



**Australians for a Murdoch Royal Commission Submission on the
*Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and
Disinformation) Bill 2023***

About Australians for a Murdoch Royal Commission

Australians for a Murdoch Royal Commission (AFMRC) is a non-partisan association committed to researching and advocating for media diversity in Australia. Our core objective is for legal reform to ensure a strong, free and diverse Australian media.

We believe that only a Royal Commission would have the powers and independence needed to properly investigate media concentration and behaviour in Australia, and make the necessary recommendations for media regulation that is fit for purpose in the digital era, including combatting mis- and disinformation.

Our campaign has demonstrated an unprecedented level of public support with more than 500,000 people signing Australia's largest ever petition calling for a Royal Commission into Australian media diversity.

We thank the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023*.

Executive Summary

AFMRC welcomes the government's recognition that Australia is in urgent need of new regulation to combat the spread of mis- and disinformation online and that the ACMA is currently ill-equipped to deal with the issue.

However, we are concerned that the bill as drafted will be largely ineffective in combating mis- and disinformation. Our concerns are based on the fact that:

1. Digital platforms have an appalling track record of self-regulating mis- and disinformation. We do not believe that any co-regulation model between government and industry can effectively combat online mis- and disinformation.
2. Some of the most damaging mis- and disinformation is generated at the intersection of demonstrably false content that is produced by professional news outlets and the online spaces where this content is spread. Any regulatory attempt to combat online mis- and disinformation must recognise this dynamic, which this legislation currently fails to do.

We also argue that the ACMA is currently unfit for purpose and the additional resources and powers proposed in this bill will be insufficient to build the capability and public trust needed to perform this crucial role. The ACMA has repeatedly proven itself unable to fulfil its current role of online and broadcast media regulation.

The Australian public would be better served by the establishment of an independent media regulator with substantial resourcing and appropriate powers to combat the dissemination of mis- and disinformation.

Ineffectiveness of co-regulation and relying on digital platforms to combat mis- and disinformation

Despite the ACMA's shortcomings, we support the ACMA being given the power to request industry develop a code of practice covering measures to combat misinformation and disinformation on digital platforms, and that the ACMA be given

the power to create and enforce an industry standard (a stronger form of regulation), should a code of practice be deemed ineffective in combating misinformation and disinformation on digital platforms.

While we welcome these increased requirements on digital platforms, we do not believe that combatting mis- and disinformation is something that can be effectively dealt with by industry-lead self-regulation. As noted in the submission from the Human Rights Law Centre, digital platforms have repeatedly demonstrated they are incapable of self-regulation with disastrous consequences around the world.

We are concerned that this bill, as drafted, leaves an incredibly important function as the joint responsibility between multinational tech platforms that profit from algorithms that privilege anger inducing content and an Australian regulator that has proven woefully ineffective in even its current functions.

How 'professional news' spreads mis- and disinformation

There is an enormous body of evidence demonstrating the way that mis- and disinformation is disseminated by the Murdoch Press before it is spread and distributed in online spaces, with devastating results. A recent high profile example of this was the role Fox News played in spreading disinformation about the legitimacy of the 2020 US election which culminated in an attempted coup and attack on the US Capitol.

As currently drafted, the *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023* fails to recognise this incredibly destructive and dangerous dynamic by excluding 'professional news' from the scope of the proposed industry standards. Given the political and societal damage that is regularly inflicted by the Murdoch Press, which would fall under this bill's definition of 'professional news', this is a concerning regulatory shortcoming.

Rather than being excluded from attempts to combat mis- and disinformation, professional outlets such as Sky News must be regulated to more stringent standards of mis- and disinformation than general online content.

The presence of known media brands or mastheads, coupled with signs of legitimacy that come from a significant budget (for example professional graphic design or high production value video segments), imbue audiences with an automatic sense of trust. News Corp systemically uses these signifiers of legitimate journalism to mask the spread of mis- and disinformation, which is arguably more damaging than user generated mis- and disinformation and online content that cannot be traced to a direct source.

The Murdoch Press plays a clear role in disseminating dangerous mis- and disinformation that permeates beyond fringe, radical online spaces and into mainstream debates.

We have detailed below some of the most egregious examples of News Corp's mis- and disinformation, including some insights from research AFMRC has commissioned to observe the role the Murdoch Press in playing in spreading anti-Voice mis- and disinformation in the lead up to the referendum.

However, we would like to emphasise that this set of examples is far from exhaustive as the sheer volume of mis- and disinformation spread by the Murdoch Press is near impossible to document.

Fox News' role in the January 6 riots

The role that Fox News, American sister company to Sky News Australia, played in the January 6 2021 riots in Washington DC has been extensively analysed and documented, with a trove of evidence being presented in the Dominion Voting Systems defamation proceedings.

Given the enormous amount of high-profile commentary that already exists, this submission will not go into extensive detail on the matter. However, we would like to note that:

- Fox News knowingly perpetrated Donald Trump's lie that the 2020 US Presidential election was stolen.¹
- The role that Fox News played in platforming and legitimising this lie played a significant role in the devastating events that transpired on January 6 2021.²
- There are substantial parallels between Fox News and Sky News Australia in terms of a shared business model that is premised on creating fear and division, increasingly radical editorial agendas, and a systematic disregard for basic journalistic standards.

Accordingly, we believe that the events of January 6 2021 are relevant to any regulatory discussion about how mis- and disinformation spread by professional news outlets should be regulated in Australia. This is a clear cut example of how dangerous mis- and disinformation from the Murdoch Press can be and we urgently need strong new regulatory mechanisms to protect Australia from similar outcomes.

Sky News Australia's dissemination of COVID disinformation

In recent years, Sky News Australia has pursued an aggressive YouTube strategy. The most radical content from their broadcast programs is packaged up, often with highly inflammatory titles, into short video clips that are available online. At the time of writing, Sky News Australia has 3.49 million YouTube subscribers which is more than ABC News and 7News combined.³

We would like to draw attention to the role that Sky News' YouTube channel played in spreading COVID disinformation and use it to illustrate why platform-lead attempts to combat mis- and disinformation are ineffective.

1. At the height of the pandemic, Sky news released a series of videos promoting COVID disinformation on their Youtube channel.⁴ After an

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/16/business/media/fox-dominion-lawsuit.html>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/01/fox-news-dominion-lawsuits-trump-election-lies>

³

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jul/25/indigenous-voice-to-parliament-sky-news-falsehoods-referendum>

⁴

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/aug/01/sky-news-australia-banned-from-youtube-for-seven-days-over-covid-misinformation>

onslaught of escalating misinformation and complaints, YouTube eventually suspended Sky's channel. However, the account was only suspended for 7 days and the offending videos were ultimately broadcast live to millions without consequence. Despite the fact that YouTube actually took action against Sky News' COVID disinformation, their actions were insufficient in limiting the damage.

2. Sky news routinely employed "experts" to mislead viewers and spread disinformation. For example, Sky's 'Outsiders' program aired on 11 December 2022 featured a naturopath – Mark Sherwood – giving his "medical opinion" on matters of immunology. The hosts also referred to Sherwood as "doctor" multiple times. Sky later placed a small correction on a rarely accessed page of their website confirming that Sherwood was not in fact a doctor, but this does nothing to address the harm done to people who took the advice.⁵

Clearly, a major news media outlet spreading health misinformation during a global pandemic has the potential to cause serious harm and it is unlikely that we will ever truly know the extent of the damage done by Sky News Australia's coverage during this period. We would like to note that while YouTube did take some welcome steps towards trying to stymie this flow of mis- and disinformation, those efforts were ultimately insufficient in combating its detrimental impacts.

The Murdoch Press' anti-Voice disinformation

AFMRC has commissioned the *Murdoch Referendum Accountability Project* to investigate the role the Murdoch Press is playing in the public debate leading up to the Voice referendum. This work is being lead by Dr Victoria Fielding who is managing a team of three media experts at the University of Adelaide.

A random sample of 126 pieces of Voice-related content from The Australian, The Herald Sun, The Daily Telegraph and Sky News YouTube are being analysed each

⁵ <https://www.crikey.com.au/2023/02/13/sky-news-australia-anti-mask-naturopathic-doctor/>

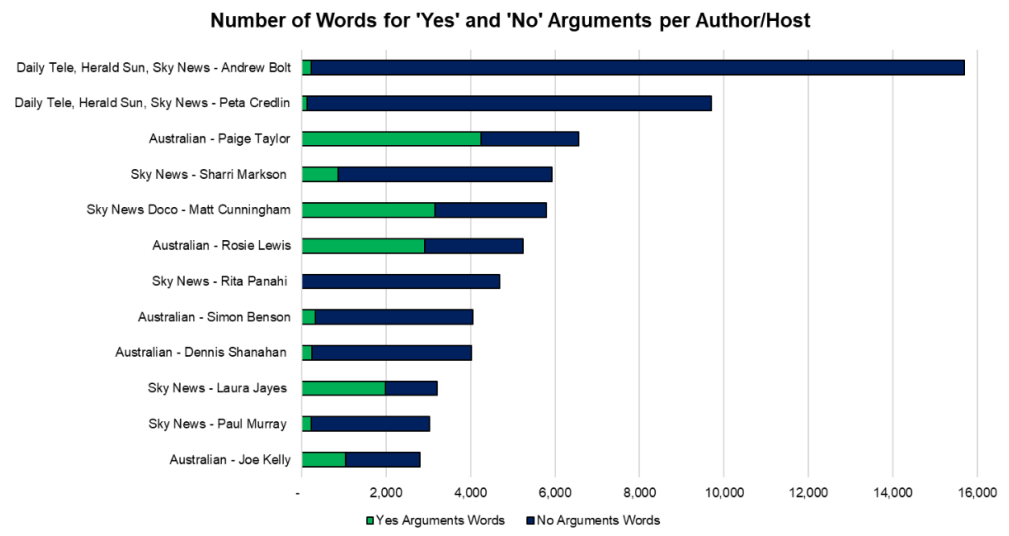
week. This rigorous analysis takes place at the word-specific level and looks at voice and sources used and included, arguments used and any characterisations present.

The project is currently in the early stages with only three weeks of analysis currently completed. However, there are a few key insights that are relevant to this submission. AFMRC would welcome the opportunity to present the project's full findings after the referendum.

When it comes to the Voice, there is a clear divide between the journalistic standards applied by News Corp's reporters (for example Rosie Lewis and Paige Taylor) in comparison to its more radical commentators (for example Andrew Bolt and Peta Credlin). Unlike Voice coverage from News Corp's reporters, which has tended towards being balanced and well researched, much of the content generated by high-profile commentators has been premised on misinformation. We are concerned that this bill would extend protections intended for legitimate journalism to such commentators as they fall under the banner of 'professional news' as currently defined in this bill.

As is detailed in the graphs below, commentators Andrew Bolt and Peta Credlin are by far News Corp's most prolific producers (by word) on this particular issue. While we do not currently have data to apply to other issues areas, we believe that it would be illuminating to see if this same dynamic is present in News Corp's coverage of other contentious political issues.

'YES' AND 'NO' BALANCE - PROLIFIC AUTHORS/HOSTS

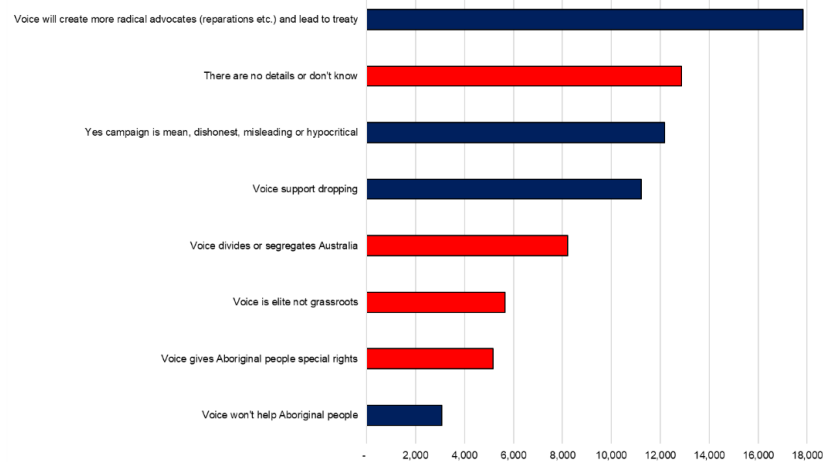


We are concerned that, as drafted, the *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023* would fall short in combating mis- and disinformation that is disseminated online by Murdoch Media commentators.

The graph below provides a breakdown of the Murdoch Press' most used arguments against the Voice. Those marked in red are the arguments that are highly-reliant on misinformation.

MOST USED ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE VOICE

Eight Most Used 'No' Arguments Against Voice By Words - All Outlets



In some instances, News Corp gives a platform to external sources in order to spread this misinformation, but in others News Corp commentators play a clear role in creating the misinformation in the first place. An especially egregious example of this is Peta Credlin's recent claim that the Uluru Statement from the Heart is not one, but twenty six pages long. This specific example is explored in more detail below.

Case study: Sky News misinformation regarding the Uluru Statement

The claim that the Uluru Statement from the Heart is not one but 26 pages long is clearly and demonstrably false. We have provided substantial evidence on this point in Appendix A and would like to note that we will be submitting this information as a complaint to both Southern Cross and to the ACMA.

This misinformation was generated by Sky News commentator Peta Credlin, who, as the data above demonstrates, is one of the Murdoch Press' most prolific content creators on the Voice. It is fair to say that given News Corp's dominance in the Australian media landscape and Peta Credlin's prominent position within the News Corp ecosystem, that she is one of the most platformed contributors to the public debate surrounding the referendum.

Even fellow Sky News commentator Chris Kenny spoke out against this misinformation saying that “[Credlin’s claims] are simply untrue... All this focus on conspiracies instead of actual arguments is the very definition of a fear campaign... There are some rational arguments against the Voice. I just don’t buy them. But the scare campaigns, the conspiracy theories and the fear mongering should stop.. We’ve got to call out the scares and centre on the reality”.⁶

We recognise that Meta, based on advice from RMIT Fact Lab, did label some of Sky News’ content on this matter as misinformation.⁷ However, News Corp continues to perpetrate this falsehood across multiple outlets, demonstrating that even when digital platforms attempt to intervene on mis- and disinformation spread by professional news outlets, it is largely ineffective.

Recommendations

While AFMRC welcomes the government’s recognition that stronger regulation is needed to combat the spread of mis- and disinformation online, we do not believe that this bill as drafted will achieve its stated objectives. In order to strengthen *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023* we recommend that:

1. There be a move away from co-regulatory models when regulators oversee codes of practice put in place by digital platforms. Instead, regulators should be empowered to both create and enforce standards.
2. The government recognise that ‘professional news’, and in particular the Murdoch Press, plays a major role in the mis- and dis-information ecosystem. Rather than being excluded from new regulation initiatives, ‘professional news’ should be held to a higher standard of truth than general online content.

We acknowledge that a major overhaul of Australia’s online and broadcast media regulator is an enormously complex task. We do not advocate a specific approach or

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liAEFPDUE_g&t=2s

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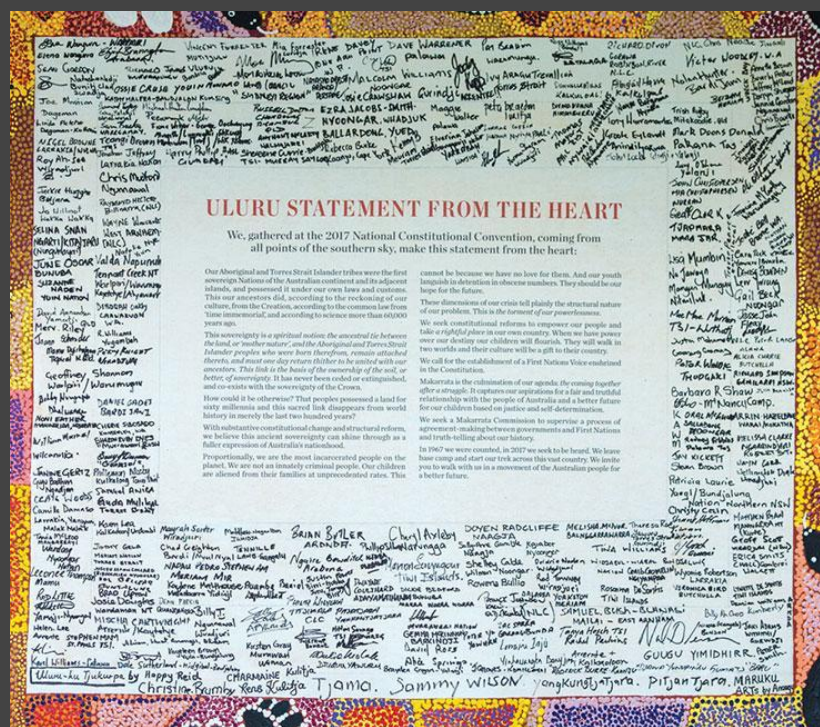
<https://www.skynews.com.au/opinion/peta-credlin/credlin-blasts-censorship-of-her-post-amid-fears-a-voice-will-dispense-of-free-speech/video/1ed8f36192123f4a5bfd10189fadd7bf>

model for this beyond that a new regulator should be independent, adequately resourced, and have appropriate powers to fulfil its function including the ability to hold media companies to account for irresponsibly platforming disinformation.

AFMRC believes that only a Royal Commission will have the independence and powers to properly gather evidence about the role that the media plays in disseminating mis- and disinformation, and to recommend appropriate reforms.

Appendix A

On 26 May 2017, more than 250 delegates to the National Constitutional Convention at Mutitjulu adopted the Uluru Statement from the Heart – a one-page proposal for a process of reconciliation that included the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.⁸



On 3 August 2023, Sky News Regional aired a segment on the basis of a 26-page document released by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) in response to an application under Freedom of Information (FOI). The application sought “detailed meeting outcomes and transcripts for the First Nations Regional Dialogues, information session, and

⁸ <https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/event/first-nations-regional-dialogue-in-ulu.html>

National Constitutional Convention”.⁹ The segment cited this document to claim, “the Uluru Statement from Heart is not a one-page document; it’s actually 26 pages in all”. This document was further described as:

- “the full Statement from the Heart”;
- “the full Uluru Statement document”;
- “the full 26 pages of the Statement of the Heart”;
- “the full 26 pages of the Uluru Statement”; and
- “the full 26-page Uluru Statement”.

In reality, only one of these 26 pages comprised the Uluru Statement from the Heart (i.e. the page titled ‘Uluru Statement from the Heart’. The remaining 25 pages is a collation of background notes, meeting summaries and diagrams produced during the deliberative process that informed the drafting of the statement.

The largest section is ‘Our Story’ which, while not part of the Uluru Statement itself, was “a synthesis of the Records of Meetings of the First Nations Regional Dialogues ... produced by the Referendum Council ... (that) recounted the themes that emerged in the Dialogues”.

This has been confirmed by NIAA chief executive Jody Broun:

“The Uluru statement from the heart is one page, signed by delegates at the national convention in 2017. The authors of the Uluru statement from the heart have confirmed this. The additional pages contained in document 14 of FOI 2223/016 are background and excerpts drawn from the regional dialogues.”¹⁰

And by Chris Kenny, a member of the Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process:

“The documents that she has been brandishing are the one-page Uluru Statement and attached to it all sorts of background papers and discussion summaries and roadmaps and even diagrams... Rather obviously they are not the Uluru Statement, they are not part of the Uluru Statement.”¹¹

⁹ <https://www.niaa.gov.au/foi/agency-foi-disclosure-logs>

¹⁰

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/aug/09/indigenous-australians-agency-refutes-ja-cinta-prices-claim-that-uluru-statement-is-26-pages>

¹¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liAEFPDUE_g

It is also confirmed by University of NSW Pro-Vice Chancellor Megan Davis, who was selected to read the statement at the convention's closing ceremony in 2017:

“The Uluru Statement from the Heart is one page. It's very simple. The unceasing attempts from the No campaign to take draft documents from conference rooms seven years ago and transcriptions of butchers paper seven years ago to manufacture a controversy over the Uluru Statement is farcical.”¹²

Copies of the Uluru Statement's complete 439-word text are held by public libraries around the country including the National Library of Australia, the Australian Parliamentary Library¹³, the Central Land Council Library¹⁴ and the Australasian Legal Information Institute¹⁵. The Uluru Statement's complete text has been reproduced repeatedly in peer-reviewed scholarship including in the Australian Law Journal¹⁶, Bond Law Review¹⁷, University of Notre Dame Australia Law Review¹⁸, University of Sydney Law School Legal Studies Research Paper Series¹⁹ and the Journal of the Law Society Northern Territory²⁰. It was reproduced in the two multipartisan reports of the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in 2018, against which no committee members dissented²¹. It has been reproduced by media outlets including the Sydney Morning Herald²², Australian Financial Review²³, West Australian²⁴, Canberra

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<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/uluru-smear-job-reeks-of-desperation-from-no-camp/news-story/6674a2e58308dee6d23b0afcd93bf163>

13 https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/jrnart/5308706/upload_binary/5308706.PDF;

14 <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/228271865>

15 <https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/other/IndigLRes/2017/1.html>

16 <https://livepages.thomsonreuters.com.au/media/15619/alj-vol-91-no-7-contents.pdf>

17 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/BondLawRw/2018/3.pdf>

18 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/journals/UNDAULawRw/2019/6.html>

19 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/journals/USydLRS/2020/4.html>

20 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/journals/BalJINTLawSoc/2019/49.html>

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<https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/summary/summary.w3p;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Author%3A%22Australia.%20Parliament.%20Joint%20Select%20Committee%20on%20Constitutional%20Recognition%20Relating%20to%20Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Peoples%22;resCount=Default>

22 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 May 2019, page 4

23 The Australian Financial Review, 11 June 2019, page 45

24

<https://thewest.com.au/news/indigenous-australians/statement-from-the-heart-calls-for-voice-treaty-truth-c-10772223>

Times²⁵, ABC²⁶, SBS²⁷, InDaily²⁸, 7 News²⁹, 9 News³⁰, Saturday Paper³¹, Australian Geographic³², Quadrant³³, Crikey³⁴, The Monthly³⁵, Griffith Review³⁶, Shepparton News³⁷, Alice Springs News³⁸, Fremantle Shipping News³⁹, Bega District News⁴⁰, Singleton Argus⁴¹, Byron Echo⁴², Daily Mail⁴³ and Armidale Express⁴⁴. And it was reproduced in the one-page

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<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8210170/statement-from-the-heart-calls-for-voice-treaty-truth/>

26

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-31/what-is-an-indigenous-voice-to-parliament-and-uluru-statement/101285958>

27

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/uluru-forum-to-pursue-makarrata-instead-of-symbolic-recognition/0v24c5x7i>

28 <https://indaily.com.au/news/2017/05/29/joyce-says-he-cant-sell-uluru-constitutional-proposal/>

29

<https://7news.com.au/news/indigenous-australians/anthony-albanese-has-committed-to-the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart-this-is-what-it-means-c-6946829>

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<https://www.9news.com.au/national/indigenous-voice-parliament-referendum-explainer-australia-politics-details-wording-constitution/24b269cc-03fd-412f-ab60-ba1dec6925ec>

31 <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/comment/editorial/2023/08/11/better-future#mtr>

32

<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2022/05/what-is-the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart/>

33 <https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2018/09/how-the-left-captured-professional-associations/>

34 <https://www.crikey.com.au/2017/10/27/uluru-statement-from-the-heart/>

35

<https://www.themonthly.com.au/blog/kerry-o-brien/2019/09/2019/1570582638/we-will-not-be-complete>

36 <https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/when-the-heart-speaks/>

37 <https://www.sheppnews.com.au/opinion/reconciliation-in-action-uluru-statement/>

38

<https://alicespringsnews.com.au/2017/05/27/first-nations-want-a-voice-enshrined-in-the-constitution/>

39

<https://fremantleshippingnews.com.au/2022/05/24/5-years-on-uluru-statement-from-the-heart-a-priority/>

40

<https://www.begadistrictnews.com.au/story/7875593/what-is-the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart-and-how-does-it-promote-a-voice-to-parliament/>

41

<https://www.singletonargus.com.au/story/8210170/statement-from-the-heart-calls-for-voice-treaty-truth/>

42 <https://www.echo.net.au/2018/06/supporting-uluru-statement-heart/>

43

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12269191/Treaty-referendum-Albaneses-Voice-Parliament-successful.html>

44

<https://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/story/8210170/statement-from-the-heart-calls-for-voice-treaty-truth/>

statement was reproduced in the Explanatory Memorandum to the legislation enabling the referendum⁴⁵.

We have identified no examples of anyone previously contacting any of these institutions to inform them that their records are faulty and the Uluru Statement is, in fact, a 26-page document.

Sky News' segment further alleged a six-year deception spanning multiple rival prime ministers and governments to shield this alleged "full statement" from public view.

The document was described as:

- an "until now secret document";
- material "the government's been forced to release ... under Freedom of Information (FOI)"
- material "available only under FOI only";
- a "document hidden from voters until now";
- material the government had been "keeping ... from voters"; and
- something "that those pushing for the Voice hoped you would never ever see".

In reality, these records have been in the public domain for more than six years, having been substantially reproduced in the Final Report of the Referendum Council (FRRRC) of 30 June 2017⁴⁶. The below chart indicates where the first 20 pages of the document may be located in the report:

Document	Description	FOI pages	FRRRC pages
Uluru Statement from the Heart	The Uluru Statement from the Heart	1	i
Our Story	A synthesis of the records of the meetings of the First Nations Regional Dialogues	2-7	16-21

⁴⁵ http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/bill_em/caatsiv2023659/memo_0.html

⁴⁶

https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/sites/default/files/report_attachments/Referendum_Council_Final_Report.pdf

Guiding Principles	Principles distilled from the Dialogues from which the National Constitutional Convention deliberated	8-14	22-28
Reform Priorities	Diagrams depicting the Dialogues' views on the reform proposals; an assessment of possible reform options against the Guiding Principles; and analysis of the three proposals agreed by the Convention.	15-20	15, 29-32

The final five pages comprise a “roadmap” summarising the Convention delegates’ understanding of how the Uluru Statement would be advanced by a working group. Regardless of whether these papers were published in full, their substance was not secret. The content has been ventilated publicly, including in two submissions by the Working Group to the Parliament’s Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples⁴⁷ and remarks by individuals who participated at the National Constitutional Convention.

For example, Sky News’ segment claimed:

“The full 26 pages of the Uluru Statement also set out in granular detail things such as the Voice being – and I quote – accommodated on an appropriate site within the parliamentary circle in Canberra. It says that it must also be supported with a sufficient and guaranteed budget with access to its own independent secretariat, experts and lawyers. That’s all on page 22 of the until-now secret document.”

These suggestions for the structure of the Voice have been well ventilated. For example, on the Voice potentially being allocated offices near Parliament, Noel Pearson has said:

“It is a voice to the Parliament rather than a voice in the Parliament. It will be hopefully a body that’s established here in the Parliamentary triangle in Canberra.”⁴⁸;

⁴⁷

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Former_Committees/Constitutional_Recognition_2018/ConstRecognition/Submissions

⁴⁸ <https://www.abc.net.au/ganda/1967-and-mabo---moving-forward/10651000>

Shireen Morris has also expressed this view:

“It should stand proudly in the Parliamentary triangle: a permanent Indigenous representative voice in our democracy.”⁴⁹

And Jackie Huggins and Rod Little:

“Perhaps one day in the future a new building will stand in the Parliamentary Triangle... Canberra would be a different and better place if it included a formal, permanent place for First Peoples’ voices to be heard.”⁵⁰

Nor are suggestions that the Voice be funded and staffed a secret. For example, the Final Report to the Australian Government of the Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process stated:

- “The Parliament would appropriate money to fund the new entity through the budget process”;
- “The National Voice members would be supported by its own Office of the National Voice to provide policy and administrative support”; and
- “The Office of the National Voice would have access to legal counsel”⁵¹

Further, the segment falsely claimed that the Australian Government intended to implement every element of the 26-page collation. For example, it said:

“It’s this complete statement – all 26 pages – that the Prime Minister has declared time and time again that his government is committed to implementing in full.”

The report also, on the same page as the erroneous note, describes ‘Our Story’ as “a synthesis of the Records of Meetings of the First Nations Regional Dialogues” that preceded the National Constitutional Convention. It is an adjacent document to the Uluru Statement but is not part of it.

This is confirmed by Mark Leibler, co-chair of the Referendum Council:

49

<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-uluru-statement-from-the-heart-australias-greatest-moral-cha/10094924>

⁵⁰ <https://www.blackincbooks.com.au/books/rightful-place-0>

51

https://voice.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/indigenous-voice-co-design-process-final-report_1.pdf

“I was at Uluru for the national convention and witnessed the adoption of the Statement. It was a one page statement. It should not be confused with records of discussions which were never adopted by delegates at the Convention”⁵²

And by Mr Leibler’s co-chair, Pat Anderson:

“The Uluru Statement from The Heart is a one-pager. It’s 439 words.”⁵³

⁵² <https://twitter.com/LeiblerMark/status/1688839846524301312>

⁵³

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-09/pat-anderson-reveals-the-truth-behind-length-of/102710022>