

Friday 31 August 2018

## **RYDE SUPPORTS THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART**

The City of Ryde has supported the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which calls for the establishment of a “First Nations Voice” to be enshrined in the Constitution of Australia.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was delivered at the First Nations National Constitutional Convention in May 2017 in which more than 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders from around Australia met to discuss constitutional reform.

The statement calls for a constitutionally enshrined "First Nations Voice". This would see the creation of a new representative body within the Federal Parliament to advise on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, while a Makarrata Commission would lay the foundation for a Treaty between federal and state governments and the First Nations. Makarrata is a Yolngu word describing a process of conflict resolution and justice.

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Jerome Laxale, said he was proud to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart on behalf of Council and the entire Ryde community.

“The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a passionate, heart-felt and conciliatory piece of work that proposes proper recognition for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, that many would argue is long overdue,” Clr Laxale said.

“The last sentence of the statement states: ‘we invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future’. By supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Ryde community is making a commitment to help ensure that this better future will ultimately be achieved for all Australians.”

The motion to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart was put forward by City of Ryde Deputy Mayor, Clr Christopher Gordon.

“With the approximate location of the grave of one of the most significant Aboriginal figures in history - Woollarawarre Bennelong - recently identified in Putney, the City of Ryde has an obligation of honouring this man and the ancient history of this land,” Clr Gordon said.

“The Uluru Statement from the Heart shows we not only support the establishment of a ‘First Nations Voice’ to be enshrined in the Constitution of Australia, but also a future in which the rights and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are appropriately reflected.”

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the City of Ryde will also submit a motion for Local Government NSW to consider at the organisation’s next conference in October.

## **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.*

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