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The Liberal Party's Response to the Voice Disappointing and Disrespectful

"The Statement from the Heart was never about politics." said Brooke Prentis, Aboriginal Christian Leader and First Nations spokesperson for the Wellspring Community of Australia. "Voice, Treaty, and Truth, which was also the 2019 NAIDOC Week theme, and First Nations justice is also not about politics. "

The Australian Wellspring Community is deeply disappointed to hear of the Liberal Party's recent announcements about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament including the disrespect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples referring to the Voice as "divisive", "race based", and a "Canberra Voice". The Voice to Parliament as well as Treaty and treaties, and a National Truth-Telling Commission are the three central calls of the 2017 Statement from the Heart and are a heartfelt plea to the nation of Australia.

The Statement from the Heart is the culmination of decades, if not centuries, of Aboriginal voices, including but not limited to the 1887 Maloga Petition, the 1927 requests of Jimmy Clements and John Noble, William Cooper's 1937 petition, the 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petitions, the 1988 Barunga Statement, the 1991 song 'Treaty' by Yothu Yindi, the 2001 Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation, the 2016 Redfern Statement, and many, many, more. We also acknowledge the many injustices still present today which Aboriginal leaders have been campaigning for change for many decades including Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the lack of Closing the Gap, and the age of criminal responsibility at 10 years old #RaiseTheAge and many others. We acknowledge the leadership and courage of Aboriginal peoples over many generations.

Australia's Constitution should be separate from any political party. "The time is now" said Brooke " for all peoples of all cultures in these lands now called Australia to embrace and see true justice, healing, and Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the oldest, living, continuing cultures in the world."

"The Liberal Party led the push in the 1967 Referendum to have Aboriginal peoples counted in the Census. A landmark achievement. Their response to the Voice has us asking what has happened to their soul and their moral fibre?" said Joy Connor, Co-leader Wellspring Community of Australia.

We in the Wellspring Community accept the invitation and echo the invitation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Statement from the Heart to walk together "in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."

We in the Wellspring Community will continue to pray, listen, and take action for justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for the common good of our nation and our world.

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