

By Allegra Spender MP

There will almost certainly be a referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament later this year. I know there's a lot of support for the Voice in Wentworth, but there are also a lot of questions. I look forward to working with and supporting local and national Indigenous groups and communities at this important moment in history.

The case for the Voice is strong. When the Australian Constitution was written in the lead up to Federation in 1901, Indigenous Australians were deliberately excluded. Since the 1990s Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have been working to try and right that wrong and recognise the special place of First Nations Australians.

The proposed change to the Constitution will enable the creation of a new advisory body – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, which is chosen by and representative of Indigenous Australians, and can advise government and parliament on matters which affect the lives of First Nations People.

The body will be accountable and transparent and work alongside existing organisations and traditional structures. It will not create laws or be able to override parliament. For more detailed information, please see [**here**](#) and [**here**](#).

I am supporting the Voice because First Nations people need a seat at the table. Our laws and policies will be improved by listening to a representative body of Indigenous Australians.

The Voice proposal was put forward by Indigenous Australians after a process of regional dialogues held around the country, that led to the Uluru national dialogue in 2017. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation to walk into a better future, that brings together Indigenous Australians, our British heritage and our multicultural achievement. According to polling it has the support of 80% of Indigenous Australians. It's an opportunity we can't afford to miss.

I know people have many questions about what the Voice is and how it will work and I'll be doing all I can to make sure the people of Wentworth have answers. We will be collaborating with community groups and others to provide Wentworth with factual information to advance a strong level of understanding in the community when the time comes to cast your vote. We will also be creating interactive forums for discussion, and I would also like to hear your views and answer your questions – please email me at allegra.spender.mp@aph.gov.au.