

# Polling - Uluru Statement

## Introduction

May 2018 marks the one year anniversary of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a declaration by the 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention.<sup>1</sup> The Convention was convened by the Referendum Council, which was jointly appointed by the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader in December 2015.

The Uluru Statement asserts the initial and ongoing sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and calls for “substantive constitutional change and structural reform” to produce a “fuller expression of nationhood”.

The Statement recommends two broad reform objectives: the First Nations Voice and the Makarrata Commission.

The First Nations Voice would be a representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Although the Voice could take a number of forms, it has been interpreted in the context of ongoing proposals for an Indigenous advisory body enshrined in the Constitution.<sup>2</sup>

The Makarrata Commission is proposed to supervise (a) “agreement-making between governments and First Nations” and (b) “truth-telling about our history”. *Makarrata* is a Yolngu word for coming together after a struggle, and is often used in the same context as “treaty”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> First Nations National Constitutional Convention (2017) *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, [https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/sites/default/files/2017-05/Uluru\\_Statement\\_From\\_The\\_Heart\\_0.PDF](https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/sites/default/files/2017-05/Uluru_Statement_From_The_Heart_0.PDF)

<sup>2</sup> Australian Parliamentary Library (2017) *Uluru Statement: A quick guide*, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick\\_Guides/UluruStatement](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/UluruStatement)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Parliamentary Library (2017) *Uluru Statement: A quick guide*, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick\\_Guides/UluruStatement](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/UluruStatement)

## Key Results

In December 2017, The Australia Institute surveyed 1,417 Australians about three recommendations in the Uluru Statement, which was presented to the Australian government after the 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention.

Respondents were asked if they supported a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution, as recommended by the Constitutional Convention, which would take the form of an Indigenous representative body that would provide advice on Indigenous issues to legislators.

- More respondents (46%) supported enshrining a First Nations Voice in the Constitution than opposed (29%; don't know/Not sure 24%)
  - A majority of Labor (50%) and Greens (75%) voters supported the recommendation, more Coalition and Independent voters supported the recommendation (both 41%) than opposed.
  - Women (50%) were more likely to support the recommendation than men (43%)

In the Uluru Statement, responsibility for supervising truth-telling and agreement-making are assigned to the same body, a Makarrata Commission. Our questions split the two aspects of the Makarrata Commission into the “treaty” component and the “truth-telling” component to gauge public opinion on each.

Respondents were asked if they supported a Commission for truth-telling about the history of the treatment and experience of First Nations people in Australia under European settlement.

- More than half (55%) of respondents supported a Commission for truth telling including 21% who strongly support the recommendation
  - In total, more than twice as many respondents supported the recommendation (55%) as opposed it (25%)
  - A majority of Coalition (50%), Labor (60%) and Greens (78%) voters all supported the recommendation. More than half of One Nation voters were opposed (51%; 28% support)
  - Those from VIC (58%), SA (58%), NSW (57%) and QLD (51%) were more likely to support a Commission than WA (47%)

Respondents were asked if they supported starting a nation-wide process of agreement or treaty making between Australian governments and First Nations.

- Half (51%) of respondents supported starting a nation-wide process of agreement of treaty-making between Australian government and First Nations, a quarter opposed it (26%)
  - Those who vote Greens were most likely to support (72%), followed by Labor (56%), more Coalition voters support the proposal (48%; oppose 33%), while half of One Nation voters oppose (50%; support 27%)

While there is clear support for both of the aspects of the proposed Makarrata Commission (truth-telling and treaty-making), between 20-25% of respondents were unsure, meaning there is still a significant number of people who have yet to make up their minds.

## Method

The Australia Institute conducted a national survey of 1417 people between 5th and 7th of December 2017 online through Research Now with nationally representative samples by gender, age and state and territory.

Results are shown only for larger states. Income crosstabs show household income.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the lower house. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs, but results are also shown separately for undecideds. "LNP" includes separate responses for Liberal and National. "Other" includes Nick Xenophon Team and Independent/Other.

## Detailed results

Note: The document that resulted from the 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention is the Uluru Statement. Our survey questions mistakenly named it the Uluru Declaration, but this is unlikely to affect the results.

***Q15: At the 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention, 250 Indigenous leaders presented the Australian government with the Uluru Declaration. It recommended “establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution”. This would be a new Indigenous representative body sitting outside of Parliament and provide advice on Indigenous issues to legislators in Parliament.***

***Should a new First Nations Voice be enshrined in the Constitution?***

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
Yes	46%	43%	50%	50%	51%	41%	36%	45%
No	29%	36%	22%	28%	24%	33%	38%	26%
Don't know / not sure	24%	21%	28%	22%	25%	26%	26%	30%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
Yes	46%	41%	50%	75%	23%	41%	32%
No	29%	35%	26%	10%	48%	28%	24%
Don't know / not sure	24%	24%	24%	15%	29%	31%	44%

**Q16: The Uluru Declaration recommended a Commission for truth-telling about the history of the treatment and experience of First Nations people in Australia under European settlement.**

**Do you support or oppose this proposal?**

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
<b>Total support</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Strongly support	21%	20%	22%	23%	23%	16%	16%	20%
Support	34%	33%	36%	34%	35%	35%	31%	39%
Oppose	15%	16%	14%	15%	11%	19%	22%	13%
Strongly oppose	10%	14%	7%	9%	11%	12%	13%	6%
Don't know / not sure	19%	17%	22%	19%	21%	18%	19%	23%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
<b>Total support</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Strongly support	21%	16%	21%	42%	11%	20%	13%
Support	34%	34%	39%	35%	17%	36%	33%
Oppose	15%	18%	16%	5%	24%	9%	9%
Strongly oppose	10%	13%	6%	4%	28%	7%	4%
Don't know / not sure	19%	18%	18%	13%	21%	28%	41%

**Q17: The Uluru Declaration recommended starting a nation-wide process of agreement or treaty making between Australian governments and First Nations. Such processes are underway in some states and one such agreement is in place.**

**Do you support or oppose starting a nation-wide process of agreement or treaty making between Australian governments and First Nations?**

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
<b>Total support</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Strongly support	17%	16%	18%	20%	17%	12%	13%	17%
Support	34%	33%	36%	36%	34%	34%	32%	35%
Oppose	15%	17%	13%	14%	11%	19%	19%	15%
Strongly oppose	12%	16%	7%	11%	13%	12%	13%	9%
Don't know / not sure	22%	18%	27%	20%	25%	24%	24%	25%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
<b>Total support</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Strongly support	17%	13%	18%	37%	6%	15%	10%
Support	34%	35%	38%	36%	21%	30%	32%
Oppose	15%	19%	14%	6%	21%	13%	11%
Strongly oppose	12%	15%	8%	3%	29%	9%	3%
Don't know / not sure	22%	19%	22%	19%	23%	33%	43%