

The Blak Sovereign Movement's response to the Yes campaign's 8 reasons to vote Yes

1. *This idea came directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

No it didn't. The idea of constitutional recognition came from John Howard. The idea of a powerless advisory body is nothing new, many came and went. The Uluru Statement came from a handpicked group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2. *Constitutional recognition for concrete results.*

Constitutional recognition was already rejected when the Recognise campaign began in 2012. Even delegates at the Uluru constitutional convention decided they did not want symbolic recognition in the constitution. Many First Peoples do not want to be part of the coloniser's constitution and see it as a step away from acknowledging First Nations Sovereignty. There is no evidence it would lead to concrete results.

3. *Ensure people have a better life.*

A powerless advisory body is nothing new and recent history has proven it will make no difference. The government's examples of 'Listening Works' are not examples of an advisory body being listened to and a government acting on that advice, they are examples of self-determination.

4. *Bring our country together.*

Putting constitutional recognition and a powerless advisory body before a process of Truth-telling was always going to further divide the country. We do not consider ourselves part of the Australian nation and have never ceded our Sovereignty. Truth-telling is the first step to harmony in this land.

5. *Save money.*

There is absolutely no evidence of this. Powerless advisory bodies of the past have added costs. The spending on this referendum, including the distribution of the Referendum Pamphlet, is a waste of money.

6. *The time is now.*

This is a cute catch phrase that epitomises the lack of substance in the referendum.

7. *Practical advice that works.*

It is telling that the government has already outlined what the Voice will give advice on. They have repeatedly ignored advice from First Peoples on how to address child removals, deaths in custody, institutional racism, protecting the environment, compensation, reparations, Truth and Treaty.

8. *Making government work better.*

Let's be honest, given the current state of our supposedly democratic institutions, this wouldn't be a great achievement. However, there is no reason a powerless advisory body would make things work better and there is nothing in the proposed change to the constitution that changes how the government operates.

The Blak Sovereign Movement's response to the conservative/racist No campaign's 10 reasons to vote No

1. *The Voice is legally risky*

It is legally risky for our Sovereignty. However, there is no basis for their fear mongering that it would be "the biggest change to our democracy." The proposed constitutional change is clearly worded to ensure parliamentary supremacy is maintained and the Voice would be powerless.

2. *There are no details*

The government has provided many details, but they are details without substance. The vote is on the existence of a powerless advisory body, all else would be determined by parliament. It is very true that it has not been explained or discussed with First Nations communities.

3. *It divides us*

This land was divided from the moment it was invaded by the British Empire and it remains divided to this day. It is racist to suggest that the nation is united. We have resisted being assimilated into this nation for over 230 years. There are many nations in this land and the denial of Truth has included an attempt to deny the existence of our Sovereign nations.

4. *It won't help Indigenous Australians*

This is true. It is just a powerless advisory body, and being in the constitution does not make it any different to past advisory bodies that achieved nothing.

5. *No issue beyond its scope*

This is baseless fear mongering. Its scope is entirely determined by the parliament. The parliament will decide its "composition, functions, powers and procedures."

6. *It risks delays and dysfunction*

It could, if that is how the government wanted to use it. There is a history of government's using Indigenous advisory bodies to delay implementing change. There is also a history of government's ignoring advice from advisory bodies, this would be no different.

7. *It opens the door for activists*

If only! In this section the conservative No camp repeats its racist assumption that Australia is united and denies the existence of Sovereignty. It is a powerless advisory body and those that support it are not activists, they are asking for a seat at the coloniser's table.

8. *It will be costly and bureaucratic*

Can't argue with that. The claims they use to support it, however, are part of the racist myth that billions of dollars are going to First Peoples, when in actual fact much of it is going to government bureaucracies, white organisations and the police.

9. *The Voice will be permanent*

Where is the Inter-State Commission enshrined in section 101 of the Constitution?

10. *There are better ways forward*

Indeed, many of them are outlined in the Blak Sovereign Movements statement on the referendum.