

*Health in the Lord and the Blessing of the Holy Spirit..[Rule of Saint Albert]*

**JPIC 102 – FEBRUARY 2021**

Saudavel iha Maromak no grasa Spirtu Santo Nian . [Regula Sto Alberto]



*The Uluru Statement from the Heart* is an invitation to us, the Australian people. **To what are we being invited? And how shall we respond?**

The Uluru Statement begins:

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

### THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART – *Do we have the Heart to Listen?*

To help us reflect on this important issue Margaret Day, a parishioner and social justice advocate for one of our Catholic parishes on the outer edge of Sydney offers us a summary of the significant document.



PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT BY VISITING AND JOINING:

*From the Heart*

<https://fromtheheart.com.au/>

The words ‘from the heart’ speak loudly. This is a deep place to speak from; this is where we hear the truth. It also signals that this is an aspirational statement because it is our heart that holds and grows our hope for a better future.

The Statement relates an old story, over 200 years old whose time has now come.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

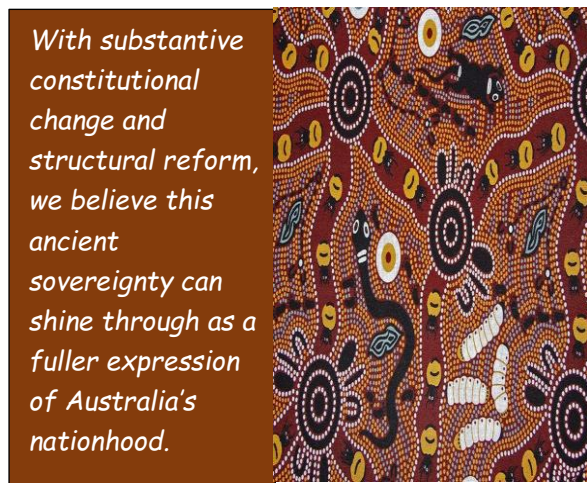
*This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty.*

It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

A unanimous theme throughout all the consultations preceding the Uluru Statement is that First Nations’ sovereignty has never been ceded. Sovereignty is not an abstract political concept for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – it is fundamental. They hold an unshakeable spiritual connection to their past, present and future; it is their law and way of life. It is beyond their imagining that this link would or could be broken.

But as the Statement makes clear this ancestral tie to the land, this sovereignty, co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. It is the fundamental reckoning of these two different notions of sovereignty that has evaded us since 1788 and continues to evade us today.

Can we deal with this reckoning? Or will we leave it to future generations? The Uluru Statement holds out great hope for our nation.



Galarrwuy Yunupingu explains:

*"You will hear us singing tonight and we will be singing to our ancestors, who are **your** ancestors too. We will be singing to remind them that we are here, maintaining our connection to them, for their appreciation. This not just for us, but for **all of us**.*

*Because our sovereignty is not a hard and brutal sovereignty, it does not take from others – it **does not exclude or steal**. Our sovereignty is welcoming."* (4 August, 2018, Garma)

The Statement continues:

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is *the torment of our powerlessness*.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a *rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

The history of Indigenous policy-making is marked more by failure than success. The repeated call

for greater self-determination has been ignored at a huge economic and human cost.

In 2008, the Closing the Gap Framework was established to address Indigenous Disadvantage. Twelve (12) closing the Gap Reports have been released since then – NOT one has ever met more than three (3) of the seven (7) targets.

Structural reform is needed to give First Nations greater say and authority over the decisions that impact them. Structural reform means making real changes to the way decisions are made and by whom. **"We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution."**

First Nations comprise 3 per cent of the Australian population, making it difficult for First Nations' voices to be heard. First Nations have little say over the laws that impact them and their rights.

This is the only proposal in the Statement that requires a Constitutional change and hence the consent of the Australian people in a referendum.

This is NOT a call for a third chamber of Parliament. It is a call for an advisory body to the Parliament. This body would be collective and representative in nature. It would not have the right of veto.

Our First Nations People have the ingredients to improve outcomes for their children and future generations – they do not have the political elite to bring these ingredients to the floor of the parliament.

A Voice to Parliament would afford them the right to have their proposals heard in public, not behind closed doors.

The Voice must be written into our Constitution so that its representative body cannot be arbitrarily disbanded as has happened in the past, and to provide continuity and certainty across our changing Federal and State Parliaments.

**Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.**

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history

The Yolngu word, Makarrata, is an alternative name for the treaty process in this country. It describes the complex process of conflict resolution, peacemaking and justice.

Part of this peace-making process is truth telling. Deep reconciliation is not possible without

knowing and naming the truth of our shared history. It is NOT about apportioning blame or generating guilt.

The statement concludes with an invitation. This is our moment to decide what our legacy will be.

**In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.**

**AN ABORIGINAL PRAYER FOR TRUTH AND HOPE by Brooke Prentis, Common Grace**

*May the God of all wonder who set the stars in the sky,  
bless you with relentless unsettledness – that drives you to seek truth.  
May the God of all justice who gave motion to the rivers,  
bless you with righteous anger – that drives you to seek freedom for all.  
May the God of all love who placed laughter in the kookaburra,  
bless you with the friendship –  
that looks like the love where one lays down their life for another.  
May the God of all comfort who determined the height of the mountains,  
Bless you with tears from shared pain and mourning – that shows you hope.  
Now with wonder, righteous anger, sacrifice, and lament –  
Go in truth, justice, love and hope – to Change The Heart of Australia*

**THREE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO RAISE YOUR OWN AWARENESS AND EMBRACE OUR FIRST NATION'S PEOPLE**



Together for the **common good**,  
finding **common ground** and sharing  
in **common grace**.

You are invited by one of our most senior Aboriginal Christian Leaders, Auntie Jean Phillips, to gather together to pray in unison to #ChangeTheHeart on the evening before January 26.

Tune in to this unique, national service led by Aboriginal Christian Leaders simulcast on tv, online, and radio on the evening of **Monday, 25 January 2021**.

You can attend this service via Zoom in the comfort of your home. Here is the link to register directly with Common Grace for this service: <https://www.commongrace.org.au/tunein>

<b>ACT, Vic, NSW, Tas</b> <b>7.30 pm</b>	<b>QLD</b> <b>6.30 pm</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>WA</b> <b>4.30 pm</b>
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**2** Listen to this beautiful new version of our Australian Anthem and think about ways to promote it. <https://youtu.be/Gn4NeUE7zCk> This is followed by a rendition of this song by Judith Durham of Seekers fame.

**3** You may like to take time to read NATSICC's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council) 2019 media release by clicking on this link:

[AUSTRALIA DAY Embracing Change to bring Us Together](#)