



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Is the `Voice to Parliament' really justified?**

The Albanese Government is pushing for a Voice to Parliament referendum for Indigenous Australians later this year.

Before discussing this `Voice' and how precisely it will work, let's begin by examining the current situation for indigenous Australians.

In the last Frydenberg Budget, \$636 million was earmarked for indigenous programs for 2022/2023.

The NSW government has allocated \$5.48 billion on indigenous programs under the `Close the Gap initiatives.

The NT government has set aside \$408 million for indigenous housing and the federal government is going to tip in \$183 million to assist in this project. WA is also spending \$600 million on closing the gap initiatives.

In Victoria, the government is committing \$1.6 billion (1,600,000,000.00) to improve the "economic, social and health' outcomes of indigenous peoples, and an additional \$151 million to support it's Victorian Treaty process development.

South Australia is spending \$274 million while Queensland is spending \$74 million with Indigenous businesses to be three per cent of the value of government procurement contracts. (Under the QIPP an Indigenous business is at least fifty per cent owned by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples)

Then on top of government spending, business's also tip in large wads of cash into indigenous coffers. Companies like RIO, (\$440 million), BHP (\$300 million) and Fortescue Metals pay handsome loyalties plus procurements and staffing quotas). In the case of Fortescue Metals some \$3 Billion is paid to local aboriginal groups in various forms.

So it's not a question of money. With the above sort of spending every indigenous person should be living well. There are countless initiatives, federal, state and local which are geared to improving the lot of Aboriginal peoples around the country. Per capita indigenous people are doing much better than other Australians and they get free education and health benefits to boot.



Clearly indigenous peoples all around the country have the ear of both state and federal governments. So why do they need an extra voice to parliament? The first question that needs to be asked is; 'Why are the indigenous given all this attention and funding which is not given to other Australians'?

The problem is not a matter of money or access to decision makers because clearly they already have it. As Nyamal Elder said when attending the Fortescue indigenous program announcement; the plight of Aboriginal people is not lack of money but the lack of (job) opportunities. Why can't aboriginal people be encouraged to be self supporting and mine their own land? Why must they always be fobbed off with generous payments which only encourage dependency on handouts and robs them of the dignity of being self supporting?

FamilyVoice calls on Prime Minister Albanese to demonstrate why an additional voice is necessary when clearly Aboriginal people have many avenues to government policy making and funding already in place.

The Prime Minister should answer the questions put to him by the leader of the Opposition, Peter Dutton.

Mr Dutton is right to accuse the Prime Minister of treating Australians 'like mugs.' The electorate has a right to know why there is a pressing need for an exclusive voice for Aboriginal people and how exactly will this work?

And what exactly does this voice entail? What benefit will this 'voice' provide that other avenues are not currently covering? Or is the 'Voice' going beyond simply being an advisory channel? Mr Dutton's question is pertinent at this point regarding who gets to choose the members of this 'voice', what are the details of their tenure?

As Mr Dutton has pointed out, the current broad sweeping statements made by the Prime Minister are too vague and need to be fleshed out before this issue is put to the people of Australia to make an informed decision on.

Further details:

**Alan Barron - 0425 785 619**