

Great. Well, thank you all so much for joining us this evening on zoom.

We have 84 people who have joined us

and on Facebook we have an audience there as well.

Apologies for the little hiccup in technology.

I'm Jen Blyth and I'm from Deaf Australia.

I am currently here on the ancestral land of the Wurundjeri people, part of the Kulin Nation, Naarm, which is also is Melbourne.

and I'm really grateful to be here tonight. Brent, over to you.

Thanks, Jen. I'm Brent Phillips.

I'm also in Naarm/Melbourne on the country.

Uh, it's a very special night to get everyone together.

It sure is.

We also want to say a huge thank you to Jody Barney for joining us this evening.

We'll have a conversation around

the referendum and then we'll have four

panelists, guest speakers speaking about views from yes and no

for the upcoming referendum vote.

And then we'll have a Q & A session.

You can pop your question in the Q & A chat.

You can put it in the Q & A area, which won't be seen,

so it's best to put it in the chat.

We also have our Facebook questions as well,

so we will have a team passing on questions from Facebook.

If there are any racist comments,

we will shut that down straight away and you will be kicked out of the livestream.

We, sometimes, people may,

or there might be a bit bit of misunderstanding,
but people don't mean to make a comment that is seen as racist.
But any racist or racism,
any racist language or racism will not be tolerated tonight.
Yeah, we want to ensure that this is a safe, respectful space for everyone.
It's a very important topic for the deaf community,
and the Australian community has been talking about this topic for quite a
while, and it's our time as a deaf community to speak to this topic,
and we want to ensure that it's a safe,
respectful space to have that discussion. Before we proceed further,
I do want to acknowledge we have nearly a hundred people in attendance in the
webinar as well as many watching via Facebook standing on their countries.
Want to acknowledge elders past, present, and emerging.
This is a, a deaf, Australia deaf connect partnership.
'cause we want to ensure the Australian deaf community gets the information in
their first language to help everyone have an informed
vote on the 14th of October to have that information and that understanding of
what they're voting for. That yes or no vote is your decision.
It's your choice to go either way.
We are presenting this as a neutral party with no bias to the information
provided, and that is our aim tonight.
But also know that the four panelists will have their own personal views and
they may be strong, uh, whether it's yes or no,

but they are their own views and people have the right to have different views

and perspectives regardless, uh,

of other people's thoughts because everyone has their own background.

So it's important to respect everyone's individual views. On that note,

I'm gonna ask Jody Barney to turn your camera on and join us.

Wanna make sure I haven't forgotten any comments? Haven't forgotten anything.

Hi, Jody.

Hi everyone. Thank you so much. A great job doing the intro.

Before we start,

it's my cultural responsibility and my cultural responsibility

is to acknowledge the countries upon where we all are this

evening, and upon which land I'm on Yorta Yorta,

the Yorta Yorta people here in Shepparton, Victoria,

Melbourne, Australia.

I would like to pay respects to all ancestors who have looked after our land

and respects to all our ancestors and leaders past, present,

and emerging.

I would also like to acknowledge that my elders in the north

who are watching this evening to ensure that

I am following the cultural protocols appropriately.

My uncle Tom and Auntie Barb

are both watching,

and I thank you both for your advice in how to ensure that

the cultural authority and the the protocols are followed to ensure a

smooth process using auslan and sign language and making sure our culture is

respected and that it is a safe conversation to ensure that

we continue this well into the future.

I would also like to thank before we start,

the interpreters who are working with us this evening.

The interpreters will be working very hard, so I want to say thank the,

I wanna thank all three of them this evening.

I also would like to thank both Deaf Connect and Deaf Australia

for asking me and inviting me to MC this evening.

I want to ensure that I am MCing in an appropriately led situation

We have four speakers this evening,

I agree there will be some differing views and perspectives and different

opinions of each speaker.

They have knowledge and expertise and experience each as individuals,

and I thank all four for joining us and for their time.

It's an opportunity for them to join the deaf and hard of hearing space this

evening and to see how this conversation

will be run tonight and also to observe

it happening in Auslan and that it's in a safe environment.

If anyone out there in the First Nations community do feel at any point that

something is not right, please feel free to reach out to me.

the team will be recording and

making sure they respond to any questions or comments throughout

this evening. If we don't, if we're not able to do it tonight,

we will follow up in the coming days.

I also would like to acknowledge all First Nations people who are watching this

evening and a big shout out

to knowing that our future is going to be determined soon.

On 14th October

I'll start with sharing a bits of a history lesson,

and there will be a slide that shares a little bit

of what's happened in the past.

There are some people in the community who aren't aware,

but the information to be shared is not in its entirety,

but we will be sharing some information.

They are snapshots of history information

just to ensure that people are informed and that they can see and learn about

how we've come to where we are this evening.

The thoughts that we also wanna give you the opportunity to think

and to share this information without bias so that you can make empowered

decisions; informed decisions.

So you can decide on 14 October to vote in a way that you feel is right and that

you feel comfortable with for is for you and your family.

So I hope this evening will be enjoyable as well.

I am not one to let heavy topics,

become a burden on anyone.

So we will speak more around how our cultural

needs are looked after and also expectations and relationships,

a across all other people who are in across Australia this evening.

I would like to thank my family
who, I shouldn't have laughed, as
my family who are suffering and
cooking for themselves tonight so that I could do this live stream.
Hopefully they won't burn the house down while I'm here. Fingers
crossed.

Okay. On that note, if we can start the PowerPoint, please.

I would like to ensure that everyone can see that
so that our presentations are on time,
and so our speakers have the opportunity to speak on time.

So can I ask the team a working hard in the background to share
their

PowerPoint, please?

The second one, please.

And if we can make that full screen, that would be great so people
can see it.

And also we want to make sure that you can also see me at the same
time.

Great. Okay.

So we know that there was a ship that came to Australia
and it sailed along the East Coast and Captain Cook.

There was a lot of people who learned at school that Captain Cook
was

the first people who sailed to Australia was actually along the West
Coast in 1606.

They were searching and
they were Dutch explorers,
William Dam Damper,
and another individual.

They sailed along the coast a few times. There were a few boats

and they sailed around Australia.

Then along the East Coast, the British, and English,
they said that that's where

Captain Cook stuck the flag in and said that he discovered
Australia because he didn't see any people.

The people across Australia,

they were people here, but they said, well,

they're not humans because they're not British.

they're not white. So they weren't human according to them.

Sorry.

Uh, sorry to interrupt.

No worries. Thank you. We'll fix that. Thank you.

Jen was just explaining that people on Facebook can't see Jody,

they can only see the interpreter. So we are just fixing that in the
background.

So people on Zoom can see me just fine.

But people who are on the Facebook live stream

we're on the live stream there.

We are just working out the technological issues there just to make
sure that,

we can all see everything that needs to be seen.

They're just working that out now.

I think Facebook's configuration. Jody, can you see me?

Sorry, I can't see the interpreter now from Jody.

I'm the only one on screen.

Yes. It's only me now.

I think other people are commenting in the chat that they can only
see the same.

Okay, Jody, hi. Sorry. Um, just to let you know if you,

I'm sorry everyone for watching through these technological issues.
Uh,

so the reason that people on Facebook could only see the interpreter
is because

Facebook relies on the voice. So that's what's spot.

And they couldn't see you signing. So if you click on your screen
gallery,

you'll be able to see the interpreter even though you are spot.

Uh, that's better. Thank you. Lovely.

So I'll turn my spotlight off and hopefully

we'll be able to continue and everything will be all signed now.

Great. Thank you for that.

Thank you to the tech team working behind the scenes and
doing that fantastic work you're doing.

So when Captain Cook's team sailed over,
they set up a colony,

and that was in 1788,

but that's what we learned in history, isn't it?

But not many people actually learn that over 400
people were killed. There were massacres,

there were, there were people all across Australia
from different mobs who were killed.

And the people in these mobs were killed by the colonists
in 1788 up until the 1930s.

And that's our history, 400 massacres in that time.

So we need to be conscious of how the generations before us
were harmed and how they're,

they were taken over and they were colonised.

Okay, next slide, please.

So Australia was established,

and then there were different states,

and there's the years listed on the PowerPoint. New South Wales was 1788.

Tasmania was 1825.

Western Australia was 1829.

South Australia was 1836.

Victoria was 1851.

Queensland was in 1859.

The worst part of the worst area where massacres were held were undertaken was in

1988 on Waterloo River

Rather, in Waterloo Creek.

And that occurred on Australia Day in 1838.

And that's where we saw men, women, and children, all massacred.

It was horrible.

And that is why a lot of our community don't want to celebrate Australia Day,

because for us, it's a day of grieving.

In 1843,

the first parliaments of Australia were elected

in 1959,

the first football or AFL

what it was called then was created.

But we actually had our own football that we had made,

and that was made from possum skin, and it was formed into a ball,

and that was what we used to use to kick around, and it was called Marnook.

So you can see that there are still

some people who make them now.

And it's beautiful to see that heritage and that history continue.

In 1868, England stopped

sending convicts over to Australia.

Altogether, there was 160,000 convicts

who were brought to Australia from

England, from the uk.

In 1869, Victorian Aboriginal,

the Victorian Aboriginal Protection Act was established.

And that was where legally Aboriginal children could be removed from their

families if they were mixed blood.

They were forced into mission, into missionary care,

to live with them, to try to assimilate with white people.

So have we made progress from 1901, the Commonwealth

was established in Australia, and there was the flag that was, uh, endorsed.

Aboriginal people before the Constitution occurred, had rights.

When the Constitution was created,

those rights were done away with Aboriginal people, no longer had rights.

They were excluded.

In 1967,

there was a referendum to ensure that Aboriginal people could be counted

on the census,

and that means that they would be federally

we could stay in states and live across the country.

In 1971, which is the year I was born, they,
the Aboriginal flag was designed by a gentleman in the Northern Territory

under Thomas.

There were many royal commissions that were established,
the first being in 1973/74.

So Aboriginal rights were established
in 1975,

there was the Racial Discrimination Act.

So in 1973, there were the Land rights, and then the Racial
Discrimination Act.

In 1985, Uluru

Uluru was given back to the traditional owners of the land.

In 1986,

Australia became independent from England.

In 1988,

the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Children Day
was endorsed.

And that was something that was celebrated on August 4th
in 1990,

the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,

that's where they talked about supporting Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people.

But unfortunately, that fell through in 2005.

Next slide, please.

We, there we go. Thank you.

So you can see here, there were different reports as well as Royal
Commissions.

In 1991, deaths in Custody,

there was a Royal Commission report, as well as NAIDOC Week that was confirmed to be held over a week. So it was a week long celebration.

It used to be one day there, but now it is the entire week. It's NAIDOC week.

And that started in 1991.

in 1992, uncle Eddie Mabo one won the rights to his land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for them to have land.

There was other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who claimed their land

back as well. And they were also able to have land rights, land in 1994 International Year of indigenous people globally

In 1995, we had Aboriginal,

the ATSIC,

the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission

was acknowledged that we had sent off,

and they acknowledged the rights and a reform where they said the Constitution

would be changed as a priority.

And that was back in 1995.

So our conversation this evening has been going on for a long, long time.

In 1997, we had the Bringing Them Home report finalised,

and that was about the stolen generation.

We wanted to ensure that that was documented

and that it would never happen again.

In 1998, there was a conversation,

there was a preamble at the front of the Constitution,
which stated that they wanted to, that,
that there was a statement there, but at the same time,
there, the, it, it was when the government wanted to vote
on a repub to, uh,
to be a republic and to dis disassociate from the Queen of England
and or the Queen and England to be independent.

But that statement was paused.

There was no further conversation. That preamble never happened.

There was no preamble on the front of the Constitution
on the same day,

the its on National Sorry, day was established.

And that was to acknowledge that all First Nations people from the
stolen

generations were impacted.

And they have trauma that was lasting throughout generations.

National, sorry, day is May 26, and that occurs every year
in 2000 in Australia. You may recall we had the Olympics.

I remember there was a march across the Sydney Harbor Bridge,
and it was a sea of people. It was incredible.

And that was to ask federal parliament to make a commitment to
support

a referendum,

to remove Section 25 and 51 and to add Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander rights in the Constitution in 2000.

And that was the same time that people celebrated Kathy Freeman's
achievements

and her win in the 400 meter sprint.

Next slide, please.

So, challenges and reconciliation. What does this mean?

In 2007,

Northern Territory intervention was introduced,

and that was part of, and part of the acts were included.

So that meant that government could control what was happening within the Northern Territory.

That meant alcohol was banned for any First Nations people, first Nations communities. It was became dry communities.

The welfare system was disrupted because

they, instead of giving money, they people were given cards so that they,

how they spent their money was controlled.

And it was difficult for many,

many people who were trying to do the best they could.

They were looking gener after generations of family at the same time.

It was very difficult. In 2008,

the national apology from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd occurred in 2017.

There was a commission and a commission board inquiry to ensure that the,

the into protection of detention of children in the Northern Territory.

So that meant that children who were detained were looked after better.

At the same time again, in 2017,

the Uluru statement of the Hearts was written,

and it was written, written at Uluru.

And now we are here in 2023,

where voice, which can be signed in many different ways,
the Parliament referendum is happening and questions are being asked
of the
community. And that is to vote yes or no.

What do you agree upon? What do you not agree upon? To become law,
the constitu for the Constitution to recognize deaf people of
Australia and
established to and to establish a voice in Parliament for Aboriginal
and Torres
Strait Islanders.

So tonight we have four speakers joining us.
They'll share their experiences, their expertise and knowledge.
And I hope you enjoy learning from them all.

I hope that they can answer some of your questions or some of the
things you may be wandering about and to give you some food for
thought in
preparation for October 14.

Or if you do an early vote,
it may be an earlier day that is something that's entirely up to
you.

So I hope that that is what is given to you tonight.

So can we please introduce our speakers?

Thank you to the tech team. Tech team for your work.

So this evening, we have four wonderful,
lovely speakers joining us this evening.

We have two different agendas.

I'm not too sure who is gonna pop up first,
but if I can get someone to support me in introducing, that would be
great.

Give it, uh, a minutes to get the panel ready and then we can

progress.

Lovely. I think there's one more person joining us,
and it looks like we are ready for the next part of this evening's
conversation.

Yeah, I think we are good to go so far. It's run smoothly.

Hopefully that fourth panelist will join us shortly.

Thank you.

So I want to let everyone know that we don't have any questions at
the moment,

or we're not high taking questions at the moment,

but you can write some questions in the q and a at the bottom of
your screen, and hopefully we'll be able to answer your question
this evening.

If we have time later on, you may be able to raise your hand.

And if you would prefer to ask a question in Auslan, you will be
able to do so.

So we're just waiting for Senator Lydia Thorpe.

Hopefully she will join us sometime soon.

But in the meantime,

I would like to thank our four speakers

and we'll start with my, uh, I'll,

I'll make sure I start with my cultural protocols first.

And I will ask Andrea Mason,

if you can lead us in starting this,

this area of conversation and to introduce yourself as well.

I think you can introduce yourself much better than I can. Thank,

Thank you, Melissa. Um, and thank you for the invitation,

um, to participate in this discussion tonight. Um,

and, uh, so I am,

I live and work in my ua,
Alice Springs in Central Australia.
And I moved here in 2008 because I wanted to be in my family.
My family, uh,
live in the region 350,000 kilometers
around Uluru. So I,
my family covered that cross-border region of wa,
south Australia and the Northern Territory. Um,
so I'm here on the lands of the people.
Um, I'm really interested in hearing other views here tonight.
Um,
and my perspective is on working in the aboriginal community
control sector, the not-for-profit sector.
And I've also worked, uh,
for the Commonwealth and the South Australian state public sectors.
And I've been an aboriginal now that, that a pitjara woman all of my
life,
um, and lived in those, uh, those intersectionalities, um,
which we'll probably hear more about tonight. Thank you.
Thank you so much, Andrea.
I was hoping to ask, uh, all four panelists,
but all three of you at the moment who have joined us currently.
Senator Thorpe, uh, is joining us now. They've just let me,
they've just sent me a message letting me know. So I would like to
ask Kerry,
if you could introduce yourself please.
Hi, everyone, my name is Kerry Arina,
very proud descendant of the Marion people from Murray Island in the
Torres

Straits.

But I would very much like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people for whose country I have lived on my entire life.

I'm truly grateful to all of you who live, work, and have traditional owners from this country,

and it is a great pleasure for me to be here with all of you tonight.

Um, Andrea, I have been a long admirer of your work,

and I really pay respects to your ancestors to

allow me to have been on your country. Um,

I spent a lot of time out at Wallen Guru,

which is neighboring the Pitjara people,

and I really did become an adult in that place,

having my second child there. Um,

and I was then able to go back up to Cairns and to Torres Straits and do a lot

of work in that region.

But now I live on the lands of the ri people down in Victoria,

and I am absolutely grateful to be here and pay my deep and sincere respects to the elders past and present.

And I also want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of many great leaders in the Victorian community for initiating

treaty truth and justice through a range of different initiatives that

really do facilitate self-determination. I'm very, um,

honored to be here,

and thank you so much to Jody for the invitation and to the,

um, the panelists,

I really want to acknowledge all of you and the heart that you bring to

the work that you do.

This is not an easy time to be a member of the,

um, of the public, um, with an opinion.

It is been a really devastating time for a lot of our peoples.

I have seen the referendum, um,

really bring families apart and put good people under an enormous amount of duress and stress. And I really want to acknowledge that

ultimately the referendum is about, um,

mental health and wellbeing for the entire nation,

and independent of the outcomes that happen on

October the 14th.

I truly believe that all of our people will thrive and flourish as

is our birthright and as is the way in which our

elders and ancestors have taught us to live and how to be.

Thank you so much. Thank you, Kerry, so much for that.

I would now, like, uh, to ask Kieran, sorry,

I'm having trouble spelling your name, uh, Kieran,

to introduce yourself. Uh, this is the first time I've met, uh, you Kieran.

So, hello. It's nice to meet you. Uh,

thank you for your time in joining us this evening.

And it's so valuable to have a male on our panel as well, speaking here tonight.

So, uh, it's, it's really important to show that we do have balance, uh,

as much as possible.

So if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself to everybody, and, uh,

yeah, over to you.

No worries. Thanks for having me, Melissa, and great to meet you too. Um,

hello everybody. My name is Kieran. I'm from the UN Nation, which is on the south coast of what is now known as New South Wales. Um,

however, I've been living down, um, in Melbourne, down here in Nam for the past 12 months now.

Great. Thank you so much. And last,

but, uh, maybe lucky last, rather, uh, I would like to ask, uh, our sister, Lydia Thorpe,

Senator Lydia Thorpe, uh,

if you could introduce yourself, please.

Thank you. Um, thank you my sister Jody. Uh,

our journey goes way back before me even thinking about becoming a politician.

So I just wanna first acknowledge your journey and the incredible work

and strength that you've had to, uh, get to this point,

go through personally, professionally, black fella,

community way. Um, and I'm, I'm really honored to be here.

Um, I'm Lydia Thorpe.

I'm a Jamara woman and the so-called Senator

for Victoria through the colonial, uh, con construct.

Uh, I'm not sure about the, uh, setting here tonight, so my apologies,

I've just come from other, uh, engagements if you like.

And I'm also under immediate threat, uh,

in my house as we speak with the,

uh, with the A f P surrounding my house and with, uh,
black security in my house.

So I'm under house arrest by the Nazis and the,
and basically the referendum in this country.

And the prime minister's responsible at the end of the day. Thank
you.

And I'm on Murri country.

Oh, thank you so much for sharing that. Um,
we do want to make sure that we, uh, all of us,

we need to make sure that all presenters this evening do feel
culturally safe.

And if at any moment in time you do feel like you need to step out,
anyone,

that is absolutely fine. That is 100% fine. Uh,
your safety and your cultural connection,
your cultural safety is the most important to me.

And I think people watching tonight will also understand what is
happening

in our current society at the moment. Uh, we,
so what we'll do is we've done our introductions,
but we haven't asked any questions as yet.

So I have the privilege of asking the first question,
and this question is for everyone, anyone can respond

for me. There's, uh, the three women here that are, that know me
well enough,

we've got, uh, and Kieran will know me well enough, uh,

at the end, so don't get too nervous. I'm not gonna ask anything too
nail biting

as part of our culture and responsibility to look after our

mob and to look after each other and to look after what's happening
on country,

as well as ensuring that we can offer future generations,

uh,

whatever it is that we can offer to ensure that they're set up for the future

so that our future generations can be safe.

So I would like to ask you,

what are your aims for our future generations in community, future,

and our grandchildren, our and their children, and so on and so forth,

who will be leaders in our space? Mm-hmm. I would like to think that,

uh, yeah. So there's no, there's no order in who will answer these questions.

It's, um, everyone can answer.

If you wish that I may get things started, I'll start,

uh, by, yeah. Excellent. Thanks, Lydia.

Thanks, sis. Uh, well, you know,

growing up as a, um,

protest baby in, in this early seventies in this country,

uh, our young people,

our old people looked after us and guided us through some pretty,

um,

incredible times that changed this country's

history and future.

And that was the rise of the Black Power Movement.

And that's how I grew up.

I would like to see an opportunity for our

children going forward,

particularly given that I have five grandchildren of my own.

They need to live, live in a country that does not discriminate,
that does not kill them in
prisons, or have them removed from their homes,
or be subjected to the,
well we know now the most increase in suicide rates in this
country for our people. I wanna,
I want a life for my grandchildren that
doesn't include the war that was declared on our people 250 years
ago.

The war on our children today is the most sophisticated war
on the globe.

And I wanna see my grandchildren be free
to be proud of who they are and not forget where they
come from.

And I'd like to see a peace treaty that
includes our children and every family in this country,
not just the handpicked ones.

And that's what I'll be doing with my grandchildren,
and hopefully they'll be doing with theirs.

And I do come from a long line of matriarchs,
so I'm a product of my old people,
and that's what, uh, we've been put here for.

And that is to ensure that our children are safe.

But we have a government that won't raise the age of legal
responsibility right
now, and we're locking up our babies at 10.

So it's okay to talk about what we want, but we've all gotta,
we've also gotta stop the war on our kids now,

on our babies now,

23,000 of our babies have been taken away from their families

today, and I,

I just want the end to the war that was declared on us.

Mm, thank you. Thank you so much, Kerry.

No, sorry, Kieran. Actually, I'll go next. I'll go to Kieran next.

Yeah. Look, I'd like to, you know,

definitely echo the same sentiment as Senator for, um,

we are in a horrible position.

You've just muted yourself, Kieran.

Sorry. Um,

we are in a horrible condition right now in this colony,

and our conditions only seem to get worse and worse each year. You know,

we look at stuff like our children being removed,

and child removal rates have gone up every year since Kevin Rudd apologized back

in oh seven. You know, we look at our incarceration rates, same thing.

They go up every single year, every quarter actually. They go up and,

you know,

things aren't going to change until we start demanding real tangible change.

And this was something that we were doing back in the seventies to eighties,

even the nineties. Um, you mentioned earlier that Attik report from 95,

if you go through and you read that Attik report,

the constitutional recognition that they asked for was

constitutionally

enshrined powers and rights, not advisory bodies. You know,

it was constitutionally enshrined seats in parliament.

And it was the ability for our people to be self determinant and to seek

proper tangible land rights as opposed to native title. You know,

I would like to see us going back to these old conversations that we were

having, you know,

two decades or more ago when we were actually demanding proper change for our

people as opposed to tokenistic reforms.

Thank you. That's a lot to think about. Uh, I can I ask Andrea to go next?

Yes. Thank you. Um, sorry. I've, um,

when the change of weather happens here in Alice Springs,

I somehow start to lose my voice, so I apologize for that. Uh,

I've had a really long, um,

interest in cultural authority and cultural governance and the

practice of cultural governance. Um,

and it started with my family in wa in the gold fields.

And it's continued, um, to, to today. Um,

I I really cemented that learning time when I came to

work with my family at, but now

women's council that covers the 350,000 square kilometers around

Uluru, um, covering wa South Australia and Western Australia. And,

uh, I was, uh, I came in to, I just knocked on the door. I said,

I'm really interested in working for my family. And, um,

I ended up staying in the organization for 10 years working there as, uh,

in the corporate role as of c e o and working with, um,
the senior women and the members. Um,
and what really struck me was the clarity of
the women and their families,
the men in their understanding of peace order and good governance.
Um, and where that comes from around their cultural understanding,
but also how it is,
it holds the external power that is the,
the state and the commonwealth and the territory, uh, more
accountable and,
um, and to hold it to account working in our communities and the
bush.

And so, um, if, uh,
unless you talked about what my focus is for the future, um,
it's holding those who are decision makers, and we have the final
say,
really in our communities to hold them account, um,
through the cultural authority and cultural power of our senior
men and women. I also am interested Kerry Ana,
who would know this better than me, but, um, I always look, um,
below side and above for cultural protocols,
which I can apply and bring to the desert from other, um,
communities. And I was very interested in the Mabo decision,
and particularly the Mabo decision,
talking about the cultural authority of the stars,
of the Tagai and the law of Marlow.

And it resonated with me, um, because the n p y region understands
the,
um, the songlines of the seven Sisters, the law of the heavens. And,

um, that protocol that came outta that Mabo decision of those two,
um,

that those two stories talks about two witnesses holding each other
account the

law of the heavens and the law of the earth, the law of the lands.
And, um,

in this sense, the commonwealth, um,

is the law of the heavens. Um, but we have the law of the land,
which at many times is voiceless and is not cutting through. Um,
and I describe it to my, uh, to the women during my time.

There is this cultural acumen that is va that is vacant, empty, and
not seen in,

um, the parliament, the law of the heavens. And so they must learn,
they must understand.

And we have to be doing that through the oral tradition because
that's our way.

And we have to be at the table. We have to be in the room. Um,
as someone told me, if you're not, you're on the menu.

So you have to be in the room. And, uh, and the women, uh,

know that that's their role and that's their place to bring that
cultural

authority. Um, and the lessons and the understanding and the
learnings, um,

because they dunno it non-indigenous people, uh, they don't know it.
Um,

and that's why we're in the mess that we are in, um,

around bureaucracy and decision making and law making.

Mm-hmm.

But that's, that's, that's really my focus for many, many years,

30 years working in a range of sectors, but being, still being, um,

held accountable, uh, by senior men and women in my region in the territory.

Thank you.

Thank you so much, Andrea. And last, but certainly not least we have Kerry.

Thank you so much. And Andrea,

that was such a beautiful acknowledgement of the contribution of Miriam people

to the whole of the nation, to be honest.

It was us that set the parameters for people to acknowledge their traditional

owner rights and to disrupt the whole conversation around terra nullius.

And what I really want to acknowledge is that Eddie Mabo and the four other

people who were plaintiffs in that case were understood to be on the margins, to be on the periphery,

to not have their right mind while those 12 years were occurring.

And it only was when it was enshrined in law that they were understood for

what it was that they were, which were powerful change agents that, that, um,

re reengage the system around cultural ways of knowing, being, and doing.

And not only set the law in this country,

but set the international law from a little tiny island,

which is the tip three tips of one ancient volcano,

um, with 300 people living on it, which has now become international law.

And I cannot tell you how proud I am that my ancestry has a

place in that beautiful part of the world.

There are other things that come into play with the responsibility of being

a Miriam person. Uh, one of the things that I personally believe, and this is me personally,

I believe that Miriam language is one of the most important languages of Australia because of its ability to disrupt this idea of terra nullius.

That language is now on the United Nations endangered language, um, registrar,

and it is at threat of being lost.

What I personally am doing is setting up a scholarship with I aim to help revitalize indigenous languages.

And I'm able to do that through my entrepreneurship. And that is a very,

very powerful way of enacting who I am in this world and what it is that I

have an expectation that people will continue on with.

I've also had the beautiful experience and the sacred

responsibility of growing up in the desert country and becoming an adult out

there. My daughter is a little nin.

And so to understand the power of what that means to be truly embedded in country, um,

is something that I believe every single Australian child needs the opportunity to experience. So for me,

who's been the, um,

managing director of First Thousand Days Australia,

which looks at the period of time from preconception until

a child's second birthday,

the way that I've been able to describe this period of time is as an idea around preparing the treaty generation, because as I was born in 1968, I have no idea about what it was like to live pre referendum in Victorian contexts in particular, since 2019, at least, we now have treaty in place, which means this generation is the treaty generation, and what we have put together is a set of rights.

And, um,

they are responsibilities for all of us to enact for children who are yet to be conceived.

We consider our children so sacred that we believe that we need to consider

them even before they're conceived.

And so we have established a set of 10 parameters for what that looks like,

and we include elements of those that every single

child will be born into,

families who have loving expectations of them,

are hopeful about their future,

and help them achieve their life aspirations in powerful

and tender ways.

We also believe that every single child has a right to

expect to be part of a healthy,

vibrant society shaped by strong kinship relationships,

and a resilient culture in which all members thrive, flourish,

and enjoy the same opportunities as other Australians without being made

the same. And that, for me,

is the difference in this referendum and why I am interested about what

it looks like to be involved in the Constitution,

which is basically an administrative tool which has controlled

and subjugated not only us,

but the country and the beautiful native species with which we have

co-evolved over the last 80 years.

What distresses me the most about this conversation is that we have taken a

singular species approach.

And when we talk about including our voice into the

Constitution, first of all,

I will say that the word and is not

considered a strength in this conversation. And that is a,

something that makes me feel incredibly sad.

We've gone into this dichotomy of discussion where it has to be either this or

this, where I believe that it should be this and this,

and that is something that is absolutely being taught to me by my elders.

We can have treaty and we can have constitutional recognition,

and we can have sovereignty, and we can have entrepreneurial activity,

and we can take our rightful place, and we do not need to be made the same.

And that I think is something that will survive and thrive independent

of what the outcome of the referendum is,

that is in our nature.

And all of us who have been oppressed stand on the shoulders of

giants.

But what I want to see in the Constitution is two things.

The first thing is that once indigenous peoples are included in the Constitution,

then all of the United Nations declarations of the rights of indigenous peoples

also has to be considered.

And that also includes our ecological knowledge and our ecological rights to care for country. At this point, we do not have that right.

And so far as Lydia will know,

because she has been such a staunch supporter of this, but the scar trees,

I'm sorry, my sister,

but those scar trees that were eradicated for administrative convenience,

our river systems that do not have the responsibility to acknowledge cultural flow, the fact that we've had the Murray Cod die,

the fact that we have had the eradication of so many

of our species that we've co-evolved with,

and that we are in a mass extinction event is something that we need to pay

attention to because our species will not

survive if all the others do not.

And if we do not pay attention to the fact that we are at

the brink and the cusp of change and transformation,

which is the transition from the Holocene into the Anthropocene,

and if we do not get our ecological knowledge into that bloody

document that has set the scene for not only our

relationships with government,

but everything that we have co-evolved with with government,

then we are operating in a lesser position than

what our cultural responsibilities tell us.

And that is the story of Tagai.

That is the story of harmonic balance that has come through from the Torres

Strait Islander community and has been the fundamental element of disrupting

terra nullius in this part of the world. It has absolutely been about balance.

It's not been about whether we have a series of administrative rights,

it's about our rights as countrymen and women to care for country.

Thank you. And you? Yes, I feel fairly strongly about that.

And yeah, and I think that's absolutely fine.

I think that's why you were one of the panelists invited,

because it's an important part of sharing our knowledge,

our learnings to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Unfortunately,

we weren't taught this information in schools. Uh,

these topics were not covered. So if not, um, and, and,

and even aboriginal and deaf Torres Strait Islanders don't even know their about

their own culture.

It's very rare and hard to find deaf and hard of hearing community members who

receive information like this.

So it's worthwhile sharing this information so that deaf and hard of hearing

community can get information that is from people with

lived experience,

from people who are leaders in different areas,

so they can have the best opportunity to be informed and make informed

decisions on October 14,

because it will have impacts on us.

This decision has impacts.

I would now like to ask Kieran,

what do you think your perspective is,

uh, leading up to October 14?

Do you think that, uh,

there's been any life changing aha moments for you?

Have you felt, yeah. What have you felt in the lead up to October 14?

Have you felt anything that you've, just,

something that just made you decide that's the choice you are making and,

and or anything along those lines?

Um, yeah,

I suppose there hasn't been one particular thought or moment, but, you know,

this is something that I've been very much around for the last few years now.

Um, it's a proposition that, you know, goes right back to the nineties,

if not earlier. It's got very conservative roots.

It first came about as a way to undermine our land rights. Um,

that's why John Howard first proposed it back in 98 as a preamble in the

Constitution. It was as a result of B H P lobbying the government in 97,

um,

specifically about aboriginal land rights and the fret of impact they had on

mining companies ability to extract, uh, natural resources.

So, you know, when we contextualize it like this,

and when we look at all our demands for self-determination over the past

few decades, and how it's been watered down to a powerless advisory body,

for me, it's just a no-brainer to oppose this. Um, you know,

there's plenty of other reasons why, um,

we could definitely go into it if you wanted to. But yeah, us ultimately,

you know,

it's a conservative agenda that's heavily backed and funded by big mining

corporations. Um, it's no secret that it is, you know,

you can go on Google and find a wealth of news articles, um,

talking about, you know,

all the funding and donations that they've made to the S 23 campaign. You know,

we know that at the end of the day,

mining corporations never have First Nations people or First Nations land.

Um, and our best interests in their mind,

they've always got their own profits as their, um, you know,

first and foremost their agenda. So, um, yeah,

I suppose for me, like, you know, that and also the whole impact on sovereignty.

Um, you know, when we look at what sovereignty actually is,

we can find that it was defined under western law and under international law

back in 1648, uh, as a result of the treaties of Westfalia.

Now,

these treaties specifically define sovereignty as having territorial
land rights and having a governance system in place to manage the
land

and to manage the people on them. Now,

when we consider that as a definition of sovereignty,

and then we look at the Australian constitution,

we look at these advisory bodies, we look at the occupation of this
colony,

we see that our sovereignty is very much impacted by these
propositions.

Um, they're impacted legally, and they're also impacted in practice.

You know, our sovereignty remains unseated.

That means that we have the right to practice our sovereignty.

But what is lacking today is the power and ability to be able to
actually practice our sovereignty. Um, so, you know,

these agendas being put forward, they, they,

the best way to put it, you know, is in the Uluru statement itself.

They talk about our sovereignty as being a spiritual notion and
nothing more.

Whereas for me, and for most,

if not every other black fella I know who is involved in grassroots
struggle,

our sovereignty when we talk about it, isn't just some spiritual
notion.

It's very much a legal tangible thing.

And that's what we're talking about when we say our sovereignty was
never

seeded.

We are talking about we've never given up our right to manage our lands and to

occupy our lands.

So when we look at the Constitution as being the basis of Australia's

false claim to sovereignty over our lands, you know, it,

it really brings into the question, you know,

how our sovereignty is impacted here because they're trying to put our

sovereignty into the document,

which forms the basis for the claim of Australia's sovereignty.

And two sovereign bodies cannot coexist

practically and fundamentally, it just does not work.

Hmm, thank you.

I think it's really important to have conversations with people who do

have different, uh, views, because it's important to learn all different sides.

As I mentioned before,

deaf and hard of hearing community don't know enough to

ensure that they are voting the right way.

That is the right way for, uh, Aboriginal and Torres Strait is people,

because we know that only 3% of,

if they're only 3% of the population.

So if you ask 97% of the population,

we're, we're putting our trust in them and to,

to make those decisions for us.

So we need to work out how we can ensure people have a balanced viewpoint on

this, uh,

and then people can self decide how they want to vote.

Lydia,

can you speak a bit about treaty in Victoria and

how well,

what the benefits are that you've seen on the grounds with discussions that

have been held with treaty conversation and how you feel

it may be different from the Constitution and the referendum?

Yes, thank you, sis. Um, I just wanna say that, um,

Southern Black Fellows have got culture, language, song dance,

and Jupa. We have song lines,

and my skin name is Nja,

and my totem goes from the middle of Yen Moon to the 12 apostles on

Guara country. Mm-hmm. So it doesn't matter where you live in this country.

As a sovereign black fellow,

we all have jupa and we all know the laws of the land.

So I might be whiter skinned, I might live in, in the city,

but that don't make me less black than anybody else. Um,

so I just wanted to say that as a beginning, uh, because that's, you know,

unfortunately part of this ugly debate that is hurting people out there.

Uh, I've just come from Yin Moon where this government shut down

every service for young people. Four hours out of Alice Springs,

they shut down the swimming pool, we're in a climate catastrophe. Uh,

they shut down the daycare, they shut down the early learning center,

they shut down the basketball stadium, they shut down the football

program,

and they've replaced it all with razor wire.

And our children at Yer Moon are breaking into homes

because they have nothing to do.

It will cost \$4 million to fix y

because that's what they want. And that's what they've asked.

And we have a government who is saying,

come say yes because it's gonna save our soul.

And they've spent \$324 million on a referendum and can't

give y for. So I,

my position is about the government hasn't shown good faith whatsoever.

Not even in treaty in Victoria.

We have 38 language groups in across Victoria that I fought for

before I was a politician to be around the treaty table. Now,

unfortunately, when the government get their grubby hands on things,

they start twisting and turn and self-determination and free prime informed

consent.

And what happened is they chose their 12 people who are already in bed with the government and put them around the table.

12 language groups out of 38 were selected because

they were already ticked off by the indigenous minister.

One of those represented representatives was so dodgy

that he got sacked, and now there's only 11. So it's a bit like, you know,

um,

a government entity that is controlling

who are the language groups that sit around the table. That's not

treaty.

And Victoria is not the model for treaty.

It's caused us problems here. Two, and when I was,

when I was negotiating, sorry, um,

can you just not make a noise for a minute. Uh,

when I was negotiating the legislation, sorry,

I've got a lot of people in my house, uh, because the a f P won't protect me.

So I've had to call mob in, um,

when I was negotiating the treaty with the government,

they refused to acknowledge our sovereignty.

So I took it through a vote in the Victorian Parliament,

and no one supported it except for the three greens at the time.

So the government, any government would not acknowledge our sovereignty.

You'll read about our, our sovereignty not being affected.

But you won't see a government actually acknowledge that we are the first people

of these lands and that we are the sovereigns.

You won't get a government that will do that.

The Prime Minister hasn't done that.

The Minister for Indigenous Australians haven't done, hasn't done that.

The Parliament of Victoria haven't done that.

And the federal Parliament also denied that we are the sovereign people of these

lands. 'cause I tried to take it to a vote and no one backed me.

'cause you need a second person to back you.

And not one black politician in that whole place backed my vote.

So we have a real problem in this country about consent,

consent to even have the Constitution here.

We never gave consent for that constitution.

And that constitution is only ever made laws that hurt our people.

Now this referendum is another

mechanism to hurt our people, to divide our people.

This voice is powerless. And,

and Tony, not Tony Abbott, well, you might as well be there. Um,

they're all the same, you know, oh, white blokes making decisions for us,

doesn't matter. Uh,

but the two at the top PM and, and

Dutton, guess what? They're gonna decide what your voice looks like,

not the black fellows.

They're gonna spend 12 months as co-chairing a committee that decides

the whole function of this body that everyone's running

around saying is gonna save our soul. Well, I can guarantee you now,

it won't save us.

It won't save anything that you're being told from the yes people, because they,

the Prime Minister will refuse to implement the recommendations on the Royal

Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody.

He refuses to implement the recommendations to the Bringing Them Home Report

that stops stealing children in this country.

And can I just add, finally,

that Nacho just came out with a report that says,

since the referendum was announced, black people have been killing themselves.

There's been a rise in suicide.

So this is not a step in the right direction. It's violent.

It's another day in the Colony. I suggest you have a look at, uh, Chelsea Water's book, another Day in The Colony.

This is one chapter out of that playbook. Thank you.

Thank you, Lydia, for sharing that.

I think it's really important that we do know, uh,

that you are safe in your home as a priority. So, uh,

if at any time you need to go and check in with anyone or, uh,

have any conversations with anyone in your house to make sure that everything's

okay, please feel free to do so. Uh, that is more important to me,

uh, than anything currently. So, um, just wanted to put that out there. Um,

we have a question from the Q and as that have come up,

so I'm gonna ask Jen Blythe from Deaf Australia to come up and ask these questions. Yes, thank you. Hi,

I'm Jen. I'm from wondering, uh, country of, uh,

the Kulin Nation in Nam. Thank you all for, uh, joining us tonight. Uh,

I just wanted to second what the Jen was say, uh, what, uh, Jodie was saying,

this information is new for so many deaf deafblind hard of hearing people

and other, even other people with disabilities in the community.

So it's important that this information is shared and what you are sharing is

extremely rich. So thank you so much. It's really wonderful. Uh,

I do have a question here. Um, I'm just looking at the questions typed up.

So we've received a few questions ahead of tonight,
and we've also got some questions in the q and a that you all have access to at
all. We also have someone with their hand up. So I will, uh,
we've got two people with their hands up.
So I'll ask a question and then we will spotlight the two people who want to ask
questions. So someone has asked,
how is treaty different from a constitution?
The reform, they wanna understand the difference and following up.
Another person has also asked the New Zealand,
they have a treaty that was signed a long time ago, but it's not,
it hasn't been followed by felt by white people for a long time.
So there's a treaty, but what's the difference, uh,
with a treaty that exists in New Zealand and what we are talking about here, uh,
I'll leave my video on if that's okay, just to stop from the coming on and off.
Would anyone like to answer, uh, Jen's questions? The question that Jen's, uh,
asked for audience members, I'm conscious of time, uh,
and I really dislike when people say, oh,
just keep it short because I like to hear absolutely everything that mob have to
say. It's, uh, always a, a really rich conversation. So if anyone would like to,
uh, answer that question, please feel free to, uh,
to raise your hand and we can spotlight you.
Thank you, Lydia.
I'll be really quick. You don't need a referendum for a treaty.
You don't need a referendum for seats in parliament. The government,

in their goodwill, if they wanna be black fellows friends,
they at the next Parliament sitting,
they could legislate extra seats in the Parliament for us,
which will have votes, which means more power for us.
More individual power not may give advice,
which is what you are, uh, voting for or at the moment. Uh,
and the fact that yes, treaties can be broken,
but we have a blank canvas in this country,
and we can have a treaty of the 21st century. And in a treaty,
you should never leave anybody behind.

So we go through every language group in this country,
and they must have free prior and informed consent about whether
they want to participate in a treaty or not.

And that's what happened with Waitangi, is there are still clans
that didn't,

that refuse to participate in the treaty. But with the treaty,
we have power as a token advisory body,
we have no power.

So I'm pushing for treaty because we deserve power.

It's 2023.

Let's move forward as a nation and give us the respect that we
deserve and give

us peace in parliament through a treaty and peace. At the end of the
day.

That's ultimately what we want,

is peace treaty has truth telling as part of that

also. And we need to go through that journey in this country.

Thank you. Is there anyone else who wants to add to Lydia's
comments?

Um,

it's really interesting because I had the wonderful opportunity of, of being the inaugural co-chair of the first na, um, the National Congress of Australia's first peoples, which was an attempt at the first representative body post the Atsic election and the demise of atsic, which was enshrined in legislation.

It wasn't a constitutional requirement that we needed to have that voice and

independent of what we all thought about AIC and the commissioners that

were in some instances rogue,

and they were not behaving in a way which was truly representative of the people

where we saw, um, through that consultation process.

And it wasn't consulting in the normal way that consultancies do.

It really was going out and, um,

facilitating a conversation with people so that they could articulate

what it was they wanted.

And we went out five years after AIC had been abolished.

It was a powerful conversation in that what women wanted

was the opportunity to be in a room and to be empowered to make decisions

without people who were there to control or

violate or to dampen down their aspirations,

which is one of the reasons why the National Congress of Australia's first

peoples was the first company in Australian law to

set, um, agenda,

equity principle about being co-chairs and to have equal representation of men and women's voice in that arrangement whilst there was a level of, um, distrust around a national voice and what they could actually do, where people felt truly empowered was, and what people actually wanted at that time was a restatement of the regional bodies where you had regional access to the power to decision making, to representation to family and clan groups, to country, to all of those kind of elements that are very, very specifically enshrined in regional opportunities that come about

as a result of governing from within the language groups and then building

out from there. So I am truly, um, interested in the ideas of treaty and of constitutional recognition,

and I don't think that there is a competition between the two. I really don't.

I think that one recognizes the rights and the responsibilities of us as First Nations peoples to care for country and to have our rightful place in the recognition of the Constitution.

And I think that treaty is a formal and legally binding agreement between

two or more sovereign nations and sovereign states,

and that those are the people who are able to be informed and make those

decisions correctly.

It really is powerful through treaties to recognize that they encompass

a wide range of matters such as international relations, um, environmental protections, human rights trade, and territorial boundaries. So for the first time ever, for example, in an entrepreneurial context, we are having in international free trade agreements have embodied in them, um, in indigenous inclusions, which means that we can actually participate in the wealth of prosperity of our nations and facilitate greater outcomes in the nation state.

And that I think is the difference, uh, for me, which is whilst we might have constitutional recognition which recognizes

inclusion specific rights and protections and the principles that we're actually operating,

I want to facilitate and be part of First

Nations engagement with other First Nations peoples in trade and reactivating those old trade routes that we had as our vital lifeblood for matriarchal lineages for our peoples to be able to facilitate our own economic independence.

When we go for international recognition, what we are doing is really acknowledging the history of disruption of those kind of statements.

We are in some ways setting the parameters for the administration of our sovereignty, whatever that looks like.

And we are also then thinking about having us recognized as the first inhabitants of this continent. And that has been really,

really powerful to, um, bring into the conversation.

What I think that we are getting into over the next couple of weeks is that we

are all creating opportunities to only having one conversation,

which is about our place in the Constitution because

of our 300 nations with 300 different

languages groups, which were all tied to specific ecosystems.

What we really do need to think about is how we then activate our nation's status within the context of a nation. And that,

I think has to be involving treaty processes and negotiations as sovereign peoples. So they're not related, but they can coexist.

And I am a firm believer that our next generations

need to have opportunities that I was able to facilitate happening for me because I was born after the referendum had gone through in 1967, the year after.

So I do not know what it was like to live without that context.

And I think that as we grow and mature as a nation

independent of what happens on the 14th of October,

we are going to thrive and flourish because that is our very nature as First

Nations peoples come 2030,

we are going to own 52% of this continent and the waters,

and we are going to own the country in a way,

which means that we can start to facilitate foreign investment and foreign inter um,

foreign financing of our initiatives and our want.

We will not have to go to the Australian government.

That is something that I'm really looking forward to.

I believe entrepreneurship is the way forward,

and I really do believe in a solid future for ourselves and our children.

I really, really do.

I I, well, I just wanted to say, um, if,

if I knew better, I would, I would think that that is the short answer.

If I didn't know you any better, Kerry, I'd say that was the short one. Um,

Melissa,

'cause you, this is something we could talk about of just nonstop and I think,

um, I think it's, sorry, Andrea.

Yeah, just wanted to, uh, thank you.

I just wanted to add in just about those advisory bodies since 1973 that we've had.

So the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee, 1973, that went to 78,

and then we had from 78 to 1985 National Aboriginal Conference. Then we had 1990 at second,

saw the slides earlier in the presentation. And, uh,

Kerry just talked about the National Congress.

Then we have the handpicked Prime Ministers Indigenous Advisory Councils. Um,

interesting for me is that the longest the appetite of governments for those advisory bodies is 15 years. Um,

and often that comes because of descent and the,

the clarity of what Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander representatives are saying

at that national level. So, um,

I think that's food for thought around how powerful our voices are actually

once it's given a platform and the wisdom that comes through, uh, from representative, uh,

people for their communities and their nations. Thank you.

Thank you. Uh, before, um,

we give the thoughts, uh, ki I just wanted to let you all know that, uh,

Senator Lydia thought just contacted me to let me know that she has had to leave

her property. Unfortunately, uh, she's had some, uh,

vandalism in her home,

so she has had to look after herself and her family and remove themselves from

the property. They are okay,

but I think we can all appreciate the time that she did spend with us and all of

the effort that she's been putting in, into this area, into this space.

She feels very, very passionate about this space.

And so I would like to formally, uh,

just acknowledge all the work that she has done and is continuing to do,

and just hope that her family, her home and community are all safe at this time.

Uh, as we said before, uh, it, it, it,

what what was said before it, it can be a really dangerous time, uh,

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.

So it's really important that we do look after ourselves,

and we can appreciate that when people give their time so freely like you will

have tonight. Uh, yeah, we are very grateful, especially with, uh,

what Libia is experiencing. Um, so having said that, Kieran

and I, I've just con I am conscious of time, so I should stop talking and I'll,

I'll give over to Kiran.

Um, yeah, I'll try and be as quick as I can. Um,

I just wanted to touch on a few points on that question between, you know,

what is the difference between treaty and Constitution as well as, um, you know,

the statement about how treaties have been broken in other nations across the

world who have treaties. So I suppose, you know, first off,

we need to realize that when we say treaty,

we are not specifically talking about one thing.

There's a whole range of different forms that treaties can take. Now,

the most powerful is an international treaty between two sovereign bodies.

As Sister Kerry was saying before, you know, between two sovereign bodies.

When we look at it under that definition,

we see that what's happening in Victoria isn't actually an international treaty.

It's a treaty taking place between a domestic entity,

which is the Victorian state government and the local black fellas who are as

well being classed as domestic entities of Australia, um,

through this treaty process.

So it's not actually a treaty between two sovereign bodies,

what's happening down in Victoria, um,

same as the treaty process that they're going to be undertaking in Queensland

and South Australia. Again, you know, these are domestic treaties.

They're not international treaties.

They don't carry that extra strength and weight that an international treaty

does. Now, as for these other treaties in New Zealand as well as America, um,

United, United States and Canada,

every single one of their treaties has been violated by the colonial government.

There has been thousands of treaties signed in these three nations.

Everyone's been violated.

The reason that they've all been violated and that those indigenous peoples of

those lands couldn't actually seek further, um,

compensation. And further, you know, punishment for the colonial governments,

um, as a result of those violations is because they entered into treaties as

domestic entities of those colonial governments,

not as international bodies.

So whatever treaty that we are going to be looking at as First Nations people,

we need to be taking a treaty as an international sovereign,

not as a domestic entity of the Australian government. Otherwise,

it's essentially not a treaty,

it's just legislation with the word treaty in its main title. Um,

another quick thing I just wanted to quickly touch on is,

the Constitution isn't a bill of rights.

It's not a bill of responsibilities for the government. All it is, is a template of power that the government can work within.

So just because something isn't in the Constitution doesn't mean that the

government will have to do it or that they will do it.

There is plenty of examples.

One of them is the Interstate Commission that was a part of the original 1901

Constitution that no longer exists despite there being no referendum to demolish

it. What happened was it existed for about 10 years.

The government defunded it, they waited three decades, brought it back in again for another 10 years, defunded it again, and it hasn't existed since.

Being in the constitution doesn't guarantee funding, doesn't guarantee longevity. A constitutionally sanctioned body, regardless of how powerful or tokenistic it is, isn't guaranteed to last.

Any government could turn around and defund it at any moment, and then it'll be up to the goodwill of future governments to refund it, to bring it back in again.

Thank you, Kieran. I think it's really important for all of us to, to really give serious thought around what we're learning tonight because there is a lot of information, there's a lot of pressure and heavy information, uh, that is here, and there's a lot of underlying topics as well.

So it's really important that we can do our own research in talking with other people who are knowledgeable and having

those conversations one-on-one with people and working out what is the best way to self determine your vote and in what you believe is the right way to vote. Uh, it's, it aligns with, and it has to align with your heart and soul as well.

So, Jen, do you have any extra questions? I, I,

I know that we are pressed for time, uh, and I thank you and I'm, uh,

grateful for all the speakers with, for your time with us. Uh, do you have another question that you would like to ask either, uh, video or via chat? Yes,

there are lots and lots of questions coming through,

but there are two people who would like to ask questions in Auslan, in Auslan.

So we have trends. Uh,

can I just ask our tech team to spotlight Spotlight Trends, please?

So that they're able to sign the question.

Trends you on the way? Uh,

yeah, they're coming.

If you can just put your video on please.

Just working out the video. Great. Hello Rena.

So what is your question that you would like to ask us all tonight? Hello?

Did you have a question for us, Rena?

One second, please.

It may be an accidental, uh, hand raised.

Did you have a question you would like to ask us? Resner

it, uh, maybe it was an accident.

So we can ask the second person who has their hand up and we can get

Resner to work out, uh, the tech. So, Sue Frank,

can we please spotlight? Sue Frank,

I can finally see you. I was just trying to work out the technology.
Hello.

Hello, my name is TR

Deza.

I'm from Raia Country.

So two seconds, Sue, we've got you both at the moment. We've got,
uh,

tr first and then we'll go to you, Sue.

So who the,

Maybe if we just type a message and let them know that they're both
on at the

same time.

If we can have one video off,

then we'll have first and then we can have Sue.

Sorry, I'm just getting mixed up on who's going to go. Um,

I might just go ahead anyway. So, as I said before, my name is TR
from Darwin Laia Country.

I am deaf,

deaf for many years, and I didn't grow up with Auslan,

I grew up with English.

My parents were responsible for teaching me as I grew up,

didn't have hearing aids, no doctors,

no auslan interpreters. I just relied on my parents,

my parents to interpret for me. As I grew up.

I work in the North End Aboriginal Council

in records,

keeping records for aboriginal community,

Making sure it's all good.

So with no access to learning Auslan in my community,
we only relied on English
and I grew up playing sport and working
as my outlets.

And so what was your question for us for, for our panelists tonight?

Did you wanna ask them a question?

I'm getting all confused in, in what I can see.

Maybe go Sue first and go back to me. Sorry.

Okay. No, that's okay.

Sue, can we spotlight Sue, please?

Hello? Hello all. My name is Sue from Cairns
and from the Torres Strait, uh,
acknowledging the lack of access and funding,
and that's why I'm on g Moi country,
working for quite a large deaf community
in Cairns.

There has been a strong lack of funding supporting us, especially
our people,

the deaf mob, the lack of services,

and a lack of funding.

How will this work with the deaf community? We have deaf
Australians,

deaf indigenous Australians, all over this country.

How is this voice going to support them?

So your question is,

how will the voice in Parliament support First Nations deaf mo?

Yes.

So what do you think as our panelists would be something that will occur?

Will it be something that needs something that will occur, that needs to happen so that Def Mob in Australia, uh, have access to voice in Parliament and also how they can have a voice at the

table? That's, thanks. Such a

Yes. Thank you, Sue. Really appreciate that.

It's been a really interesting conversation for me to have with some of

the people that I work with.

We all know what we will do with a no vote,

but we will put to the question about what will happen with the Yes vote.

So for women's rights in Australia,

when that was recognized,

they were able to access contraception. They were able to, um, to have their own assets.

They were able to have their rights to their own bodies.

They were able to have all of these other things that came about as a right

of the women's movement that happened with the same sex

marriage plebiscite after that had happened,

people were immediately able to go and get married.

Those kinds of things were very, very strong and,

and could happen immediately after, um,

those changes had occurred.

I am yet to be convinced of what it is that we're able to

immediately go out and do or see change as First

Nations peoples about what will happen if we get a yes
vote.

It's not going to change the rate of which family
violence happens.

It's not going to change immediately the rate of incarceration.

It's not going to change those things immediately.

And that's what I think we need.

We need to have some assurity that if this change
occurs in the referendum, that there is some immediate benefit for
us.

You are speaking very strongly, sue,
about the right for inclusion and the right to be properly
resourced, to live a good quality life.

That is what I would hope for all of us,
and that is why people need to make an individual decision about
whether they're going to vote yes or no in the upcoming referendum.

It's about what we are able to facilitate and participate in. And,
um, I think you've got a very strong point to make.

I'd like to see change in transformation happen,
but I'm not sure what that's going to look like personally yet.

Just

To,

I'm sorry, I'm just conscious of time before, uh, you speak Sue.

Uh, we are running out of time. Can I just one more.

We do have multiple questions. Uh, if you have another question,
can you, for Kieran, can you contact him after Kerry
or that follow up question for Kerry? You can contact her after. Uh,
I think, yes, it is a very valid point,

and that is that we need to be conscious about how lobbying to government and advocating to government ongoing, regardless of whether it's a yes or no vote, will potentially be the outcome for our needs in conversation to be represented

in conversation and to ensure that resources are provided in an appropriately,

uh, accessible manner so that we can contact the right people and make complaints in the appropriate way, and that we can advocate, uh,

and feel safe in doing so,

in feel safe in attending community and, uh,

our own community, whether deaf, uh, hard of hearing, uh, anyone who's in the,

in the justice system, if you're in going through the, the ports, everyone needs to feel safe during that process. I know, Jen,

that we are over time, uh, and I am just,

uh, I I'm happy for you to wrap up. I think I, I did wanna give some time to,

uh, I am the mc so my time skills are lacking.

I apologize. I obviously do not have good time management skills.

I've just been completely consumed by everything our panelists have had to share

with us this evening. Uh,

and the questions that we've also received from community,

they've just been a credible, so thank you.

Yes, I, I can see that there are a lot of, uh, positive comments and questions.

So I'll get in contact with you, Jody, after this webinar,

and we can work out what we can do with the questions we have received,

but we haven't been able to answer.

I would just like to again say there are, like you said, Jody, there are so many deaf people who have not got this information in an accessible

way. They have no way,

there's no way for deaf and hard appearing community members,

regardless of whether you are white like myself or Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Island. Uh, people have not, who are deaf,

have not been had able to have this access to this information. So it's, uh,

been wonderful for so many people tonight.

I'm sure there's millions of questions that want to be asked of everyone,

everyone wants to know more, but you're right, it is time to wrap up.

I know that, uh, a lot of people have asked whether voting no,

uh, will, which is fine if you wanna vote. No, it's your choice.

But will it make people feel like white people think yes. See,

we don't think that Aboriginal people should have rights or,

or will it cause a further division in the community between White and First

Nations people? That's one question that has been a recurring theme.

So I did wanna ask that final question, and then we can wrap up.

Yeah, we can have, uh, Andrea and Kieran,

did you wanna both answer that question?

Uh, yes,

Please. I think it's important for you both to, yeah.

Perhaps say something on that.

You wanna go first Ann, or,

Um, I, well, I, I'll I'll just be brief. Um, as,
as you would all appreciate, um, the Northern Territory has a,
has had a very particular experience around the race power in the
Constitution, section 51 26 when John Howard, um,
brought in and,
and Parliament passed the Northern Territory emergency response in
2007. And that went effectively for 15 years.

Um, and so, uh, as everyone knows that on the back of little
children, a sacred,
a very honest, real, um, and,
uh, solutions, a solutions based report,
because there are recommendations there around the change in
communities,
the 73 communities across the territory and others, uh,
spoke honestly with, uh, the, the authors of that report,
and then John Howard used that with the calling of the intervention.
Um,
and so the race power, uh, has a particular, uh,
history for Northern Territory, um, Aboriginal Torres Strait
Islander people.

And so, uh, our land councils, uh,
the organization that I and Monday N p y Women's Council are all
supporting
the Yes vote, because we, we had no one at table.
There was no one there advocating for, um, common sense. Um,
and of course, John Howard abolished adec, um,
in 2005. And so there was a clear path for that. Mm-hmm. Um,
and so I just, that history, it's a real history now. And even, uh,
for,
for those who follow the news, um, Lydia has also talked about you

and,

and Alice Springs,

the children who were 17 and 18 were young babies in 2005.

So we're gonna look at performance and outcomes of the intervention.

And those children, uh, the result of the government's,

uh, rollout of the intervention and all of the measures. It's,

it's not had the success or the results for

a betterment of our future. It's, you know, quite the opposite.

And so that the race power is still there in the Constitution,

and we are looking for another avenue to be able to speak up because

that power is, can still be used,

whether it's a benefit Atsic was formed under the Rose power or a detriment,

which is the 2007 Northern Territory emergency response.

Yeah.

Thank you Erin.

Um, yeah, just with the question about, you know,

the whole no empowering racist,

I think this really opens up another question that we need to all ask ourselves,

which is, why is that the case when so much mob have been opposed to this for,

you know, since 2007, even earlier, um,

so many mob have been opposed to this whole constitutional recognition and this

powerless voice body for, you know, years and years now, um,

the conservative right have only come out in opposition toward, over the last,

what, six months if that. But suddenly, if you're saying no,

it's a racist right-wing thing,

despite the fact that so many progressive Black Fells have been opposed to this

for years and years.

It just really highlights the disconnect between First Nations struggle and the

rest of Australia.

If the rest of Australia was around our affairs and our politics and, you know,

what was going on in First Nations communities,

we wouldn't be having this conversation.

It wouldn't be seen as empowering the right and racism to say no.

And, you know, I think going forward,

what that really opens up is the need for solidarity between First Nations

communities and other communities. 'cause ultimately, you know,

we're all fighting the same struggle here. Whether it's climate change,

whether it's steps in custody, whether it's, you know, homelessness,

whether it's whatever else is happening, you know, mortgage, rent, rah rah,

rah, all these problems in society that are impacting the working class.

We're all members of the working class,

regardless of our race at the end of the day.

But all of these issues can be addressed through solidarity and through First

Nation struggle. First and foremost.

Thank you. Thank you. It's been, uh,

it's a great note to finish on, but before we do, uh,

I know that, uh, just like, uh, black time, where we go on and on and on,

there is deaf time where we also go on and on and on. For me, that's a double whammy. So we are gonna go on and on and on and on and on.

So I do apologize to everyone, uh, thank you to the tech team working behind the scenes, all the hard work that you've, uh, put in to ensure that we can live stream here and on Facebook, uh, on Zoom and Facebook, uh, the interpreters for working hard tonight. Uh,

thank you. And also, uh, to Deaf Australia and Deaf Connect for allowing us the opportunity to host this Zoom session and Facebook live session to really get people thinking and to ensure they have access to information from people

with lived experience, uh, and, uh,

from people from different perspectives and people who have experience in

country. So, uh, and, and community. So

I think it's just a great thing that we've been able to do tonight, is to get people thinking, to make people think, Hmm, can I make an informed decision now?

Or maybe I should read up a bit about this or the other. Regardless of that,

it's been great to get people thinking. So I thank you all for joining us. Uh,

I thank you to our panelists and to Senator Olivia thought for her time as well,

especially during a time of crisis. At the moment, we do know that, uh,

we need to be respectful of others, others, feelings, thoughts, safety. So I do hope that, uh, yeah, that everything is, uh,

okay with, uh, doctor, with, uh, with Senator. Thought, uh, Jen and Brent, we,

we'd both like to say something in closing,

just something, uh, very small, just the same.

Thank you so much for our amazing panelists for joining us this evening. Uh,

we've got, uh, we'll host this video on our website,

and we have videos on our website about the referendum in Auslan.

And if you have any further questions,

please feel free to reach out to Deaf Australia and we can put you in contact

with Jody. Uh, and from that, we can let you know what will happen.

The recording of tonight's session will be shared later,

but I would like to thank Jody for MCing and for organizing our panelists, uh,

to join us this evening. I also would like to say,

I do hope that, uh, you all stay safe,

and I hope that everything goes well. Uh,

I leading up to the referendum and after. Thank you so much.

Yes, thank you all so much.

Look after yourselves and safe travels wherever you are, uh,

across country or across the globe,

and please do look after yourselves and your family.

Thank you all so much for your time,

and thank you to our audience for your time.

Your time is extremely valuable as well. Thank you everyone. Good night.

Good night.