

Strategy	Why	Other Supporters; Other references in SVDP submissions
The Society supports the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart	<p>From the Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Uluru Statement from the Heart</a></li> </ul>
The Society supports the From the Heart campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Voice to Parliament provides the foundation for better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First Nations people have the best understanding of the challenges facing their families and communities. They know the strengths of their communities and what can be achieved when they are involved in designing programs and services.</li> <li>○ A Voice to Parliament will empower First Nations people, enabling them to take ownership and responsibility for the challenges they face, and to work constructively with governments from any political party to develop the laws and policies needed to Close the Gap.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The National Voice must be representative of the diverse population and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The National Voice must speak to the Commonwealth Parliament and Government on policy and legislation.</li> <li>○ The National Voice must not be a third chamber of Parliament</li> <li>○ The National Voice must not deliver programs or services</li> <li>○ The National Voice must act and operate independently from Parliament and Government</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Society supports the position that to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in decision-making, significant constitutional and structural changes are required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A National Voice “enshrined in the Constitution” optimises empowerment, self-determination and subsidiarity. Substantial reform to consultation processes and the delivery of programs is also needed.</li> <li>○ Any membership, representative or consultative body needs to reflect the fact that communities are unique and constantly changing; and the body needs to be agile enough to respond to localised issues but have the mandate to address national matters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ does not believe that legislative reform and constitutional enshrinement should be decoupled.</li> <li>○ calls on the Australian Government to honour its election commitment to hold a referendum once a model for the Voice has been settled</li> <li>○ supports the passage of enabling legislation for the Voice to be passed <u>after</u> a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament, and</li> <li>○ supports a membership model for the National Voice that ensures previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same chance of being selected as established leadership figures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">From the Heart Campaign</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SVDP Submission, Indigenous voice co-design report</a></li> </ul>
<p>Indigenous Voice Co-Design Final Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not supported by key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</li> <li>• not supported by Labor</li> <li>• model only requires an obligation for parliament and government to consult the National Voice where laws ‘overwhelmingly’ relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples</li> <li>• model disregards overwhelming call outlined in 88% of submissions received during the consultation process for the Voice not to be decoupled from Constitutional recognition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Voice Co-design Final Report was released 17 December 2021</li> <li>• Two levels of advisory bodies will be established to address legislation and policy</li> <li>• The model is proposed to be legislated as early as 2022 and sets out an obligation for the federal government and parliament to consult the National Council on proposed laws that “overwhelmingly” relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people. But only “an expectation of consultation” is required where proposed laws ‘significantly’ impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</li> <li>• The National Voice will “ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a direct say on any national laws, policies and programs affecting them”</li> <li>• The system will consist of local and regional voices and an overarching national advice that would provide advice to the federal parliament and government.</li> <li>• Thirty-five regions across the country will decide on the best process of selecting representatives, including the number of members in the local and regional bodies.</li> <li>• A small national body will form the National Voice: A 24-member model that will be determined by the respective regional bodies with two members from each state and territory, as well as the Torres Strait Islands.</li> <li>• There would also be a third member for remote representation for NSW, NT, QLD, WA and SA, and one member for mainland Torres Strait Islander people.</li> <li>• The final report cements the decision to legislate an Aboriginal advisory body rather than to enshrine in the constitution, as called for in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Indigenous Voice to Parliament plan revealed after years of lobbying, but Labor gives it a 'fail'. ABC News, 17 Dec 2021.</a></li> </ul>
The Society supports the principles outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The St Vincent de Paul Society does not claim any special authority and is not speaking on behalf of First Nations Peoples, but rather standing in respectful solidarity.</li> <li>• Better outcomes will only be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to “live in dignity, to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their self-determined development, in keeping with their own needs and aspirations” as set out in the United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AHRC UN Declaration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</a></li> </ul>

<p>The Society assists a significant number of people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant number of those we assist in any given year identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Assistance varies and depends on need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In New South Wales, more than one in five (almost 13,500 of the 60,000 people assisted) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the last financial year.</li> <li>○ In South Australia, 17 percent of people assisted identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.</li> <li>○ In the Canberra-Goulburn region, around 1,650 people assisted identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, bringing overall representation to 19 percent. This varied significantly by location, from around 13 percent in Goulburn to 24 percent in the Far South Coast of NSW.</li> <li>○ In Queensland, representation is around 18 percent each for the youth and child and family programs. For domestic violence services, overall representation was 24 percent, with a range of 10 percent to 32 percent by location. For alcohol and other drug services, overall representation was around 20 percent, with a range of 2 percent to 32 percent by location.</li> <li>○ In the Northern Territory, representation varied by the type of assistance provided. 90 percent of people who received emergency relief assistance identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. 95 percent of people presenting to Ozanam House homelessness services identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, while 46 percent of people receiving Commonwealth Home Support Services identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.</li> <li>○ In Western Australia, representation also varied depending on the type of assistance sought. Around 10 percent of people seeking emergency relief assistance identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander but this increased to one in four people accessing youth engagement hubs. Around 30 percent of people accessing specialist homelessness services (such as Tom Fisher House) and the Housing Plus program identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SVDP Submission, Indigenous voice co-design report</a></li> </ul>
<p>The Society supports the Change the Record campaign, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to at least 14 years of age</li> <li>• Developing a dedicated First Nations National Safety Plan, for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This campaign is led by an Aboriginal led justice coalition of legal, health and family violence experts. Their mission is to end the incarceration of, and family violence against, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The campaign has two overarching goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Goal one: close the gap in rates of imprisonment by 2040; and</li> <li>○ Goal two: cut the disproportionate rates of violence to at least close the gap by 2040 with priority strategies for women and children</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Solutions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Investing in communities, not prisons</li> <li>○ Listening to local communities because they have the answer</li> <li>○ Recognising the driving factors of imprisonment</li> <li>○ Focusing on safety</li> <li>○ Services, not sentences</li> <li>○ Community policing, not policing the community</li> <li>○ Smarter sentencing</li> <li>○ Eliminating unnecessary imprisonment</li> <li>○ Adopting community justice approaches (such as Koori and Murri courts, drug courts and healing circles)</li> <li>○ Keeping young people out of prison – they don't belong there</li> <li>○ Rehabilitation, not just punishment</li> <li>○ Reintegration not recidivism</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A campaign is also being run to <a href="#">increase the age of criminal responsibility</a> from 10 to at least 14 years of age. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The ACT government is leading the way. Over twenty ACT youth, family and legal service providers welcomed the release of the ACT Government-commissioned expert roadmap to Raise the Age. The roadmap, developed by Emeritus Professor Morag McArthur, Dr Aino Suomi and Belinda Kendall, shows the clear and achievable next steps required to ensure that no child under 14 years old is arrested, criminalised or imprisoned in the ACT. It is a roadmap to a safer and more supportive community for everyone</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The coalition calls on Prime Minister Morrison, Senator Payne and Senator Ruston to agree to support a dedicated First Nations National Safety Plan that is developed for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The coalition calls for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A truly self-determined plan that brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and First Nations frontline service providers to design their own strategies for their safety and the safety of their communities. This cannot be achieved by the government deciding who is at the table, and what reforms they want to consider.</li> <li>○ A dedicated plan to ensure that First Nations people are not an afterthought or an 'add on' to a 'mainstream' plan. That won't work. First Nations people need to design a plan that specifically works for them and their communities.</li> <li>○ A new approach that does not replicate the mistakes of the old National Action Plan that failed to reduce the violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Any plan that is a subset of a government driven process, under a government determined framework, will fall into the same traps.</li> <li>○ A national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering/Summit is essential to ensure that self-determined, community-led solutions are invested in and listened to. A national Gathering/Summit specifically for First Nations women will also support the sharing of knowledge, promotion of leadership, building of networks and relationships.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Change the record Vision</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">At a Meeting of Attorneys-General, they propose to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12, which is still too young. 14 years is the minimum (16/11).</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Federal Government has announced that a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children will be led by Marcia Langton, developed for Aboriginal women, by Aboriginal women (26/11)</a></li> </ul>
<p>The Society supports the National Agreement on Closing the Gap</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new National Agreement was launched in 2020 and was developed in partnership between the Australian Government and the coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Agreement on Closing the Gap</a> Close the gap campaign</li> </ul>

- The National agreement has [17 targets](#) in the areas of education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters and language
- Each party to the National Agreement has developed implementation plans with Aboriginal and Torres Strait partners
- The Australia Government released its Implementation Plan on [5 August 2021](#).
- An [implementation tracker](#) has been developed.
- Information on outcomes and target, implementation plans and accountability and reporting is accessible at: [Closing the Gap in Partnership](#)
- The Productivity Commission has published a [dashboard](#) to monitor progress towards the targets
- The [first annual Productivity Commission report](#) (July 2021) contains more recent data for 7 targets. Progress is mixed.
  - Three are on track, namely healthy birthweight babies, the enrolment of children in the year before full time schooling and youth detention rates
  - Four are not on track namely closing the life expectancy gap by 2031, adult imprisonment, out of home care for children and suicides.
- AHRC calls on governments to redouble their efforts to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inequality

- [AHRC Close the Gap: New report a wake-up call for all Australians \(July 2021\)](#)
- [Closing the Gap In Partnership](#)