



10th of July 2023

AWGSA STATEMENT: A VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

The Australian Women's & Gender Studies Association (AWGSA) recognises it operates on unceded, Sovereign lands of Australia's First Peoples. We acknowledge Australia's colonial history and its impact on families, communities, lands, and everyday lives of First Nations Peoples.

Guided by the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#), we recognise systemic, structural, and institutional violence has continued to affect First Nations Peoples, including dispossessing histories of this continent and its Islands. We are committed to being continually reflective, anti-racist, and anti-colonial in our feminist praxis.

The AWGSA Executive takes our ability to respond to issues of national significance seriously. We acknowledge the women, non-binary people, and other marginalised individuals and groups within First Nations communities who tirelessly lead in their advocacy for the continuity of cultural practices and knowledges.

Now and always, in hopes of justice and healing, AWGSA supports the principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We support the three critical elements for which it collectively advocates: 1) a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution; 2) a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making; and 3) a national truth-telling process.

We recognise A Voice to Parliament is a significant and overdue moment in history. We have heard from some Indigenous leaders that A Voice to Parliament will offer some self-determination to First Nations communities as a constitutionally recognised pathway to provide advice to inform policy and legal decisions that impact their communities. We have also heard from many other First Nations leaders that A Voice to Parliament is an insufficient response to colonial violence and white supremacy in the Australian settler colony and that a formal Treaty should come first. First Nations Peoples are yet again providing leadership on how they wish this to occur, as they always have since the earliest times of invasion.

As the AWGSA Executive, we recognise this complexity. Standing in solidarity, we acknowledge that this process is steeped in colonial logics and does not safeguard Sovereignty.

We recognise that for First Nations' Peoples debating the right to have a constitutional voice on stolen lands can be triggering and re-traumatising. As such, we acknowledge that not all First Nations' peoples and communities feel safe to engage in this dialogue or want to

participate in the discourse of the possible implications of the outcome. We also respect each person has every right to vote as they wish in the referendum.

We earnestly hope for - and will do our utmost to promote - a robust and respectful conversation within our Association. We believe First Nations Peoples are best placed to shape the solutions that meet their communities' continued efforts and calls for self-determination.

Always was, Always will be.

In solidarity,

The AWGSA Executive.



AWGSA recognises the First Nations peoples as enduring custodians of the longest living culture in the world and of all the lands, waters and air that sustain us.
Always was, always will be Aboriginal lands.