with other Christian Churches we are asking our faithful to engage seriously with the referendum question—which Australian citizens will be asked to vote upon on 14 October 2023—about constitutional recognition and a voice to Parliament.

It is our heartfelt prayer to our loving God that all human beings may enjoy to the fullest measure the most precious gift of the imprint of God in them and that our commitment for a more humane co-existence may be enhanced so as to reflect all the more authentically our innate solidarity with all humanity.

goarch.org <https://vema.com.au/greek-orthodox-archdiocese-of-australia-regarding-the-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-voice-to-parliament/>