



Understanding and Responding to the  
Referendum to alter the Constitution to  
recognise the First Peoples of Australia by  
establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Voice

Resources for use by Anglican Parishes,  
Schools and  
Organisations

Compiled by the Public Affairs Commission  
of the Anglican Church of Australia

# I want something which will help me right now!

- FAQs from the Diocese of Southern Queensland

FAQ – Southern Queensland

- FAQs from the Diocese of Melbourne and NATSIAC

FAQ – Red Shoes Walking

## What is the Statement from the Heart and how does it relate to the Referendum?

- Start where it all begins. Read the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' and explore what the Statement means and what it calls for.

[Home - Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)

- The Chair of NATSIAC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council) answers your questions.

[FAQ's On All Things Voice! - RedShoesWalking](#)

## How to have a conversation regarding First Nations Recognition

- Two resources for those who want to learn to engage with others to promote The Voice.

1. [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice - Queensland Community Alliance \(qldcommunityalliance.org/\)](#)

2. [Allies for Uluru \(antar.org.au\)](#)

## Resources for Clergy and Parishes

- The Anglican Diocese of South Queensland has produced a range of resources for parishes and their leaders to follow and mark the key points in this significant journey.

[Uluru Statement \(including Voice to Parliament referendum\) resources for clergy and lay leaders \(anglicanfocus.org.au\)](#)



## Theological Resources

- The Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) have produced with the Public Affairs Commission a comprehensive guide for study and reflection called 'A Voice in the Wilderness' . It is available free as a download or as an attractive book for purchase. A leaders Guide is also available.

[A Voice in the Wilderness - Anglican Board of Mission \(abmission.org\)](http://abmission.org)

- Rev Canon Assoc Prof Uncle Glenn Loughrey (Chair of NATSIAC) produces a regular theological reflection in the form of a blog at: [RedShoesWalking - A blog for people to explore the spiritual journey. BYO RedShoes.](http://RedShoesWalking)

## What are the Dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia doing?

- ABM have surveyed the Dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia and have compiled a collection of statements, pastoral letters, synod motions and activities representing the positions of the Australian Anglican church.

[The Voice Referendum - Anglican Board of Mission \(abmission.org\)](http://abmission.org)

## Bible Studies

- 3 Bible studies for use in small groups or classrooms follow this summary



# Recognition Voice Makarrata

3 Bible Studies for use in small groups to explore the key themes involved in the Referendum to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

Here are 3 Bible Studies for use in small groups to explore the key themes involved in the Referendum to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

3 key topics – Recognition, Voice, Makarrata

Each study begins with a section of the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart'. A member of the small group may like to read this aloud for the whole.

The full statement can be found at [Uluru Statement From The Heart](#)

The studies follow a common format: Think, Read, Discuss, Ponder.

**Think:** These short statements and questions aim to set the scene for the passages and prepare the participants hearts and minds for the theme. Avoid spending all of your available time on these, but give enough space to open up the topic.

**Read:** A key passage from Scripture which touches on a Christian response to each theme is read. Study groups may like to take turns in reading the passage aloud or read it a few times pausing between each recitation to allow the text to saturate your mind. Instructions for this can be found at [Lectio Divina \(Praying with the Sacred Scriptures\) – Jamberoo Abbey](#).

**Discuss:** The next questions seek to focus in on the text of scripture which has been read. Some of the questions are to get at the meaning of the passage, others give opportunity to focus in on the various people we meet in each text.

**Ponder:** Having spent time reading God's word and drawing out some themes which touch on a Christian's response to what is being asked in the referendum the final part of the study poses questions to ponder. This is the pivot from the text of God's word to how its way of life may be enacted as we each approach the opportunity to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Remember to pray! You could use these two prayers from *A Prayer Book for Australia*.

God of wisdom,  
grant, we pray, that the words we have  
heard today  
    may be grafted in our hearts  
so that they may bring forth in us the fruit  
of good works  
    to the honour and praise of your  
name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.  
(APBA, p216)

Prayers are taken from *A Prayer Book for Australia*  
(APBA) © 1995, The Anglican Church of Australia  
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Lord God, bring us together as one,  
    reconciled with you and reconciled with each  
other.  
You made us in your likeness,  
    you gave us your Son, Jesus Christ.  
He has given us forgiveness from sin.  
Lord God, bring us together as one,  
    different in culture, but given new life in Jesus  
Christ,  
    together as your body, your Church, your people.  
Lord God, bring us together as one,  
    reconciled, healed, forgiven,  
    sharing you with others as you have called us to  
do.  
In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one. Amen.  
(APBA, p203)



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

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?'

# Recognition

## Think

Being recognised is a great gift. It speaks to our inherent value. When we are recognised others say, 'you matter, you are valuable'.

Being ignored causes pain. To be ignored is to be treated as if we did not exist. This is sad if it is careless, if it is deliberate it causes deep wounds. It is almost as if we are un-recognised or painted out of the picture.

When have you enjoyed recognition? What has it been like to be ignored or un-recognised? How has this felt if you were ignored by a new-comer?

## Read

Luke 10:25-37

## Discuss

What was wrong with the response of the Priest and the Levite?

What was right in the response of the Samaritan?

Why do you think the lawyer asked Jesus his question?

Why do you think he wanted clarification on who his neighbour was?

According to Jesus who is our neighbour?

How are we likely to recognise them?

What would my response to a neighbour look like?

## Ponder

Where am I likely to un-recognise someone?

Why is this so?

Where is this seen through our society?

What makes for a Samaritan's response?

How do you think the Samaritan would respond to the call in the first part of the 'Statement from the Heart' copied above?





'With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.'

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.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.'

# Voice

## Think

Recognising a person is the first step in valuing them and their unique experience.

Can you think of a time when you have discovered there is something more to a person and their life than you first thought?

What was it you found out?

How did you discover this new information?

## Read

John 9

## Discuss

This passage has much to say about Jesus, today we will focus on the man who recognised Jesus and how he was treated.

What did the disciples think the man's 'problem' was? Was that so?

Why do you think they were mistaken?

What was Jesus' response to the man?

How did the Pharisees treat the man after he was healed? How did his parents?

How did the man 'turn the tables' on the Pharisees? Were they open to learning something new?

How did the Pharisees and the man differ in their response to Jesus?

## Ponder

Where are our fixed views and blind hearts?

When do we treat people the way the Pharisees treated the man?

What practises help us to listening well to the experience of others and respond with open hearts?





'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.

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.'

# Makarrata

## Think

Power and treasure go hand in hand. The things we value are the things we tend to use what power we have to protect.

How do I use my strength (physical, intellectual or positional) to get or hold onto those things I value?

Where am I aware of this...where am I blind?

What have I gained simply by living in a nation built on the false idea that it was there for the taking?

## Read

Philippians 2:1-8

## Discuss



## Read

Matthew 6:19-24

## Discuss

What attitude does Jesus have?

Why do you think that Paul needed to remind the Philippians of this?

How is Jesus' attitude shown in practical terms?

Where is Jesus' own security found?

## Ponder

How much energy do I spend storing up (or hedging round) treasure?

How anxious am I to maintain this protection or hedge?

If I did an audit of my effort in life where would most of my energy be spent? What sort of attitude would it show?

What would I lose in 'coming to terms' with our relationships with First Nations and our history?  
What would I gain?

A section of 'The Elephant on Country' by Glenn Loughrey © Used with permission

