

South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament: Overview

Description: This factsheet provides an overview of the structure of South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament, including the roles and responsibilities of the Local and State First Nations Voices.

Overview

South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament (the Voice) will be a representative, elected body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Through the Voice, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can have their say at the highest levels of decision-making in South Australia, including to Parliament, on matters, policies and laws that affect them.

The Voice is an advisory body and will not have veto or decision-making powers in South Australia's Parliament. It will allow the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to raise community priorities in a public transparent and accountable way.

How it will work

South Australia's First Nations Voice will have two levels, a Local First Nations Voice and a State First Nations Voice. They will work together but will have different roles and responsibilities.

Local First Nations Voice

The Local First Nations Voice will be elected. There will be six regions across South Australia, with an elected body for each of the six regions.

All elected members will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They will be elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in their region.

Of the six regions:

- Five will have 7 elected members
- One (the Central Local First Nations Voice region) will have 11 elected members, as it has a higher population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Read the fact sheet '**Local First Nations Voice regions**' for more information about the regions and boundaries.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local First Nations Voice bodies will:

- talk to and listen to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about issues that are important to them
- engage with government or other organisations in the local area
- share their community's views with the State First Nations Voice.

Each Local First Nations Voice will choose two joint presiding members. They will chair local meetings and be their region's representatives on the State First Nations Voice.



State First Nations Voice

The State First Nations Voice will be made up of the two joint presiding members of each Local First Nations Voice, with a total of 12 members.

The State First Nations Voice will choose two people of differing genders to become joint presiding members. These joint presiding members will lead the State First Nations Voice by engaging directly with Parliament on behalf of the State First Nations Voice.

Roles and responsibilities

The State First Nations Voice will:

- hear the views of each Local First Nations Voice
- form state-wide views and positions that represent the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South Australia, and
- present those views to the South Australian Parliament, Ministers, and government Chief Executives.

Addressing Parliament

The State First Nations Voice will be able to:

- Provide an **annual address to South Australia's Parliament** about activity from the past year and any matters of interest to First Nations people.
- Make an **address to the Parliament on any Bill (draft law)** of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people. The State First Nations Voice can make one address for each Bill. The Parliament must give the State First Nations Voice notice of all Bills that are introduced into Parliament.

- **provide reports to the Parliament**, which Government will be required to respond to, outlining what, if any action, they are taking in response.

Engaging with the State Government

The State First Nations Voice can engage with the South Australian Government.

Broadly, the State First Nations Voice will:

- Meet with **Cabinet** at least twice per year.
- Meet with **government department Chief Executives** at least twice a year to receive information and ask questions. The departments represented will be chosen by the State First Nations Voice.
- Attend an **annual engagement hearing** with Ministers and Chief Executives from portfolios of interest to the State First Nations Voice. This will allow the Voice to ask questions on operational issues, expenditure, and priorities of their portfolios.

The State First Nations Voice will also have advisory committees, to represent the diversity of community. Read the '**Advisory Committees**' fact sheet for more information.

Relationship with existing legislative bodies and authorities

The South Australian First Nations Voice to Parliament is not intended to replace the role of peak bodies or regional authorities (including Native Title bodies), or supersede the powers and functions of existing legislation (for example, *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act 1981* and *Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act 1984*).



Advisory Committees

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have said that to be successful, the Voice must represent the diversity of issues within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Local First Nations Voice bodies will be gender balanced and represent communities across the State.

There will also be advisory committees set up by the State First Nations Voice, to hear the views of specific groups of people. These committees reflect the feedback provided in the engagements.

The State First Nations Voice will establish the following permanent committees:

- **Native Title** Bodies Advisory Committee – 1 representative from each native title body listed in the First Nations Voice regulations.
- **Stolen Generations** Advisory Committee – 6 people determined by the State First Nations Voice.
- First Nations **Youth** Advisory Committee – 12 people (2 representatives nominated by each Local First Nations Voice, of different gender)
- First Nations **Elders** Advisory Committee – 12 people (2 representatives nominated by each Local First Nations Voice, of different gender)

Advisory committees members will not be members of Local or State First Nations Voices.

The State First Nations Voice can also set up other advisory committees. It can make recommendations to the Minister about remuneration, allowances, and expenses for these committee members.

For more information, go to:

<https://www.agd.sa.gov.au/first-nations-voice/>

www.savoicerelection.sa.gov.au/

