

General Acknowledgement

The Project Team acknowledge and thank the Committee for Geelong, Leaders for Geelong program for the opportunities this timely project provided. An unreserved thank you also to our sponsor organisation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation for the support and commitment provided to the Project Team, particularly from Project Champion, Paul Davis, who was always gracious with his time and guidance. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the contribution of our project mentor, Kit Kline of Nature Based Therapy. To Stephanie Skinner, a First Nations woman and fellow participant in the Leaders for Geelong Program, we thank you for your generosity and time with time and imparting of knowledge and advice. We also acknowledge and thank those who completed the online survey and provided invaluable insight into local sentiment and opportunities. Finally, we would like to thank our families and colleagues for supporting us through the project.

The Leaders for Geelong Program is made possible through the support of our generous Program Partners and Scholarship Providers

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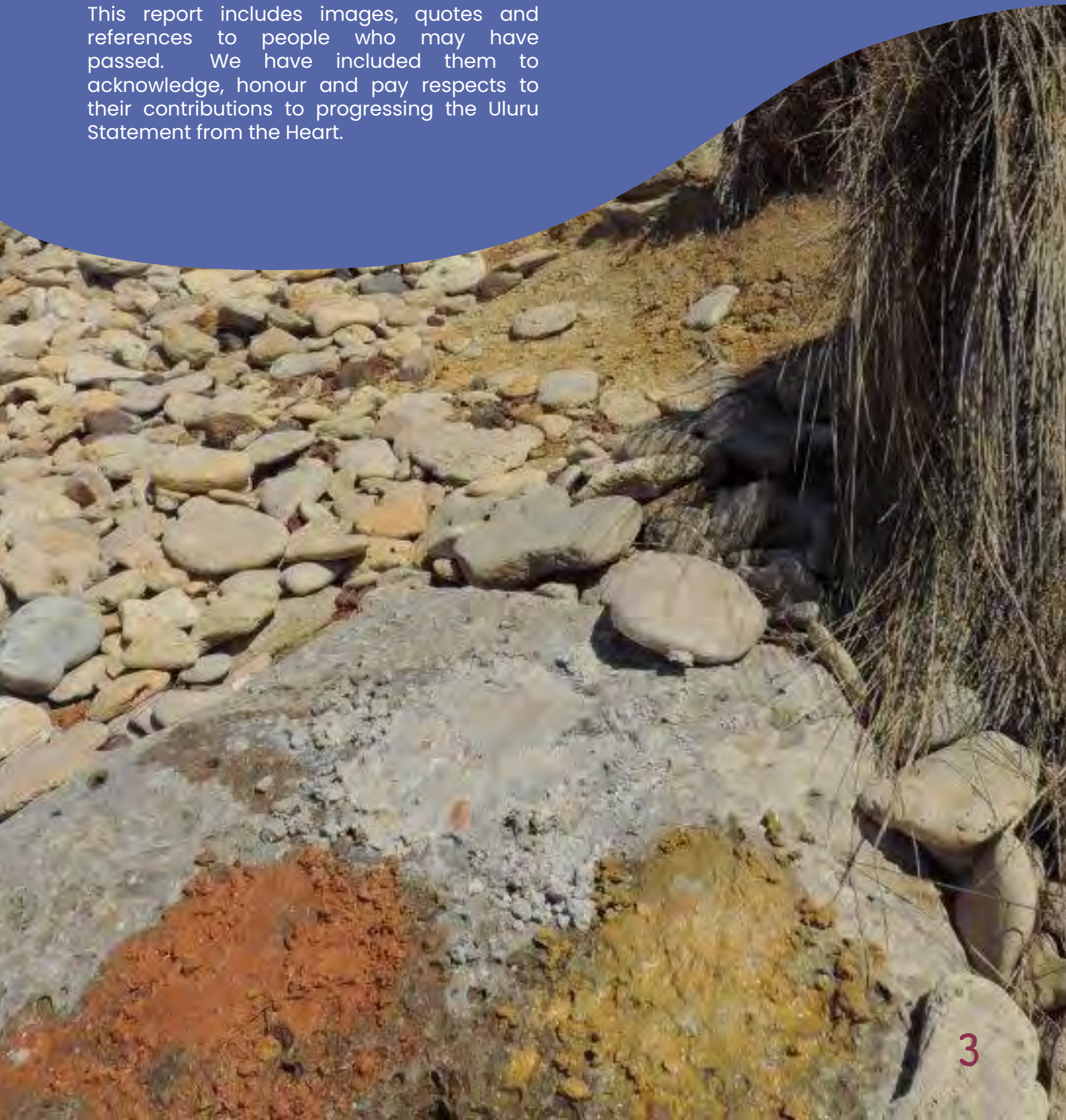


Acknowledgement of Country

The project team acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work.

We pay our respects to Wadawurrung Elders both past, present, and emerging and recognise their connection to the land, sea, waters and skies. We extend this to all First Nations people reading this report.

This report includes images, quotes and references to people who may have passed. We have included them to acknowledge, honour and pay respects to their contributions to progressing the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



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Report Terminology

Throughout this report, the term First Nations people will be used to refer to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Project Team

Antonio La Torre



Principal at RUBI Architects. Antonio is excited about developing a sustainable and community-oriented Geelong.

He is an advocate for raising the housing standards for a better future. "Building the swell" is important to Antonio as it marks a first step in rectifying an Australian history devoid of First Nations Voices.

Cassie Citroen



Cassie fell in love with the coastal region when she moved to Geelong in 2007 to study at Deakin University. Currently a Strategy Insights Manager at the TAC, Cassie enjoys working for a purpose and values driven organisation.

It is important to Cassie the First Nations people of Australia's humble request for Voice, Treaty and Truth are honoured.

Kathy McEwan



A Geelong resident since 2013, Kathy is committed to creating a community that is accessible and inclusive for everyone. Kathy is currently Director Strategic Advice at the National Disability Insurance Agency.

It is important to Kathy that this includes recognising the First Nations people as the first sovereign nations of the Australian continent.

Kimberley Sinnott



Kimberley is passionate about connecting with people, supporting those in need within the Geelong community and building a creative and accessible region. Kimberley is currently Development Manager at the Geelong Arts Centre.

It is important to Kimberley that all First Nations voices and viewpoints are heard and treated with respect.

William Ramirez



William is a Project Manager in the Department of Defence and a Captain in the Australian Army Reserve. William is a committed community volunteer and is currently a volunteer CFA firefighter and an honorary Justice of the Peace.

He is committed to reconciliation and justice for First Nations people.

Recognition

We would like to recognise that this project has been a journey of discovery and learning for each of us, as individuals and, the collective group. We want to highlight that one of our key leanings has been that there are many voices and views regarding the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We feel that the title 'Building the Swell' is reflective of the outcomes we have been able to achieve in the time we have been able to commit to the project and that this project relates to broader recognition of over 250 years of history.

Forward

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

An Indigenous Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution presents an invitation to all Australians to walk together with First Nations people towards reconciliation and for a fairer and more just society.

Early in the life of this project, a new Federal Government was elected with a promised commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart including an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

The commitment to a referendum in the new Government's first term presents a challenge and an opportunity. As we know from experience, referendums in Australia are hard and must have strong community support.

The success of this is far from assured, which has made the work of the project team more pertinent. By examining the sentiment of the Geelong community about an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, the project team has been able to identify and analyse important factors and trends.

I would encourage you to read this report and examine what insights it might offer you and to see how leaders and leading organisations can play a constructive role to help achieve this overdue constitutional reform.

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is grateful for the ongoing support of the Committee for Geelong, and we look forward to continuing our long and fruitful partnership.

Nyatne,

Paul Davis

Acknowledgement

The Project Team would like to acknowledge the photos used through out this document were supplied by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Cooperation

Executive Summary

This project has been based on providing support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The project team have approached this with the intention of laying the groundwork in the Geelong region for the Voice of First Nations people to be enshrined in the Constitution.

In May 2017, over 250 First Nations delegates from all points of the Southern Sky gathered in the shadow of Uluru and put their signatures on a historic document. The Uluru Statement from the Heart was agreed through a series of regional dialogues. There were 12 dialogues and 1 regional meeting held across the country. These dialogues culminated in the National Constitutional Convention at Uluru in 2017 and the signing of the Statement.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart, addressed to the Australian people, invited the nation to create a better future via the proposal of key reforms to empower their people and take a rightful place in their own country. The Statement calls for:

- The establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution
- A Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement making between governments and First Nations
- Truth telling about history

This project set out to benefit the Geelong region through 'Building the Swell' of understanding about the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The approach was to plant a seed, raise awareness and rally support. A central tenant of the project was to measure current sentiment, develop a communication plan and identify regional champions to progress the swell.

The project team acknowledge that this has been a journey of learning for themselves and acknowledge they do not have First Nations heritage. The project was approached through the lens of listening, learning and respecting. Importantly the project recognised this as not just a First Nations issue, rather, a whole of community issue. The project has deliberately focused on understanding the regional view and remaining apolitical. It is important that any next steps incorporate more First Nations and community views and voices. This should include both a local and National Lens.

This project has built on the outcomes since the National Constitutional Convention with an aim of contributing to a more unified and reconciled Geelong region through respectful listening and learning.

There were two significant occurrences after the commencement of the project. The first being Prime Minister Anthony Albanese recommitted to the Uluru Statement from the Heart during the Welcome to Country ceremony at the beginning of his victory speech on the first day of the 47th Parliament sitting in 2022. The second was Victorian Parliament passing historic Treaty Authority legislation on August 16, 2022.

Due to the project timelines, there was limited opportunity for extensive immersion in conversations to hear a broader range of voices. It is hoped that the project has achieved a deeper understanding of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in the Geelong Region and provided a springboard for further action as this is an ongoing journey and there is more to be done.

The aim of this project was to support continued dialogue and a deepening of understanding. This will see the Geelong region embracing its own history and heritage.

It will also encourage understanding and support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, in part or in full, as a crucial step towards achieving a greater level of equity and inclusion.

Key Stakeholders

Paul Davis, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Jennifer Cromarty, Committee for Geelong

Bill Lawson, Reconciliation Australian (Board Member Tasmania representative)



Background

Transformative proposal

*'You will hear us tonight and we will be singing to our ancestors, who are your ancestors too. We will be singing to them that we are here, maintaining our connection to them, for their appreciation, and we will do this not for just us, but all of us'*Djawa Yunupingu (1)

The Uluru Statement from the Heart (available Appendix One) is an invitation from the First Nations people to create a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

The Statement is a historical consensus of a representative group of First Nations people encouraging the fuller truths of Australian history to be told and structural reforms including constitutional change to establish a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution.

A national campaign has been launched calling for a referendum in 2023. There is a growing movement to bring people together to create 'The Voice' supported by a growing chorus as one part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Geelong region was proposed as a platform to grow the chorus by raising awareness of 'The Voice' campaign in a regional context, supporting and feeding into the national movement.

"The Uluru Statement makes three very important proposals that will be transformative. They are in sequence: first, for a First Nations Voice enshrined in the constitution; second for a Makarrata Commission to supervise agreement making, or treaties; and third, to oversee the truth telling for the nation". Thomas Mayer (2)

Voice, Treaty, Truth

Historical context 1770 – 1990

There has been a long history of Aboriginal injustice since British acquisition of Australia in 1770. It is an important part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart to understand the full historical context. Many First Nations people believe that 1770 represents Invasion of their land and culture. As far back as 1846, First Nations peoples were exiled from their own land and culture.

First Nations peoples commenced petitioning for their land as early as 1866.

‘We should be free like the White population there is only a few black now remaining in Victoria....and we Blacks of Aboriginal Blood, wish to have now freedom for all our lifetime’.

Warundjeri Elder William Barak 1886. (3)

In the 1920s First Nations peoples formed their first pan Aboriginal activist organisation and there were calls for the establishment of an Aboriginal State.

The 1930s saw a call for representation in Federal Parliament. The Commonwealth did not send the request to the King. The first day of mourning was held and Torres Strait Islanders held and won a Maritime strike resulting in the Queensland government establishing an Islander Council that provides some political representation and power.

Voice is a way for our First Nations people to talk to Australia. Our hope is for it to be added to the constitution <so> it will always be there to help decide what happens in this country.

Treaty is an agreement. Because we need to agree how we can live together.

Truth is so we all know what has happened. So, we never lose our heart again. (4)

Strong public support for constitutional recognition

In the early 2010s an expert panel handed down a report finding strong public support for constitutional recognition and removal of some existing constitutional references to race. The Recognition Act was passed in 2013 providing an interim form of recognition for First Nations peoples.

Over the 1960s the right to vote in Federal elections was granted to First Nations people. The Yirrkala Bark petitions are sent to Parliament objecting to the excision of land from their reserve for mining. Vincent Lingari and Dexter Daniels lead the Gurindji people on a walk off at Wave Hill Station, NT, fighting for wages, land, rights, and self-determination. Constitution Referendum saw Aboriginal people counted as part of the Australian population for constitutional purposes for the first time.

Over the 1980s and 1990s momentum gained and Prime Minister Bob Hawke committed to Treaty, a promise that was later broken. In 1993 the Native Title Act was passed after months of pressure, protests, and negotiations.

The *Bring Them Home* report was tabled calling for an official apology from the Commonwealth government. The High Court of Australia Hindmarch Island Bridge decision left open the possibility that the Constitution could be used to impose racially discriminatory laws on Aboriginal people. In 1990 Australia held a referendum to decide whether to become a republic and whether to adopt a new preamble to the Constitution that acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using words that had been rejected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and many Lands Councils.

Change is coming

Recent History

The Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation delivered its Australian Declaration towards Reconciliation and the Roadmap to Reconciliation in 2000. This reinforced the aspirations for Treaty and Constitution to change. Other noteworthy events in the 2000's included a new commitment to a Constitutional preamble, an Apology to the Stolen Generations and recognition that rights need to be included in the Constitution not just the preamble.

In the early 2010s an expert panel handed down a report finding strong public support for constitutional recognition and removal of some existing constitutional references to race. The Recognition Act was passed in 2013 providing an interim form of recognition for Aboriginal people.



In 2022 Labour leader Anthony Albanese reconfirms his commitment to implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full during his victory speech.

The Victorian Parliament passed historic Treaty Authority legislation on August 16, 2022

The full historical context and timeline can be found at [History - Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)



Building the Swell

Three Project Stages

1. **Planting a seed** – focused on building momentum in the Geelong region to support ‘the Voice’ to be recognised in the Constitution
2. **Raising awareness** – focused on understanding baseline sentiment, across a cross section of the Geelong population
3. **Rallying support** – focused on paving the way for future activities including identifying local champions

This project aimed to raise regional support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart in the Geelong Region.

The project focused on laying the groundwork and building understanding of the Voice.

Post commencement of the project there were two significant occurrences. The first being Prime Minister Anthony Albanese recommitted to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the second the Victorian Parliament passing historic Treaty legislation. In response the focus of the project shifted from encouraging the call for a referendum to encouraging a successful outcome at the referendum.

Planting a Seed

During the 2022 NAIDOC Week the Committee for Geelong collaborated with Geelong Advertiser to temporarily rebrand the newspaper as ‘Djilang Advertiser’ and included an 8-page supplement in its 4 July 2022 edition.

The supplement was leveraged for the project. A brief article written by the team was published with the ambition of planting a seed. Bringing attention to the ‘Voice’ in the local region and acting as a primer for the then upcoming sentiment analysis discussed in the Raising Awareness section of this Report.

Planting a Seed

In 1967, Aboriginal Australians were recognised as Australians in the Constitution, and now, they seek to be heard.

Djilang Advertiser Article

In 2017 Indigenous leaders met to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which called for the enshrinement of an indigenous voice to Parliament in the constitution. The referendum proposing this change is likely to occur sometime within the next year. However, a successful referendum is far from a certain outcome.

Referendums are not passed easily, with the last successful referendum occurring in 1977. Many proposed constitutional changes have failed since then, and the one clear lesson is for a referendum to pass, is that it must have broad support across all voters.

Organisations play a major role in the community and have been instrumental to achieving large scale societal changes.

In Geelong, as across the country, local organisations have the opportunity to play a constructive role in supporting the constitutional enshrinement of an indigenous voice to parliament. A small group of community leaders are asking what role Geelong organisations can play in supporting this historical change.

For over 16 years, the Committee for Geelong has managed the Leaders for Geelong program. In 2022, a small team of Leaders for Geelong participants have taken on a community project in partnership with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. This project focuses on raising awareness of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The project team is conducting a survey to understand local organisation's knowledge about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and wants to hear directly from the community to shape a regional communication approach and identify potential champions to support in raising the Voice.

In 1967, Aboriginal Australians were recognised as Australians in the constitution, and now, they seek to be heard. This Leaders for Geelong project are aiming to empower organisations to take an active role.

COLUMN

WILLIAM RAMIREZ,
KIMBERLEY SINNOTT,
KATHY MCEWAN,
CASSIE CITROEN,
ANTONIO LA TORRE

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE
HEART PROJECT GEELONG LEADERS

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For information, email lfg-admin@committeeforgeelong.com.au

Raising Awareness

The first step toward raising awareness in the Geelong region.

Sentiment Analysis

Shortly after publication of the article the team took the first step toward raising awareness in the Geelong region, this was to understand the local context by measuring regional sentiment.

Aim:

The primary purpose of the sentiment analysis was to:

1. Understand regional support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart (specifically constitutional enshrinement of the Voice to Parliament).
2. Provide additional opportunity to identify potential regional champions for the Rallying Support phase of the project.
3. Inform direction of further consultation and the development of the Communication Plan.

Approach:

A short online survey was designed covering awareness, knowledge, and support for the Statement and 'the Voice' as well as identify individuals and organisation wanting to be involved.

To serve the multiple objectives of the research, surveys were distributed over a one-week period via local business networks (mailing lists and social media). Mailing list non-responders were followed up directly via personal emails during the second week. The survey link remained open for a total of three weeks. Due to the unknown size and reach of the networks the response rate was unknown.

Participants were invited to nominate their preference to partake in the survey as an individual or on behalf of their organisation. Very few participants undertook the survey on behalf of their organisation and given there were no major differences in the distribution of their responses compared to individuals the results were combined.

Findings:

Respondents

Of the 55 participants that completed the survey, 60 percent were female, and 95 percent were aged between 35-64 years of age. Not surprising given the business network approach. Only two participants identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Ten participants responded on behalf of their organisation and of those nine had a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Awareness and Knowledge

Although there was strong recognition of the Uluru Statement of the Heart few people felt they understood the Statement.

Most participants had heard of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Forty-four percent had heard about it from two or more channels with the primary source being newspapers or articles at 65 percent. Over 90 percent of participants felt they knew the local Indigenous name of Country however responses were mixed with 71 percent referring to Wadawurrung and only 20 percent referring to Djilang on further enquiry.



Figure 1. Where participants heard about the Statement

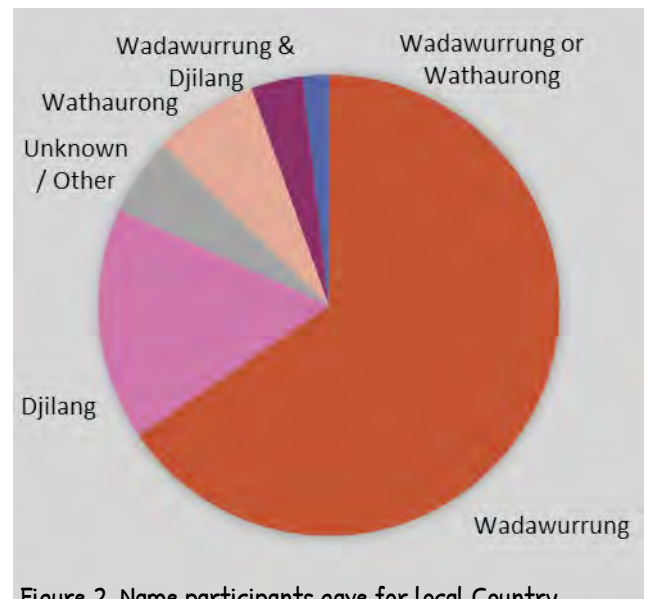


Figure 2. Name participants gave for local Country

Awareness and Knowledge continued.

Although few participants felt they understood the Statement well or very well (22 percent) 85 percent participants correctly recognised Voice, Treaty and Truth as its three core proposals.

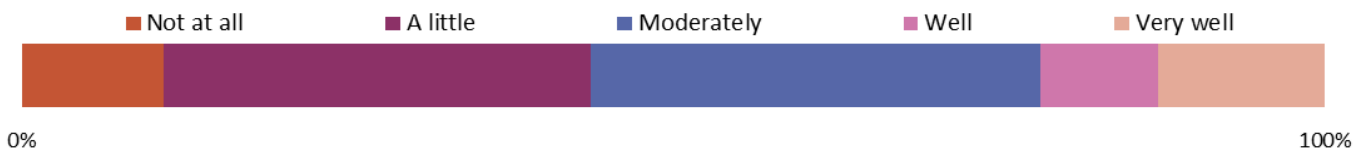


Figure 3. Level of understanding of the Statement

Support

There was overwhelming support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its three proposals (Voice, Treaty and Truth).

Ninety-eight percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture considered important to Australia's identity as a nation. Just over three quarters of participants believed the wrongs of the past should be rectified. Over 90 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed there is a need for Treaty (91 percent), it is important to understand the Truth (98 percent) and the Voice should be enshrined in the constitution (93 percent). There was also substantial support for raising awareness of the Voice in the Geelong region (91 percent).

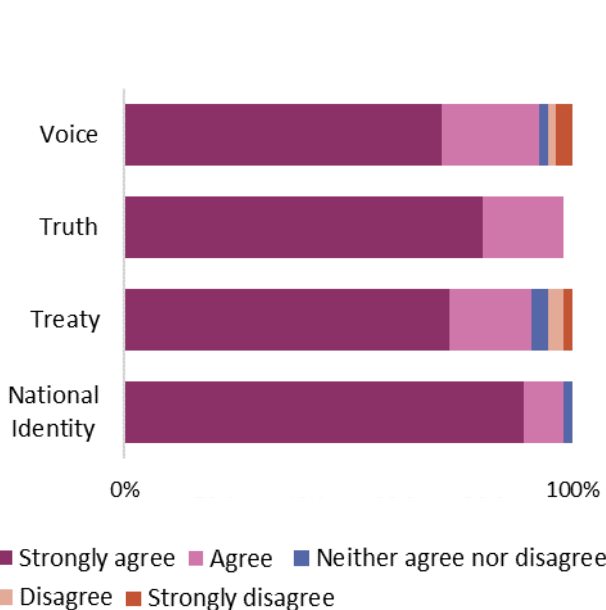


Figure 4. Level of agreement with Voice, Truth, Treaty and importance to national identity



Figure 5. Addressing the wrongs of the past

Potential Regional Champions

Many people were wanting and willing to be involved in raising awareness of the Voice in the Geelong region.

Although very few people were aware of local activities focused on the Statement (five percent) when prompted many ideas were offered for raising regional awareness of the Voice. Sixty-five percent of people offered ideas with the most frequent related to leveraging community clubs and networks (20 percent) follow closely by providing platforms and public forums for speaking and information sharing; and lobbying (18 percent).



Figure 6. Themes of ideas offered for raising the Voice

Many participants either wanted to learn more or be involved. Eighty-two percent wanted to learn more while 56 percent wanted to actually be involved in raising awareness of the Voice in the regional. All participants that partook in the survey on behalf of their organisation want to be involved in raising awareness.

These findings were extremely promising, and it was recommended that further discussion about championing the Voice in the region take place with the group of participants eager to be involved (see Rallying Support section).

Limitations

The results reflect the views of a small selection of businesspeople in the Geelong region and should be interpreted cautiously. They do not represent the sentiment of the broader community and no generalisations can or should be made.

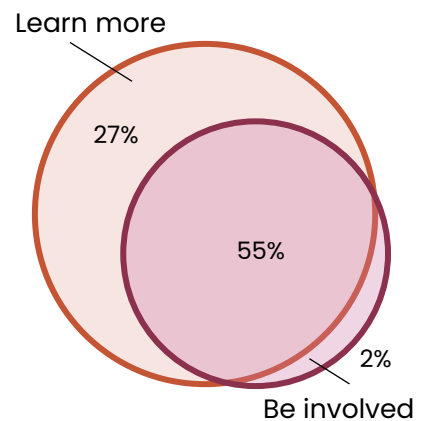


Figure 7. Desire to learn more and/or be involved

Rallying Support

The primary stakeholder group for the project was comprised of key businesses in the Geelong / G21 region, particularly those with an existing Reconciliation Action Plan. This reflects the understanding that organisations play a major role in community and can be instrumental to achieving large scale societal changes.

The project was seen as an opportunity for regional leaders and their organisations to both deepen conversations with First Nations peoples and strengthen their own commitment to the Uluru Statement

The Project team collated a list of businesses connected to Committee for Geelong and other business directories. The list was used to seek engagement in the survey in the first instance and to rally support for the Statement.

Awareness of the project was shared through Committee for Geelong and Geelong Chamber of Commerce channels as well as via social media, predominately LinkedIn.

Direct engagement with interested organisations was also key in sharing the project objectives and information about the Statement. Such meetings and deep conversations were instrumental in determining businesses that could act as regional champions beyond the life of the project.

The project had success in identifying several groups as potential regional champions that will continue increasing awareness and mobilising the Geelong community to continue building momentum towards constitutional change.

Beyond finalisation of this report, organisations that engaged in the survey will be invited to attend a virtual 'Lunch and Learn' session. Centred around providing awareness and education around the Statement and engagement with local First Nations Voices, this session will be set in a 'conversations that matter' style.

Organisations will be invited to attend a virtual 'Lunch and Learn' session.

Organisations will also be encouraged to share this event with their networks, playing a crucial role in building a regional chorus to support the Voice, by collectively raising awareness and to take action with the approaching referendum. Local champions can continue to build support and momentum for the Voice demonstrating their commitment to unity and reconciliation within the region and nation.

Communication Resources

To support others to continue to build the swell the project has developed communications plan (see Appendix Two).

The communication content will support identified regional champions and other interested people to continue and support building momentum and support the constitutional change through provision of frameworks, knowledge and resources.

The main objectives of the communications plan are to:

- Encourage regional champions to continue building momentum and support for constitutional change
- Support building strong relationships between champions and local First Nations peoples
- To ensure regional champions remain informed, connected and interested in the Uluru Statement from the Heats
- To provide regional champions with a framework, knowledge and resources that can be further communicate to the broader society

The communications plan also includes an introduction to deep canvassing, a road map to the delivery of a major event and a list of State and National resources.

Although First Nations support of Uluru Statement from the Heart is divided, we believe it represents the most sensitive manner in which to progress cultural and political reform.

Project Learnings

Early on it was identified that this was not just a First Nations issue, but rather, an issue for the whole community.

Staying within the scope has been an important learning for the project team. Given the lengthy historical context and national significance of this project the team needed to remain mindful of:

- The short duration of the current project.
- Over 250 years of history
- The impact of many years of disempowerment and subsequent time required to build the trust necessary for First Nations people to yarn openly with non-First Nations people
- The many voices that should be heard.

Early on it was identified that this was not just a First Nations issue, rather, a whole of community issue. It was also recognised that to achieve the intent of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, it would be important to hear from all voices. It was and is important that history and the Uluru Statement from the Heart were represented accurately.

Throughout the project there was an awareness that there was a need to consider over 250 years of history whilst raising awareness of the more recent history related to the development of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. They are intrinsically linked together, and one cannot be understood without the other.

This project has reinforced that it is more important than ever that the Geelong region, and beyond, seek to understand the voices and the intent of the Uluru Statement of the Heart.

The Project was conducted over a six-month period with significant national change occurring over this time. The two key events since project inception were Prime Minister Albanese commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and Victorian parliament passing historic Treaty legislation. This meant that the project was required to shift its focus to encouraging a successful outcome at the referendum. It also meant there was a considerable increase in information available for the public relating to the Statement supporting raised awareness. Even with its small scale and major external changes, it is hoped that the ripple the project has achieved contributes to the rising swell of raising awareness for the Voice in the Geelong Region.

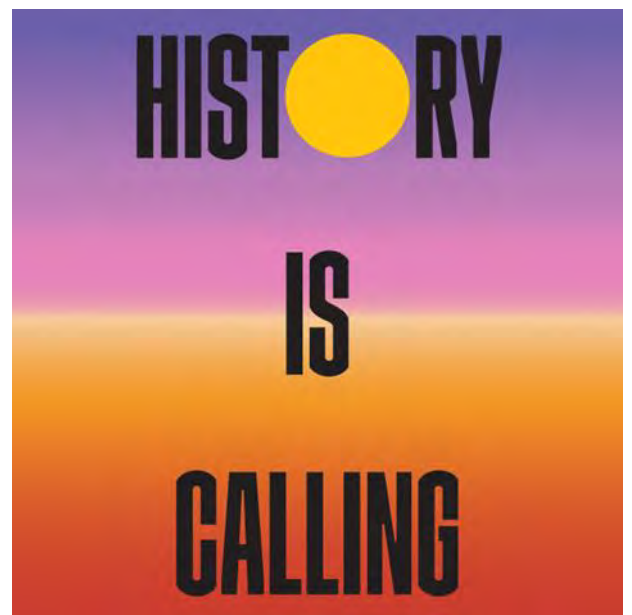
The project team do not intend to speak on behalf of First Nations people and this report does not represent all views. There are many First Nations people and non-First Nations voices and views, and it is anticipated that views will continue to change as more awareness builds. It is hoped that the work undertaken in the project contributes to further conversations with more First Nations peoples. There is more to be done in understanding history and raising local awareness of the Voice. It is recommended any steps taken after this project incorporate more views and voices through authentic engagement.

There are many voices to be heard. This project has reinforced that it is more important than ever that Geelong region and beyond seek to understand the voices and the intent of the Uluru Statement of the Heart and recognising the First Nations people as the first sovereign nations of the Australian continent.

How you can help Build the Swell

This project has paved the way for future activities including but not limited to:

- Building individual self-awareness
- Organisations with Reconciliation Action Plans can use content and resources in this report to raise awareness
- Becoming a Regional Champion
- Participating in community events to increase your awareness and understanding



Individual Awareness

There are many views and opinions available as awareness of the Uluru Statement from the Heart grows.

<https://ulurustatement.org>

Local Champions

The support of local champions expands responsibility of the Voice from solely Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the whole community.

Write to your local member

Write to your local members. Sample letters can be found

<https://ulurustatement.org>

Reconciliation Action Plans

Find out if your organisation has a Reconciliation Action Plan. If not, you could advocate for one to be developed.

[Reconciliation Action Plans - Reconciliation Australia](#)

Community Events

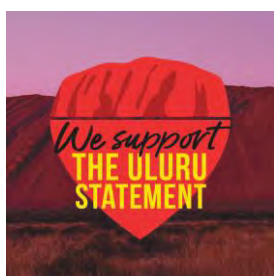
Attend the upcoming and any future events such as virtual 'Lunch and Learns' to participate in conversations that matter towards awareness and education with regard to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

References

(1)(2) Mayor, T (2019), Finding the Heart of the Nation, Hardie Grant Publishing (Melbourne)

(3) <https://ulurustatement.org>

(4) Mayor, T (2020), Finding Our Heart, Hardie Grant Publishing (Melbourne)





Appendix One

Uluru Statement From the Heart

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

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?

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. 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



Appendix Two Communications Plan

Building the Swell Uluru Statement from the Heart

Distribution list:

- *Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation*
- *Committee for Geelong*
- *Aspiring Regional Champions*

Issue date:

October 2022

Introduction / Current Situation

“Building The Swell” aims is to provide support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart by laying the groundwork in the Geelong region for the Voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be enshrined in the Constitution.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation and gift from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to create a movement of the Australian people for a better future. The statement is a historical consensus of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people encouraging the full truth of Australian history to be told and structural reforms including constitutional change, to establish a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution.

There is a growing movement to bring people together to create 'The Voice' supported by a growing chorus as one part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

It's also worth mentioning our findings when dealing with some local First Nations people as there are many alternative points of view including that 'Treaty' should take priority over 'Voice'.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has committed towards a referendum regarding whether an Indigenous voice to parliament should be enshrined in the Constitution.

Position

“Building The Swell” aims to raise awareness of the Uluru Statement from the heart and identify Regional Champions among Geelong based organisations.

Geelong has been proposed as a platform to grow the chorus by raising awareness of 'The Voice' campaign in a regional context, supporting and feeding into the national movement. There is an excellent opportunity for regional leaders to deepen conversations and commitment with local First Nations groups.

The communication content developed will encourage the identified regional Champions to continue and support building momentum and support the constitutional change

Communications Objectives

- Encourage regional champions to continue building momentum and support for Constitutional change.
- Build strong relationships between champions and local first nations people.
- For Regional Champions to remain engaged, informed and interested in the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- To provide Regional Champions with a framework, knowledge and resources that can be further communicate to the broader society

Stakeholders

Primary

- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Committee for Geelong
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Secondary

- Geelong organisations including those with Reconciliation Action Plan
- Regional leaders

Summary of activity

- In 2022, Leaders for Geelong Project Team seeks to raise awareness of the Uluru Statement of the Heart by engaging with Geelong businesses
- Survey sent to a selection of local businesses to understand the regional sentiment for the Uluru Statement of the Heart. For more information please refer to Project Report
- November 2023 (TBC) Webinar/Event to further raise awareness and connect with first nations people and valid voices.
- Identification of regional champions to continue working towards the preparation of a major event prior referendum.
- Major event including talks, round tables, food, family activities, etc

Key Messages

Uluru Statement from the Heart

- The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation from First Nations to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”. It was issued to the Australian people in May 2017 following almost two years of work. The Uluru Statement calls for structural reform including constitutional change. Structural reform means establishing a new relationship between First Nations and the Australian nation based on justice and self-determination where Indigenous cultures and peoples can flourish, and we all move forward.
- The Uluru Statement calls for a First Nations Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling. These reforms are: Voice, Treaty, Truth. The first reform is the constitutional enshrinement of a Voice to Parliament (Voice). A Voice is a common reform adopted around the world by liberal democracies to improve democratic participation for Indigenous populations. In Australia, the Voice will empower First Nations politically. It will be a permanent institution for expressing First Nations’ views to the parliament and government on important issues affecting First Nations. The second reform is the Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations (Treaty), and truth-telling (Truth). Voice, Treaty and Truth provide a clear and practical path forward for First Nations’ self-determination in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Individuals can support the Uluru Statement from the Heart by writing a letter in their own words and draw on their own experience to their local MP reflecting what is motivating and concerning them. MPs do not want to read a cut and paste letter that repeats identical messages. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation to the Australian people to tell their local MP why they are accepting the invitation
- Regional champions can further raise awareness to the their communities by extending the invitation to read and learn from the Uluru Statement from the Heart and available resources. A road map to the delivery of a major event is included within this communications plan.

Approaches

Deep Canvassing

- Deep canvassing is an approach to conversations which is non-judgemental and invites people to open up about their real conflicted feelings on an issue. The canvasser shares vulnerably about their own life and asks curious questions to create mutual understanding grounded in lived experience.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN6O5LTaGyg>

<https://callhub.io/deep-canvassing/>

<https://www.vox.com/2020/1/29/21065620/broockman-kalla-deep-canvassing>

<https://commonslibrary.org/deep-canvassing-scripts-and-examples/>

<https://deepcanvass.org/research/>

Local Sentiment Survey

Respondents

Of the 55 participants that completed the survey, 60 percent were female, and 95 percent were aged between 35-64 years of age

Awareness and Knowledge

Although there was strong recognition of the Uluru Statement of the Heart few people felt they understood the Statement.

Support

There was overwhelming support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its three proposals (Voice, Treaty and Truth).

Potential Regional Champions

Many people were wanting and willing to be involved in raising awareness of the Voice in the Geelong region.

Limitations:

The results reflect the views of a small selection of businesspeople in the Geelong region and should be interpreted cautiously. They do not represent the sentiment of the broader community and no generalisations can or should be made.

Approaches

Major Events

Events and discussions are often an effective communication tool that brings together like minded people, to share knowledge and provide access to experts and stimulate the emotions of an audience.

There are multiple types of events including Q&A sessions with a guest speaker, debates, Town Hall-type presentations, networking sessions, virtual discussions and round tables. The below details the aspects required to develop a major event.

1. Planning

- Budget
- Event date
- Venue booking
- Stakeholders – share event date

2. Logistics and Suppliers

- Welcome to Country booking
- Catering
- Technical (AV)
- Assign event manager
- Engage speakers
- Photographer

3. Marketing requirements

- Develop invitation/artwork for promotion
- Determine ticketing channel e.g. Eventbrite, Trybooking
- Communication channels – social media, news outlets, community groups
- On the day collateral – signage, brochures and video

4. Engagement Plan / Guest Management

- Invite list
- RSVP tracking
- Communications to attendees – pre- and post-event information

5. On the Day Requirements

- Run sheet
- MC Script
- Presentation
- Name Tags

6. Post-event

- Thank you gift (if required)
- Follow up with Stakeholders

National and Local Resources

<https://ulurustatement.org/>

<https://ulurustatemdev.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/USFHInteractiveSupportersKit050521.pdf>

<https://libertyvictoria.org.au/content/submission-support-uluru-statement-heart>

<https://antarvictoria.org.au/>

<https://antar.org.au/campaigns/yes-voice>

<https://www.wadawurrung.org.au/>

<https://www.maggolee.org.au/voice-to-council>

<https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/barwon-south-west-local-aboriginal-networks>

https://reconciliationnsw.org.au/voice_treaty_truth/

<https://voice.niaa.gov.au/resources#>

<https://www.wathaurong.org.au/>

<https://g21.com.au/g21-pillars/first-nations-conversation/>

