

Requests to be Heard

21 March 2023

Council Meeting



Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

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Council's position on a First Nations Voice to parliament		
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WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Item 10.1		For (F) Against (A)
Council's position on a First Nations Voice to parliament		
1.	Mr Troy Nicholson	(A)
<p>My submission pertains to the sentence "delivers information to assist electors to understand the importance, purpose and process of the Voice referendum and mitigate misinformation"</p> <p>Can Council please provide the definition of "misinformation"? Can Council please provide written assurances that any contrary position to Council will not be automatically classed as "misinformation"?</p> <p>And despite Council supporting the Voice, will Council commit to also providing information to residents about the No campaign to allow residents to make their own decisions?</p>		

Indigenous activist Nyunggai Warren Mundine says the voice 'isn't our voice'.

Mundine also says the people pushing the voice are the same people who have failed Indigenous Australians for decades. Quote..., "It was dreamed up by a whole lot of people, aboriginal people, in Sydney and Melbourne. The elites in academia."

These are the same groups of people who have failed Indigenous people for decades, Mundine argued.

"The people who have been pushing this forward have been in charge of Indigenous affairs for the last 50 years. And what improvements have they done?" Mundine asked.

Is Council going to address the day-to-day problems of Indigenous people?

Is Council going to get involved in setting up Indigenous businesses..., arrange Indigenous investment..., put Indigenous people into jobs..., and ensure Indigenous kids are in school?

The government are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on this body sitting in Canberra. Aboriginal organisations are complaining that they aren't getting money, where is it going..., it's getting soaked up by this voice.

The public are very tired of Councils because they stray too far away and have headed into ideological waters rather than simply providing good service and good value.

Council use far too many consultants and specialist reports...,

- Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan Implementation \$100,000
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan \$98,000
- Inter War and Post War Heritage study review \$100,000

Councils are not state or federal government..., they are not the United Nations..., it does need to write business cases that cost half a million dollars that will have a consultant tell them what they already know.

Get the basics done right! Rather than discussing foreign aid, Australia Day, marriage equality, de-gendering of toilets or declaring..., " a Climate Emergency in December 2019 recognising the need for urgent meaningful action on human induced climate change".

Get the basics done right!

We have seen a significant shift away from really independent community advocates to polarising political candidates coming from major political parties.

Councils have now become training grounds for "wanna be" MP's..., and we are seeing more ideological warfare and less of what can be delivered for local communities.

Get the basics done right!

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my concern regarding your intention to advocate for 'The Voice'.

Historically, I have shown little interest in Council matters when Council's were focused on the fundamentals of their job i.e. Parks, Beaches, Waste, Parking, Roads & Rates ect. However, Councils steady creep into political matters has motivated me to pay more attention as to where my money is being spent, why rates continue to increase and why the fundamentals of Council play second fiddle to activism, which is out of step with the majority of the silent community.

It is an astonishing overreach of Council to advocate, for or against, any federal referendum - that is not the role of council and I object to rates being wasted on propaganda masked as education.

The community has not been consulted on this matter and the political opinions of councillors is irrelevant. Councillors should not exploit their position to push any political agenda and further divide our community. Such attempts create negative activism, disharmony and provides motivation for those aware of councils motives to amplify how Council has lost focus of its core fundamentals and more interested in their own political agendas.

I strongly object to this alarming overreach by Council and I am now driven to highlight how Council are exploiting our rates for their political agenda(s).

Seperately, 'The Voice' is the 'thin edge of the wedge' and if Australia wants to march towards a treaty and reparations as clearly repeated by Senator Lidia Thorp, then the people of Australia can decide via the referendum. Perhaps that is part of your agenda - is this an excuse for another levy on our rates notice? What's next, another specific 'Voice' for another race or focus on sexuality and gender.

This type of "advocacy" sets a dangerous precedent. My views on this matter are overwhelmingly shared within the community and any push by Council to advocate for a side of politics will create nothing but negativity and division towards you. Please stick to your role and demonstrate some leadership by role modelling best practice on the fundamentals of Council services.

Yours Sincerely
Andrew McLeod

4.	Mr Brendan Kierce	(A)
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****This below statement was submitted as a public question; however, as it does not contain a question, it has been included as a written statement. Governance.***

Regarding the item on Voice Referendum, I very strongly support option 1.
A local council should not get involved in Federal issues and certainly no ratepayer funds should ever be committed to such activities.

Please concentrate on managing our local activities and do not get involved in Federal activities, it is not the role we elected you to do.

This agenda item – for Council to take an active public stance on a radical political issue – seems well separated from usual Council business, and perhaps exceeds Council’s mandate as provided by legislations. **Council’s advocacy role surely applies to those matters under its remit—not to national politics.** Moreover, **Baysiders’ feelings** for an active and unusual Council role **have not been gauged at all.**

This council motion (as presented) relies on:-

- 1) **Consistency with Council’s approved Vision 2050 Statement**, which derives from a **wide and well-considered canvassing of community views**. But the vision specifically rejects divisive issues such as the Voice – the Vision is for a society “inclusive and accessible for ALL” races and groups. It **does not envision** radical political change to favour or define one group, and certainly rejects the idea of Council sanctioning such.
- 2) **Council’s earlier expressed support for the Uluru statement** as per its own Reconciliation Strategy. This step was taken without detailed input from constituents, despite its obvious implications. **Instead**, sectional interests predominated then in the so-called consultation, reflected by the **solitary endorsement** of the paper by Reconciliation Australia. The current exercise seems one more step along a pre-meditated course **favouring a small population group (0.3% of the city’s residents)**. **Support for the strategy is yet to be tested** by a well-informed local electorate.
- 3) **Supporting statements from Reconciliation Australia** –but these only present views of “our people” (i.e. Aboriginals) who are seen by the Uluru statement and the RA organisation as separate from “the Australian People.” **Hardly inclusive, and certainly not compatible with the Community Vision**; nor representative of the likely views of Bayside constituents
- 4) **Local views of aboriginals** ---But as stated in the agenda, these have yet to be finalised or confirmed and may not support the agenda’s views or the referendum process. **Such views anyway are hardly impartial or representative.**
- 5) **Like-minded Local Council support**: But only **38 local councils out of 537** in Australia (7%) have joined the mayoral voice – **93% have not!** This reflects concern that councils focus on what they’re elected to do. It is un-precedented that local councils get involved in national politics.
- 6) **for community sentiment, the agenda paper admits a “lack of data”** but relies again on its own RAP and indigenous members of Reconciliation Australia. This is **hardly fair or representative** of the Bayside community.
- 7) Some Councillors may regard a **sizeable contingent of supporters in the gallery** as evidence of broad community support. This **might be treated with caution** as some of those present may have been alerted –and organised --by political advocates, whilst the **broad voting community of Bayside seems unaware and is certainly unalerted.**

As a concerned and community-minded resident of Bayside I earnestly commend these views to Council and ask respectfully that Council take no position (Option1) in relation to the Voice referendum.

Stephen Le Page

6.	Mr James Campbell	(A)
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The offered recommendation attempts to put the Bayside Council and our community out in front of the Federal Government. It is for them to formally offer a form of words, inviting people to vote on the proposed Voice and it is for them to offer the pros and cons for the proposition.

Please don't presume to take a position without seeing the Federal Government's formal proposition and without engaging with the community, offering various public forums where people can have their say. Genuine debate on the issues around a change to any constitution is critical to success, through which we, i.e., all Australians may reach a consensus on something that affects us all, that being a change to our national constitution.

Whatever you may decide, please don't take a position that may divide the community. We enjoy a multi cultural community in Bayside and we support very different communities from different cultures across the length and breadth of Melbourne. Let's make sure that all have a voice even though English may not be the first language spoken in many households.

If I may, has Council considered what it can do with the State and Federal governments to Close the Gap, being a voice for ATSI or any other group of Australians that are disadvantaged in any respect when compared to others?

I look forward to reading and hearing the views of our community as we objectively engage in respectful debates on this very important issue.

7.	Ms Zoe Daniel (MP)	(F)
<p>If not us, who, if not now, when?</p> <p>That was the simple challenge I put to the voters of Goldstein less than a year ago and their answer was a resounding “Yes”.</p> <p>It applied to climate policy, it applied to revaluing women and girls, it applied to restoring trust in leadership, and it applies to the once in a generation opportunity that is now before us with the Voice.</p> <p>As I said to a community forum at the Brighton Town Hall last week – one of many I plan to hold in coming months - The Voice is a simple proposition – a simple and generous invitation – but if we do not accept it now, then when?</p> <p>The forthcoming Referendum will allow us to recognise First Nations people in our constitution.</p> <p>And then, to give First Nations people a say in the formulation of the policies and laws that affect them.</p> <p>It’s as simple as that.</p> <p>This is their generous offer and our opportunity.</p> <p>The Uluru Statement from the Heart and its three straightforward pillars:</p> <p>Voice Treaty Trust</p> <p>In short, from where I stand, the referendum is about three principles:</p> <p>Respect Recognition Results</p> <p>... practical, tangible results to Close the Gap for First Nations communities.</p> <p>Dozens of councils around the country are endorsing the Voice and a Yes vote in the referendum.</p> <p>Therefore I say to all of you now: If not us, who? If not now, when?</p>		