



**FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER**

# BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

I was shocked to learn that Barraba Medical Centre would close at the end of last month and since that time, I have had many conversations with many people to try to get this problem fixed.

I have written to Hunter New England Health, Federal Member Barnaby Joyce, and NSW Minister for Health to impress on them the need to find a solution to this problem.

I want to thank all community members who have taken the time to contact me and share their concerns. I have raised your concerns directly with those organisations.

I know the Local Health Committee have met with Hunter New England Health, and I have also spoken to them, impressing upon them the need to get a doctor to Barraba as soon as possible.

In the interim, we thank Dr Boyd for providing in-person cover out of the Barraba MPS when his busy schedule allows.

This problem deeply concerns me. I am continuing to follow this situation closely and look forward to responses from Hunter New England Health, Federal Member Barnaby Joyce, and NSW Minister for Health.

King regards

**Hon. Kevin Anderson MP**  
**Member for Tamworth**

With the closure of our Doctor's practice in Barraba my granddaughter and myself attended Barraba Hospital to seek medical attention.

We were looked after to the highest standard and in a very professional manner.

The Ambos, staff and nurses need to be applauded in the circumstances place upon them.

Thank you, Barraba Hospital, for your dedication.

Janet Harris



### **BARRABA RSL & RECREATIONAL CLUB LTD**

Phone 67821379

For the information of members and guests.

#### **THIS WEEK**

#### **FRIDAY 22nd September**

MEAT RAFFLES

1st Draw 6.45pm

2nd Draw 7.30pm

MEMBERSHIP DRAW \$1200

#### **SUNDAY 24th September**

ANGLER CLUB RAFFLES FROM 1PM

MEMBERSHIP DRAW 5 DRAWS \$2000

#### **FRIDAY 6th October**

Kevin Spencer from 6pm

#### **BISTRO HOURS**

Phone 0427303808

#### **DINE IN OR TAKEAWAY**

**DAILY BLACKBOARD SPECIALS AVAILABLE**

**ALSO PIZZAS MADE TO ORDER**

**MONDAY: CLOSED**

**TUESDAY: CLOSED**

**WEDNESDAY: 12PM-2.00PM**

**THURS/FRI/SAT: LUNCH 12-2PM**

**DINNER FROM 6PM**

**SUNDAY: 12-2PM**



## History Notes

This week was relatively quiet for members apart from continued sorting of historical

papers and photos. One of our past visitors has donated her Taylor family history to our collection - it arrived in a large envelope last week and will have to be secured in a folder before becoming available at the museum.

We are still looking for a photo of Dr. Poggioli to join his wife - the only one we have is taken outside the hospital and is far too small to blow up successfully. Perhaps someone has a five by three or similar photo tucked away somewhere.

Last week we were tracing the history of the Barraba Hotel in Windsor, and assumed that it may have been the Bushell family who were early settlers of the Barraba/Horton/Gulf Creek area. The news here is that the Bushell's did not build or name the Barraba hotel in Windsor.

The Rev James Steele wrote a book "Early Days of Windsor" in which he listed all the early hotels - they are actually numbered and we find that Barraba was number 23 as follows:-

*23. Barraba - This hotel stood on the corner opposite the Post Office, and was built by John Hoskisson about 1851. It was kept by Blanchard (1857), Reid and Seymore, and then in 1866/68 by Charles Beasley, who removed here from the White Hart, then Hopkins' (1869-73) and Miss Bushell (1873-74) when it was burnt down in the big fire.*

Checking Campbell & Dowd's "Squatting on Crown Lands in New South Wales" - John Hoskisson, residing at Cornwallis, held the licence 117 for northern land, Brisbane and Bannaba (Barraba) Plains in the January, 1837, listed in the NSW Government Gazette.

Towards the middle of this publication there is another list of licences held in 1840 and John Hoskisson appears in this list, still with licence 117, "Barraba" to depasture stock. The Nandewar Historical Society's first booklet lists these early licences including Burindi, Foote, Pringle for example.

So now we know where the Barraba Hotel got its name but Barraba in the lower Hunter Valley is still a problem - if someone has a copy of Cecily Mitchell's Hunter's Valley, they may find it there but I no longer have a copy of this very interesting book.

The Society Annual General Meeting is coming up next month and memberships are now due for those who have not already joined for 2023/4. More about this next week.

**This week at the Pub..**

**Karaoke Saturday Night**  
**23 September from 8.30**

**Dining 6 til 9 Friday & Saturday**  
**6 til 8 Sunday thru Thursday**  
**Bookings all 67 821023**

**KARAOKE**

**COMMERCIAL HOTEL**





*Let's talk...*

# SPECIAL RATE VARIATION PROPOSAL

We need to address rising costs if we want to be resilient in the years ahead and not have deteriorating roads and facilities.

We are starting a conversation with you about whether to apply for a Special Rate Variation to increase our rates income above the rate peg.

.....

## Information Sessions:

<b>Tamworth</b> Heritage Room, Tamworth Community Centre Tue 17 Oct, 11.30am - 12.30pm	<b>Nundle</b> Nundle Bowling Club Thur 19 Oct, 11.30am - 12.30pm
<b>Passchendaele Room,</b> Tamworth Town Hall Tue 17 Oct, 6.00pm - 7.00pm	<b>Kootingal - Moonbi - Bendemeer</b> Moonbi Hall, Gill Street Thur 19 Oct, 5.30pm - 6.30pm
<b>Barraba</b> Conference Room, Barraba Playhouse Wed 18 Oct, 12.30pm - 1.30pm	<b>Webinars</b> Registration required Wed 11 Oct, 12.00pm - 1.00pm Wed 11 Oct, 6.00pm - 7.00pm
<b>Manilla</b> Manilla Small Town Hall Wed 18 Oct, 5.30pm - 6.30pm	

To learn more, register for an information session or provide feedback scan the QR code or go to [www.haveyoursay.tamworth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.haveyoursay.tamworth.nsw.gov.au)




Councillors have agreed to undertake extensive community engagement about a proposed application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a permanent Special Rate Variation of 36.3% over two years starting next year. The proposal comprises a variation of 18.5% from July 1, 2024 (including the forecast rate peg of 3.5%) and 15% cent from July 1, 2025 (including the forecast rate peg of 2.5%). A report considered by Councillors detailed the financial challenges ahead and how \$7.9 million in annual savings and \$3.2 million in one-off savings have been found as part of cost savings and efficiencies. However, the report said an increase to rate income above the rate peg is an option which must be looked at if Council is to deliver the services and projects the local community has told us they want and need. Over the next six weeks, a wide-ranging engagement plan will be activated to inform the local community about the need for Special Rate Variation. It will include advertising in newspapers, radio, television and social media, face-to-face meetings, webinars, a community newsletter and detailed information on [Council's website](#).



**Do you know a local legend?**

**Nominate them for the 2023**

**Local Legend Awards!** 🏆 🏆

The Awards recognise the outstanding achievements and contributions of individuals and organisations to our community.

Local Legends can be nominated for areas including:

- ★ Volunteering
- ★ Access
- ★ Gift of Time
- ★ Sustainability
- ★ Performing Arts
- ★ Visual Arts
- ★ Community Inclusion

Nominations close on Wednesday 18 October 2023!

To nominate, visit:

<https://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/.../local-legends-awards>

**At the Ordinary Meeting of Tamworth Regional Council on 12 September 2023:**

**Councillor Russell Webb has been returned unopposed as Tamworth Regional Mayor while Cr Judy Coates was elected the new Tamworth Region Deputy Mayor through a written ballot process.**

# Barraba Landfill

## Temporary Opening Hours

**Commencing  
18 September 2023**

**Friday 8.30am – 11.30am  
Saturday 8.30am – 11.30am  
Sunday 1.00pm – 4.00pm**

*For more  
information  
scan please*



www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au | Tamworth Regional Council, PO Box 555,  
474 Peel Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340

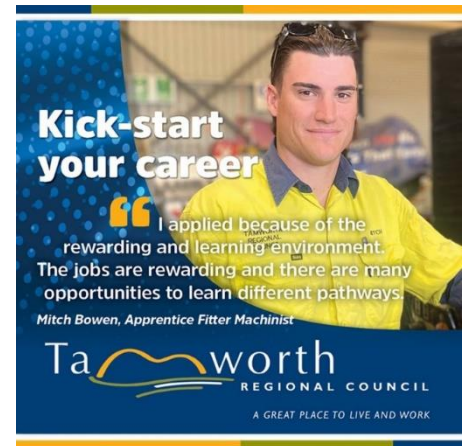
### Temporary changes to waste facility opening hours

Staff shortages will mean Tamworth Regional Council needs to make temporary changes to the opening hours of waste management facilities across the region from Monday 18 September. Despite the changes, Council has ensured residents in Barraba will still be able to access their local facility on at least one day during the week and on the weekend.

“Unfortunately, the labour shortages businesses are experiencing across our region are also affecting Council,” Bruce Logan, Director Water and Waste at Tamworth Regional Council explained.

The changes to opening hours are essential for the safety of staff and members of the public, ensuring an experienced member of staff is on hand at all the sites during opening hours.

**Barraba Landfill will be open: Fridays from 8:30am – 11:30am,  
Saturdays from 8:30am – 11:30am and Sundays from 1.00pm – 4:00pm**



Traineeships and apprenticeships are a fantastic way to gain a qualification and learn on the job in an interesting and fulfilling industry. Tamworth Regional Council currently has a number of positions available in a diverse range of industries. Make the first step in your new career and apply today <https://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/.../current-vacancies>

### Advisory groups appeal for new members

Tamworth Regional Council has opportunities for interested locals to give their time to support two committees which are an important part of our community – the Tamworth City Centre Working Group and Tamworth Region Inclusive Culture Advisory Committee.

Tamworth City Centre Working Group has four positions to fill for people suitably qualified to give expert input as a planning consultant, landscape architect, urban designer and a commercial property owner.

The Tamworth Region Inclusive Culture Advisory Committee meets quarterly and provides strategic advice to the Council in relation to diversity and other specific cultural matters.

The terms of reference and expression of interest forms can be found on Council’s website via the following links:

[Tamworth City Centre Working Group](#) [Tamworth Region Inclusive Culture Advisory Committee.](#)





# Kenneth Garwen Hiscock

Peacefully at Barraba Hospital  
11th September, 2023  
Aged 88 Years

Much loved son of Harry & Maud (both dec'd).  
Treasured brother of Cynthia (Min), Daphne,  
Charles (Jeffrey), Henry (Jack), Joyce,  
Mary (June), Betty (all dec'd) and Ron.  
Loving brother-in-law of their partners.  
Much loved uncle, great uncle and  
great great uncle of their families.

A dear friend to many.  
The family and friends of

## Ken

are warmly invited to attend his  
Funeral Service to be held in  
**St. Laurence's Anglican Church,**  
**Cnr. Maude and Fitzroy Streets, Barraba commencing**  
**at 10.30am, Thursday 21st September, 2023.**  
**Following the Service the cortege will proceed to the**  
**Barraba Lawn Cemetery, Memorial Drive, Barraba.**

*By request, no flowers.*  
*Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to*  
*The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service*  
*by using the following link*  
*[rescuehelicopter.com.au/donate](https://rescuehelicopter.com.au/donate)*

*Shaun Hamilton Funerals*  
125 MARIUS STREET  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340 | 02 6766 1966



## Snippets from St Laurence's

Once again, I must start with an apology: here it is nearly the end of September and I haven't given you a reminder about BCA boxes. September and March are the times these are collected, so if you are a supporter of Bush Church Aid, and your memory has been playing 'catch me if you can', like mine, please get your box to Lee or leave it at the church.

Synod meets next weekend. This is a time when clergy and lay representatives from every part of the diocese come together in a type of parliament. Please hold them in your prayers as they look at what God's word means in the twenty first century. I remember a synod when the big question was the acceptance of women into the clergy – that was a while ago.

When a loved relative or friend dies we often have mixed feelings – relief that they no longer suffer and our own grief because we shall miss them – but we know that death is not the end. There is life after death: the empty tomb was visible proof, so we look forward to a reunion. Think about these words from Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 38 and 39: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

Beth

**Memorial Service for Sr Petra Ries**  
**Friday 22 September 2023 at 12pm**  
**St John's Catholic Church**  
**Savoy St Barraba**

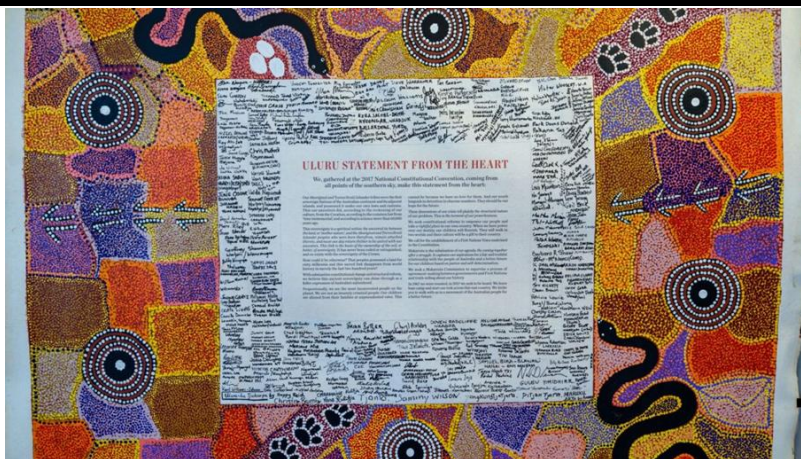
We extend an invitation to all community members to come and celebrate the life of Sr Petra in this memorial service.

We walk by faith, not by sight.  
2 cor 5:7

**CATHOLIC CHURCH TIMES**  
Barraba 1st Saturday evening  
Mass 5pm  
2nd 3rd 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
9am  
Upper Horton 11am in July  
Weekday Mass Wednesday  
10am

**BARRABA UNITING CHURCH**  
**NOTICES**  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023  
**Service time 8.45am.**  
Please note change of time  
All welcome

**ANGLICAN CHURCH TIMES**  
**St Laurence's Barraba**  
Sunday service at 10.00am  
Woodsreef 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the  
month at 11.30am



Several of our readers phoned to request we print the ‘**Uluru Statement from the Heart**’.

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This **is the torment of our powerlessness**.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

**The independently fact checked ‘No’ case for the referendum starts on page 10**

**Next week we will print the fact check for the ‘Yes’ case**





**Phone: 0459 192 265**

Email: [admin@barrabaveterinaryservice.com](mailto:admin@barrabaveterinaryservice.com)

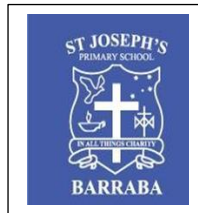
219 Mulwarree Rd, Barraba 2347

Mon to Fri 8:30am – 5.30pm

Closed from 1-2pm

**After Hours service available for emergencies only.**

Offering veterinary services within the Barraba district for small and large animals in clinic or on farm. Cat & Dog Boarding available for short or long-term stays.



*Students of the week*

*K: Emily J Excellence in reading*

*K: Sophie J Super work in writing*

*1/2: Alfie A Always working well in all learning areas*

*3/4: Ava H Achievement in literacy*

*5/6: Felix U Always producing quality work in all areas*

*5/6: Lucas T Great playground behaviour*



## NOMINATE A LOCAL WONDERWOMAN TODAY

Nominations for the 2024 NSW Woman of the Year awards are now open, and the community are invited to put forward the name of local woman who inspires, overcomes, and is a pillar of our community.

Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson said “Rural women have always played an incredibly important role in regional communities and it’s great that every year we have an opportunity to recognise their contributions to our community. Throughout our history, women have ensured the success of regional communities, whether that’s through organisations like the CWA, or through the incredibly important role women have always played in agriculture.”

The 2024 NSW Woman of the Year Awards will be held during NSW Women’s Week 2024 (4-10 March) in Sydney and the community can nominate women across four categories:

- Premier’s NSW Woman of Excellence
- NSW Community Hero
- NSW Young Woman of the Year
- NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year

Nominations are open now and close on at 11:59pm on Sunday 8 October. For more information, please visit the [NSW Government website](#).



*Reading Awards 200 Night Reading*

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

**TRANSPORT DRIVER**  
Provide transport to individuals or groups of older persons

**COMPANION INDIVIDUAL**  
Spend one on one time with a GoCo client in their home or out in the community

**COMPANION GROUP**  
Deliver fun activities to our clients such as bingo or mystery tours!!

**MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERY**  
Deliver meals to clients straight to their door

**GET IN TOUCH AND START VOLUNTEERING TODAY! 6740 2240 OR SEE JODY AT OUR QUEEN ST OFFICE**



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## BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

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One day you're young, the next day you're sitting at the edge of your bed like this...





## Rifle Club Notes

Although we only had handful of shooters on Saturday it was a great afternoon of shooting.

The scores were all up in the 90's in the 100m, with Andrew scoring a possible. The weather was just perfect at the range with not much of a breeze at all.

### Unlimited 50m

D. McIlrick 87.2, 85.1, 92.2 = 264.5

### AA Grade 50m

A. White 94.2, 97.3, 97.3 = 288.8

C. White 80, 91.2, 87.1 = 258.3

G. Urquhart 87, 84, 82 = 253

### Unlimited 100m

D. McIlrick 96.4, 94.2, 93.1 = 283.7

### AA Grade 100m

A. White 98.4, 98.4, 100.6 = 296.14

C. White 97.4, 99.8, 97.3 = 293.14

G. Urquhart 84.1, 92.4, 95.1 = 271.6

## Breast Cancer Research Golf Day

A very good attendance of 80 players supported our Breast Cancer Research Golf Day on Sunday. It again showed what a wonderful supportive town we live in. In excess of \$7000 was raised for Breast Cancer research as 4 person teams, many wearing something pink, battled it out over 9 holes. Players soon forgot their near misses and "if only's" out on the course with Lachie Smith and Ben Freeman providing the necessary refreshments. It wasn't about winning it was about enjoyment and it was in spades. Congratulations to our overall winners Firmen Allan with his daughters Ruby and Izzy and friend Jack Myers.

As teams finished the club house veranda started to fill to watch the "shoot out" of cousins Nick and Mitch up the 18th. Attention then turned to Auctioneer Simon Koopman who again ensured Breast Cancer Research were the real winners on the day encouraging spirited bidding amongst the good crowd.

President Will Sedgwick thanked the trophy and auction prize donors and in closing he thanked the large field of players for again supporting what is now our annual Breast Cancer charity afternoon. All in all a wonderful day was had by everyone. Next Sunday we will play an Individual Stableford for the Vera Doyle Memorial Trophy.

A gentle reminder also to be thinking about your twilight golf teams starting on Friday 6th Oct.

## Rugby Report

Well, the Rugby season in Central North has been completed after the Grand Finals at Pirates on Saturday with three hard games.

The women's game went to Narrabri over Gunnedah 26-12. Reserve grade, Pirates took on Moree with four penalty goals to Moree. They finished on top after a try each 17-7 the minor premiers unable to finish off the season. First Grade saw the Pirates again take on the Moree Bulls but again were unable to finish the job, leaving Moree the premiers with a convincing 28-17 win.

The three results, I feel, would have been popular with most clubs in the zone, as Pirates has an abundance of players in their ranks compared with most other teams.

Looking back at the week's before final with Barraba and Moree, I thought the early substitution of Jamal from the front row after 20 minutes was a mistake as the Rams were in control of the scrums and winning their lineouts, keeping pressure on the Bulls. This enabled Moree to come back to get the upper hand for the rest of the game. But two injuries did not help the Rams.

When a team gets to the final, the aim is to get to the next game and to do that the best team should be on the field. We know the Reserves have trained and played throughout the year but a winning result is better than a loss and I feel all players would have liked to be in Tamworth last Saturday for a chance to be premiers.

The club's players had a get-together at the club last Saturday which proved to be a good way to end the season. A reminder of the Presentation Night to be held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October for the senior women's and men's teams and also the girls under 16s side, which saw 3 girls playing for Country. Bookings can be made online or through Stock and Crop.

### Message from the Editor

At *Barraba Community News* we welcome local news and stories from our community members about activities, events and news of interest to the Barraba community.

Share your news, views and what you or your local organisation is doing.

Advertise in *News* at a competitive cost and reach 750 households in our area who receive a free copy each week.

Contact [news@barrabacommunitynews.org.au](mailto:news@barrabacommunitynews.org.au) or drop into the Community College on the corner of Alice and Fitzroy Sts.

## The no pamphlet: (official Government pamphlet delivered by mail last week) campaign's voice to parliament referendum essay –factchecked by The Guardian

### REASONS TO VOTE NO – A SUMMARY

This Referendum is not simply about “recognition”. This Voice proposal goes much further. If passed, it would represent the biggest change to our Constitution in our history. It is legally risky, with unknown consequences. It would be divisive and permanent. If you don't know, vote no.

#### RISKY

We all want to help Indigenous Australians in disadvantaged communities. However, this Voice is not the answer and presents a real risk to our system of government.

This Voice specifically covers all areas of “Executive Government”. This means no issue is beyond its reach.

**Fact Check** *The voice would have no right of veto, and would not be binding on the parliament, according to the prime minister, Anthony Albanese.*

The High Court would ultimately determine its powers, not the Parliament.

**Fact Check Incorrect.** *The referendum amendment clearly says parliament will have the power to make laws with “respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures”. Legal experts – including Australia’s former chief justice – say high court challenges are unlikely and even then, the court cannot change a decision made by parliament. It can only send a matter back for reappraisal.*

*The former chief justice of the high court, Robert French, said in a submission to the joint select committee on the voice referendum: “What, if any, part would the courts have to play in the working out of the constitutional and legal role of The Voice? There is little or no scope for constitutional litigation arising from the words of the proposed amendment.”*

*The former high court justice Kenneth Hayne has said the courts can and do review decisions made by the executive “but the courts look only at whether the decision was lawfully made, not at the merits of the decision”.*

It risks legal challenges, delays and dysfunctional government:

**Fact Check Disputed.** *The federal solicitor general, Stephen Donaghue, in legal advice on the voice, said it would not clog up the courts or slow down government decision-making and “would not pose any threat to Australia’s system of representative and responsible government”. His advice, released by the government in April, said the voice would “enhance” the system of government and that “no such requirements can be implied” for the government to wait for voice advice.*

#### UNKNOWN

No details have been provided on how members of the Voice would be chosen or how it would operate. Australians are being asked to vote first before these details are worked out.

Australians should have details before the vote, not after.

**Fact Check Misinformation.** *The referendum is a vote to give parliament the enabling power to design the voice. Those details do not belong in the constitution. As the constitutional expert Anne Twomey said in January: “Constitutions are not places where you want to freeze details. It is appropriate to leave it to parliament as this gives greater flexibility to adjust for future needs.”*

*The government has said it will be up to parliament to design the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the voice. It has issued key design principles, partly inspired by the Indigenous Voice Co-design Process Final Report, (the Calma-Langton report), which was commissioned by the previous Coalition government. The report was the result of 18 months of consultation with 9,478 people and organisations, including 115 community consultations in 67 locations, 2,978 submissions, 1,127 surveys, 124 stakeholder meetings and 13 webinars.*



We don't know how it will work, we don't know who will be on it, but we do know it will permanently divide us as Australians

**Fact Check Disputed.** *The five key principles of the design are: it will provide independent advice to parliament and government; it will be chosen by First Nations people based on the wishes of local communities; it will be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; it will be empowering, community-led, inclusive, respectful, culturally informed and gender balanced; it will also include youth; it will be accountable and transparent.*

Some Voice supporters say this would just be a first step to reparations and compensation and other radical changes. So, what would come next?

**Fact Check** *As noted above, advice from the voice would not be binding on parliament. Any proposals for reparations or compensation would need to gain the support of MPs, just as they would if a political party brought them forward now.*

## DIVISIVE

Enshrining a Voice in the Constitution for only one group of Australians means permanently dividing our country.

**Fact Check** *All Australians have the right to make representations to parliament, which is guaranteed by the freedom of political communication implied in our constitution. The First Nations voice is simply a permanent one which also addresses systemic and structural disadvantage faced by First Nations peoples since colonisation.*

It creates different classes of citizenship through an unknown body that has the full force of the Constitution behind it.

**Fact Check** *The constitution already refers to race in section 51 (xxvi) and section 25. In 1967 the Australian people voted in a referendum to change how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were referred to in the constitution. This referendum will enable an Indigenous voice, with representatives from local state and regional bodies, to advise parliament on those laws with the aim of improving life outcomes for First Nations people.*

Many Indigenous Australians do not support this.

**Fact Check** *Two different polls have shown 80-83% of Indigenous Australians support it.*

## PERMANENT

Putting a Voice in the Constitution means it's permanent. We will be stuck with negative consequences.

**Fact Check Incorrect.** *The voice model would be able to be changed by the parliament of the day, exactly the same as any other law. But the voice could be removed from or altered within the constitution only by a further referendum.*

## TEN REASONS TO VOTE NO

### 1. THIS VOICE IS LEGALLY RISKY

Australia's Constitution is our most important legal document. Every word can be open to interpretation.

Australia hasn't changed its Constitution since 1977. This would be the biggest change to our democracy in Australia's history.

It is a leap into the unknown. This Voice has not been road tested. There is no comparable constitutional body like this anywhere in the world.

**Fact Check Not quite true.** *While not enshrined in a constitution, Canada has an Indigenous advisory committee. New Zealand has the Waitangi tribunal to oversee the treaty of 1840. Dedicated Maori seats have existed in the New Zealand parliament since 1867. The arctic nations – Sweden, Finland and Norway – all have the Saami parliament to advise governments on Indigenous matters.*

Enshrining a Voice in the Constitution means it is open to legal challenge and interpretation by the High Court. Legal experts don't agree, and can't know for sure, how the High Court will interpret such a constitutional change.

*"I would foresee a decade or more of constitutional and administrative law litigation arising out of a voice..." (Ian Callinan AC KC, former High Court Judge - The Australian, 17/12/2022)*

This opens a legal can of worms.

**Fact Check** See notes above.

## 2. THERE ARE NO DETAILS

This is a big decision. However, the Government won't reveal key details before the vote. We don't know how it will help disadvantaged communities and close the gap.

We don't know how many members this Voice would have.

These details will be decided through normal parliamentary procedures of legislation, and would be able to be altered by the parliament of the day, as conditions need.

We don't know if they would be elected or chosen, or how this would occur.

We don't know how it would make representations or be held accountable.

**Fact Check** *The design principles state that the voice membership would be "selected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, not appointed by the executive government". The process would be designed "to suit the wishes of local communities and would be determined through the post-referendum process". The principles also state members would serve fixed terms to ensure "accountability", fall within the scope of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and be able to be sanctioned or removed for serious misconduct.*

These details would only be worked through after Australians have voted.

**Fact Check** *And would be developed in consultation with Indigenous communities.*

According to the Yes campaign, it "doesn't make sense" to have details before the vote:

*"It doesn't make any sense to do that detailed consultation until we have the support of the Australian people to change the constitution." (Yes23 Brochure - The Australian, 17/12/2022)*

This is the wrong way around.

You wouldn't buy a house without inspecting it or a car without test driving it.

Yet you are being asked to vote to change our Constitution without details.

Australians shouldn't be asked to sign a blank cheque.

**Fact Check** *See above – parliament will design the details after the vote, and some design principles have been made public already.*

*"How can Australians possibly agree to something where we don't know the detail?" (Senator Kerryne Liddle, Shadow Minister for Child Protection and the Prevention of Family Violence and Arrernte woman)*

## 3. IT DIVIDES US

**Enshrining in our Constitution a body for only one group of Australians means permanently dividing Australians. Many Indigenous Australians do not agree with this**

**Fact Check** *Again, two different polls have shown 80-83% of Indigenous Australians support it.*

*"This Voice will not unite us, it will divide us by race."*

*(Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians and Warlpiri woman)*

**Fact Check** *The constitution already refers to race in section 51 (xxvi) and section 25. In 1967, Australians voted in a referendum to change how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were referred to in the constitution. This referendum will enable an Indigenous voice, with representatives from local state and regional bodies, to advise parliament on those laws with the aim of improving life outcomes for First Nations people.*

*The attorney general, Mark Dreyfus, denied the bill would introduce race into the constitution. The Nationals leader, David Littleproud, said he didn't support claims that the voice would "re-racialise" Australia.*



*The former high court chief justice Robert French said the amendment would be “a significant shift away from the existing race-based legislative power that the commonwealth has with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people”.*

*Prof George Williams: “I think the whole race issue is a complete misnomer. Race is a 19th-century concept that has no longer any scientific credibility attached to it. A group has been identified because they’re a unique group within our community.”*

This goes against a key principle of our democratic system, that all Australians are equal before the law.

**Fact Check** See notes above.

*“The inclusion of the proposed s 129 would mean that we become a nation where, whenever we or our ancestors first came to this country, we are not all equal.”*

*(David Jackson AM KC, former Federal Court Judge - Parliamentary Inquiry Submission, 11/04/2023)*

Our Constitution belongs to all Australians. Our Parliament is there to represent all Australians. It now includes a record 11 Indigenous Members and Senators.

Our national anthem was recently changed to reflect the fact we are “one and free”. By contrast, this Voice would permanently divide Australians, in law and spirit.

*“We’re all Australians. And that’s the way it should end up. It shouldn’t be divided by this so called Voice which is going to split this country right down the centre.” (Ian Conway, Central Arrernte Senior Custodian)*

#### **4. IT WON’T HELP INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS**

We all want to help Indigenous Australians in disadvantaged communities, to close the gap and achieve reconciliation.

**However, more bureaucracy is not the answer.**

There are currently hundreds of Indigenous representative bodies at all levels of government, along with the National Indigenous Australians Agency, which has 1,400 staff.

**Fact Check Incorrect.** *There are not hundreds of Indigenous bodies at levels of government. NIAA is a government department, like Defence or Health. As at 31 December 2021, just 23% of NIAA staff identify as Indigenous.*

A centralised Voice risks overlooking the needs of regional and remote communities:

**Fact Check** *The voice design principles include each of the states, territories and the Torres Strait Islands, plus specific representatives from remote regions. The Calma-Langton report proposes remote representatives in NSW, NT, Queensland, WA and SA, in addition to other members.*

*“A national voice cannot speak for country.”*

*(Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO, Australians for Unity board member and Bundjalung man)*

Right now, many voices are crying out for help in tackling devastating social problems in some remote communities. What’s needed is action.

*“What we need in Canberra is ears, not a Voice.”*

*(Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians and Warlpiri woman)*

#### **5. NO ISSUE IS BEYOND ITS SCOPE**

This Voice model isn’t just to the Parliament, it goes much further – to all areas of “Executive Government”. That includes all government departments, agencies and other bodies (like the Reserve Bank).

**Fact Check** *The government has many advisory bodies that provide advice, which the government then decides to either act on or not act on. The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, in June said “it will simply be an advisory body, just like we have a range of other advisory bodies”. On Tuesday, Albanese said “it’s not binding on the parliament, it has no right of veto”.*

Decisions in relation to the economy, national security, infrastructure, health, education and more, would all be within its scope.

**Fact Check** Anne Twomey: *"There is no obligation upon parliament or the executive government to respond to the representations [from the voice] or give effect to them."*

In the words of a member of the Government's Referendum Working Group:

*"The voice will be able to speak to all parts of the government, including the cabinet, ministers, public servants, and independent statutory offices and agencies – such as the Reserve Bank...It can't shut the voice up." (Professors Megan Davis and Gabrielle Appleby - The Australian, 1/4/2023)*

In the words of a constitutional law professor who supports the Voice:

*"I think it's fatally flawed because what it does is retain the full range of review of executive action. This means the Voice can comment on everything from submarines to parking tickets...We will have regular judicial interventions." (Professor Greg Craven AO - Daily Mail, 24/3/2023)*

**Fact Check** Craven has accused the no campaign of being **"deeply misleading" and "disreputable"** by including his quote. He said he is a supporter of the voice and will campaign strongly for a yes vote.

Many legal experts have expressed concern about its scope, however their concerns have simply been overlooked.

**Fact Check** The government altered the proposed wording of the amendment after some legal experts suggested changes. The final wording makes it clearer that parliament would retain power to make laws over the voice's composition and functions.

## 6. IT RISKS DELAYS AND DYSFUNCTION

The Australian Parliament deals with hundreds of pieces of legislation a year.

This Voice's scope goes beyond Parliament, covering departments, agencies and all areas of "Executive Government". How would the Voice handle this?

**If the Voice is not satisfied with the way it has been consulted, or a decision that is made, it could appeal to the courts. How long would this take?**

**Fact Check** The leading constitutional academic Anne Twomey, a member of the government's expert legal panel that developed the voice, rebuffed such concerns in April. She said there was **"no obligation"** for parliament or government to respond to the voice's representations, to engage in prior consultation, or to wait for representations from the voice before making decisions.

Many legal experts have warned this would cause considerable delays in decision making.

**Fact Check** The federal solicitor general, Stephen Donaghue, on the question of obligations to wait for voice advice, said: **"The text of [the] proposed s129 imposes no such requirements. Further, no such requirements can be implied."**

*"The Voice will almost certainly become a lightning rod for protracted debate about a vast array of current issues. Nearly every matter of current concern on the national agenda will be seen as having an Indigenous component of some kind." (Nicholas Hasluck AM KC, former WA Supreme Court Judge - Parliamentary Inquiry Submission, 16/4/2023)*  
The risk of legal appeals and delays means a risk of dysfunctional government. That is not good for Australia.

## 7. IT OPENS THE DOOR FOR ACTIVISTS

The legal uncertainty and the absence of details raises the question: what comes next?

**Some Voice supporters are upfront in saying this Voice will be a first step to reparations and compensation and other radical changes.**

*"This is the first step, it's a vital step and it puts all the explanation behind it. 'Pay the Rent' for example, how do we do that in a way that is transparent and that actually sees reparations and compensation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people...?" (Thomas Mayo, Referendum Working Group - SEARCH Foundation speech, 12/2/2020)*

The Uluru Statement from the Heart says a Voice is a first step, before a treaty and truth telling.



By definition, a treaty is an agreement between governments, not between one group of citizens and its government.

**Fact Check Incorrect.** *A treaty is a binding agreement between two or more parties. A treaty sets out the terms of engagement and obligations of all sides to maintain the agreement. New Zealand (Aotearoa), Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Japan, Greenland and the US have all negotiated treaties with Indigenous peoples.*

A member of the Government's Referendum Working Group has described "truth" as "leverage" to lead to "the abolishment of the old colonial institutions".

**Fact Check** *The Uluru statement from the heart has called for a sequence: first the establishment of the voice, followed by a Makarrata commission to explore a process of treaty making and truth telling. These processes are a long way from being determined.*

*"It is a way to further what we need for our people in any negotiations for treaties and for other things like legislation, reform and abolishment of the institutions, the old colonial institutions that harm us." (Thomas Mayo, Referendum Working Group SEARCH Foundation speech, 12/2/2020)*

Already, many activists are campaigning to **abolish Australia Day, change our flag and other institutions and symbols** important to Australians.

*"It's always been #abolishAustraliaDay, changing the date is a cop out."*

*(Teela Reid, Referendum Engagement Group - Twitter, 24/1/2023)*

If there is a constitutionally enshrined Voice, these calls would grow louder.

**Fact Check This is speculation.** *The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has publicly ruled out compensation for Indigenous Australians, moving the date of Australia Day and the voice making representations to the Reserve Bank. The Indigenous affairs minister, Linda Burney, has said her priorities for the voice will be health, housing, employment and education.*

*"Australians need to understand that the Voice will be used to support the demands for recognition of coexisting sovereignty, a Makarrata commission designed to produce a treaty and monetary compensation, and a rewriting of Australian history..."*

*The potential for great irremediable harm to Australian society means the voice should never be incorporated into the Australian constitution..."*

*(Terence Cole AO RFD KC, former NSW Supreme Court Judge - Spectator Australia, 6/4/2023; Parliamentary Inquiry Submission, 19/4/2023)*

## 8. IT WILL BE COSTLY AND BUREAUCRATIC

We don't know how much additional funding would be allocated to this Voice. That's another detail that would only be determined after the referendum.

There are currently hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative bodies at all levels of government. This year, the Government has allocated \$4.3 billion for the National Indigenous Australians Agency, which has 1,400 staff.

**Fact Check** *As at 31 December 2021, NIAA said approximately 23% of those staff were Indigenous. NIAA is a government department to serve the minister, like health, foreign affairs or education. Under the previous Coalition government, 39% of all grants were being paid out to 589 non-Indigenous corporations, charities and organisations.*

*The current Indigenous Australians minister, Linda Burney, says the voice would help design programs which are more efficient as well as cost-effective.*

This Agency's website and corporate plan says: "We... ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a say in the decisions that affect them."

There is no suggestion this Voice will replace any of these. It will operate as one bureaucracy among many.

## 9. THIS VOICE WILL BE PERMANENT

This Voice is not a trial or pilot program. It will not be in legislation that can be reversed. Once it is in the Constitution it won't be undone.

**Fact Check** Details of the voice, including its membership and how it interacts with parliament, will be decided through legislation that can be changed by the parliament of the day. The constitutional amendment specifically notes parliament will "have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures."

Once the High Court makes an interpretation, Parliament can't overrule it. We will be stuck with the negative consequences forever.

**Fact Check Incorrect.** Legal experts – including the former chief justice of Australia – say the high court cannot change a decision made by parliament. It can only send a matter back for reappraisal. See detailed annotation above.

## 10. THERE ARE BETTER WAYS FORWARD

This referendum is not about simply recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution.

**That can be achieved without tying it to a risky, unknown and permanent Voice.**

Recognition has the widespread support of Australians. However, this Voice proposal is the problem. There are many Australians who oppose a Voice on principle.

**Fact Check** The voice came from the Uluru Statement from the Heart, signed by 250 Indigenous leaders, following comprehensive rejection of symbolic recognition by Indigenous people across many years.

Others might be willing to consider a less risky Voice option, but the Government has not given you this choice. When previous changes to the Constitution have been proposed, there has been a Constitutional Convention to properly consider options and details.

**Fact Check** The Uluru statement from the heart, calling for the voice, was delivered in 2017 following the First Nations constitutional convention at Uluru. The attorney general, Mark Dreyfus, has said: "This bill is the product of a comprehensive and lengthy process to determine the right form of constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples stretching over more than a decade."

No such process happened here. This process was rushed and heavy-handed. This approach isn't unifying, or effective. It's divisive.

## THIS DECISION IS YOURS

This is a very important decision. Unfortunately, the legitimate questions and concerns of many Australians have been dismissed.

Fortunately, this referendum won't be decided by politicians, corporations or celebrities. It will be decided by every Australian. It affects every Australian.

**If you don't know, vote no.**

## MORE INFORMATION

For information and updates go to:

- [www.riskyvoice.com](http://www.riskyvoice.com)
- [www.oneandfree.au](http://www.oneandfree.au)
- [www.australiansforunity.com.au](http://www.australiansforunity.com.au)

**Fact Check** None of these sites are neutral sources of information. They are operated by the same conservative group, Advance, which is working with companies that appear to specialise in conservative Christian campaigning, including a US-headquartered marketing and fundraising firm that aims to help Christian non-profit ministries "fulfil their mission". There are links between the no campaign and the failed conservative push to defeat the marriage equality postal survey in 2017.

Advance runs one Facebook page highlighting conservative criticism, another highlighting progressive complaints, and a third portraying itself as a neutral news source.