

Draft Quakers Australia response to the Statement from the Heart

Our Quaker testimonies call us to be in right relationship with all peoples and to support social justice systems where people know their concerns are being heard and taken into account.

In the Statement from the Heart, First Peoples spoke of the torment of their powerlessness, and sought constitutional reforms to empower their people and take a rightful place in their own country. They called for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and sought a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about their history. They sought to be heard.

First Peoples concluded the Statement from the Heart with an invitation to walk with them in a movement of the Australian people for a better future for all living in this land now called Australia. Quakers Australia seek to take up this invitation.

We consider it is essential that First Peoples have an effective say in laws and policies that affect them. We support the implementation of the Statement from the Heart and we see support for the Yes vote for the Voice as a pivotal step toward the Statement's full implementation. The full implementation of the Statement from the Heart, and not just The Voice, will provide us as a nation with an effective mechanism to finally and fully confront the truth of our past and our present and to make way for abiding justice, healing, recovery and repair for Original Australians, and our rightful relationship.