

Thursday, 26 May 2022

## 47th Parliament must move swiftly toward referendum on Voice to Parliament

Five years since the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Law Council of Australia is urging members of the 47th Parliament to come together and swiftly progress a successful referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament.

The Law Council has long supported enshrining the Voice in the Constitution in order to ensure a First Nations representative body that is permanent and respected, through which meaningful dialogue can be conducted with Parliament.

"It was heartening to hear Prime Minister-elect Anthony Albanese give prominence to the Uluru Statement from the Heart in his victory speech at the weekend. We now need his government and the Parliament to deliver," said Law Council of Australia President Mr Tass Liveris.

"It has now been five years since the Uluru Statement – already far too long to wait for action. There is no reason for delay now. We need a referendum as soon as possible so that First Nations peoples – who have shown considerable strength, resilience, and patience – can have certainty that the Voice will be implemented and enduring.

"The Law Council notes the new Government's commitment to progress a referendum on the Voice as a matter of priority in its first term. However, we also urge all members of the 47th Parliament to come together and smooth the path to a successful referendum on this issue through bipartisan support.

"The Law Council will stand side by side with First Nations peoples to advocate for these changes to our Constitution when a referendum is held."

Mr Liveris noted that any remaining concerns the Voice would be a 'Third Chamber' were misplaced.

"A Voice to Parliament, enshrined in the constitution, would not be a Third Chamber of Parliament," Mr Liveris said.

"It would provide First Nations peoples the opportunity to inform the Parliament on the laws and issues that affect them and their communities, their rights and aspirations. This is the basic entitlement of all people to have control over their destiny and to be treated respectfully.

"A large part of the reason Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs have historically faltered is because elected leaders have not listened to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A First Nations Voice to Parliament, as a manifestation of the right to self-determination that all people should possess and enjoy, would be a significant step toward rectifying this problem."

---

Contact: Anil Lambert, P. 0416 426 722, E. [anil@hortonadvisory.com.au](mailto:anil@hortonadvisory.com.au)

*The Law Council of Australia is the national voice of the legal profession, promoting justice and the rule of law.*