



Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility
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20 April 2023

Committee Secretary,
Joint Select Committee on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum
PO Box 6201
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: jscvr@aph.gov.au

Dear Colleague,

Inquiry into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum:

Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) 2023 (Inquiry)

Thank you for your consideration of the following brief submission to the Inquiry.

The Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR) is a research and shareholder advocacy organisation. We advocate for the interests of shareholders in Australian and overseas publicly-listed companies. We are philanthropically funded, not-for-profit, and independent. We are a member of both the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) and the Responsible Investment Association of Australasia (RIAA).

[ACCR wholeheartedly supports the referendum proposal to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.](#)

Forming one of the three pillars of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Voice is a beneficial, if modest, measure aimed towards ensuring that Australian decision-makers are informed of the likely impacts of their decisions and actions upon Indigenous communities.

The moral imperative of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is self-evident, and overdue. We are fortunate indeed to be able to share in this magnificent country. Australians' support for the Voice would be only a small gesture of our gratitude.

Taken together with the other pillars of the Uluru Statement, namely Makarrata and truth-telling, the Voice has the potential to contribute substantially to improving social harmony in this country. A stable and predictable operating environment is essential to the functioning of business.

ACCR engages extensively with major companies which operate in the extractives sector in Australia. These activities disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples and their enjoyment of fundamental rights. Extractives companies are well-represented in Australia in legislative and policy processes, directly and through lobbyists and trade associations. Indigenous peoples are patently under-represented. One need look no further than Rio Tinto's destruction of Juukan Gorge (and its legality) to understand that under-representation of Indigenous perspectives in regulatory systems relating to the extractives sector can have perverse and unacceptable consequences.

Therefore we consider the Voice proposal to be good for business and good for shareholders.

We would be pleased to elaborate further upon request.

Yours sincerely,

James Fitzgerald

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