
*Expert Indigenous
Panel to discuss*

**THE STATUS OF AN
ENSHRINED
CONSTITUTIONAL VOICE
FOR AUSTRALIA'S
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

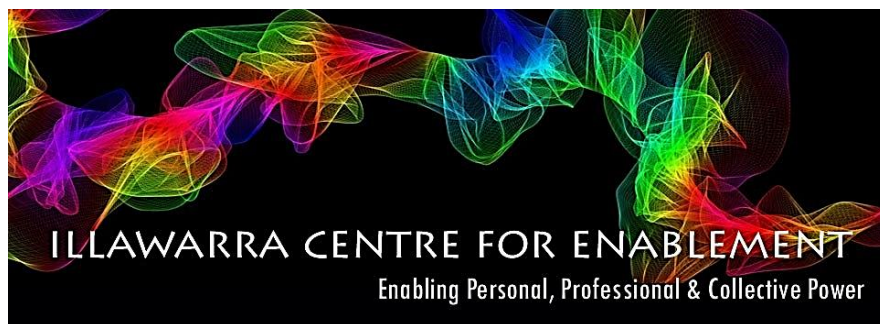


Date: Thursday 19 March 2020
7pm-9pm
Venue: The Auditorium at The
Fraternity Club, 11 Bourke Street
Fairy Meadow, NSW.

Disability Access is available.
Contact the Club on 02 4283 3333
Free onsite parking is available.
Tickets of \$20 (General Admission)
& \$15 (Concession) available at
<https://indigenous-panel.eventbrite.com.au>

High School students in Years 10 -12
& current Undergraduate UOW
students can attend free of charge
and must register. See
<https://illawarracafe.com/programs/finished-and-unfinished-business-2020/>

A full refund is available 7 days
before the event date of 19 March.



Australia is the only Commonwealth country that does not have a treaty with its Indigenous citizens, though it has been attempting to take historic steps towards reconciliation with Indigenous people.

In 2017, the Uluru Statement from the Heart emerged from the constitutional convention of 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates held at the foot of Uluru in Central Australia on the lands of the Anangu people.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart presented the Indigenous consensus position on Indigenous constitutional recognition and asked for two reforms: 1) a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution; 2) a Makarrata Commission, which could be set up by legislation. Here is an Excerpt of the Uluru Statement of 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.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 October 2017, Malcolm Turnbull rejected the Indigenous voice to parliament proposed in the Uluru statement, saying it is neither “desirable or capable of winning acceptance at referendum.” In a joint statement, attorney general, George Brandis, and the Indigenous affairs minister, Nigel Scullion, Turnbull said the voice to parliament body “would inevitably become seen as a third chamber of parliament”.

“Moreover, the government does not believe such a radical change to our constitution’s representative institutions has any realistic prospect of being supported by a majority of Australians in a majority of states.”

Fast forward to 2019 when Indigenous Minister Ken Wyatt in Morrison’s government has said that he would not pursue a key demand from the Uluru statement – that the voice be constitutionally enshrined. He has formed a national Co-design Committee, as well as a local and regional co-design group to fulfil a core part of the Uluru statement from the heart: to allow Indigenous people a voice in policies and legislation which directly affect them. This Co-design Committee has been asked to “develop options for an Indigenous voice to government.”

In light of the concluding words of the Uluru Statement of the Heart “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,” the Illawarra Centre for Enablement (ICfE) is inviting communities in the Illawarra to discuss the above historic developments and explore what needs to happen to enable long-lasting substantial and enduring change for First Nations, to enable Australia’s political leaders to commit to long-held Indigenous aspirations to take their rightful place in their own country and strengthen the future of Australia’s relationship with its Indigenous People.

Expert Indigenous Panel Members



Thomas Mayor; Teela Reid; Charline Emzin-Boyd; Richard Davis; Marcia Ella-Duncan

Panellist Bios are at <https://illawarracfe.com/programs/finished-and-unfinished-business-2020/>

Moderator: Dr Diann Rodgers-Healey, Director ICfE

Diann’s Bio is at <https://illawarracfe.com/vision/>

ILLAWARRA CENTRE FOR ENABLEMENT (ICFE)

The Expert Indigenous Panel Event is the first in ICfE’s **Finished & Unfinished Business 2020** series to resolve in the Illawarra and raise the momentum of issues of national significance through public expert panel discussions involving the community.