



As for me, I'll be voting 'Yes'

By Archbishop Geoff Smith

On 27 May 2017 a gathering of 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders issued an invitation to the wider Australian community. The invitation is called The Uluru Statement from the Heart. You can read [the statement here](#).

The statement and the gathering which produced it was part of a long process of consultation and arises from a consistent call for many years for constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Included in the statement is a call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the constitution. The question of whether such a voice should be established will be the subject of a referendum later in the year.

I am particularly struck by the last sentence of the statement: 'We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future'.

I am sure all Australians want a better future for our nation. Part of that better future must be reconciliation with the first peoples of this country.

We may not think we have anything against them, but they have something against us-hence the statement and the calls it includes. Jesus as part of the sermon on the mount said, 'So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift'. (Matthew 5.23-24).

The task of reconciliation is a spiritual one and Christians are well placed to support it. As part of our following Jesus we seek reconciliation with others.

As part of following Jesus we seek reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Uluru Statement, finalised after a significant process of consultation sets out what is being sought on this journey.

The question of whether or not Constitutional change should be supported is a very important one and I encourage careful engagement with the statement. There are good resources available to help this including [material from our own Anglican Board of Mission-Australia](#).

I hope the referendum is passed because that will say to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, thank you for your invitation to walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

We gladly accept. Let's go!

The Most Reverend Geoff Smith is Archbishop of Adelaide and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia

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