

FACT SHEET



New South Wales
Aboriginal Land Council

Referendum process – Australian Government commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart

The Australian Government is committed to implementing the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, which includes a call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

The Australian Constitution is the set of rules by which Australia is run. It came into effect on 1 January 1901.

The Constitution can only be changed with the approval of the Australian people.

To meet this commitment, a referendum will be held in this term of Federal Parliament to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the Australian Constitution.

What is a referendum?

A referendum is a vote of the Australian people to change the Australian Constitution.

A proposed change must be approved by the Federal Parliament and then be voted on by Australians in a referendum.

What is the Voice proposal?

On 30 July 2022, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced draft words for a constitutional amendment on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, and proposed a draft question to be put to the Australian people at a referendum.

The draft words to be added to the Constitution are:

'There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.'

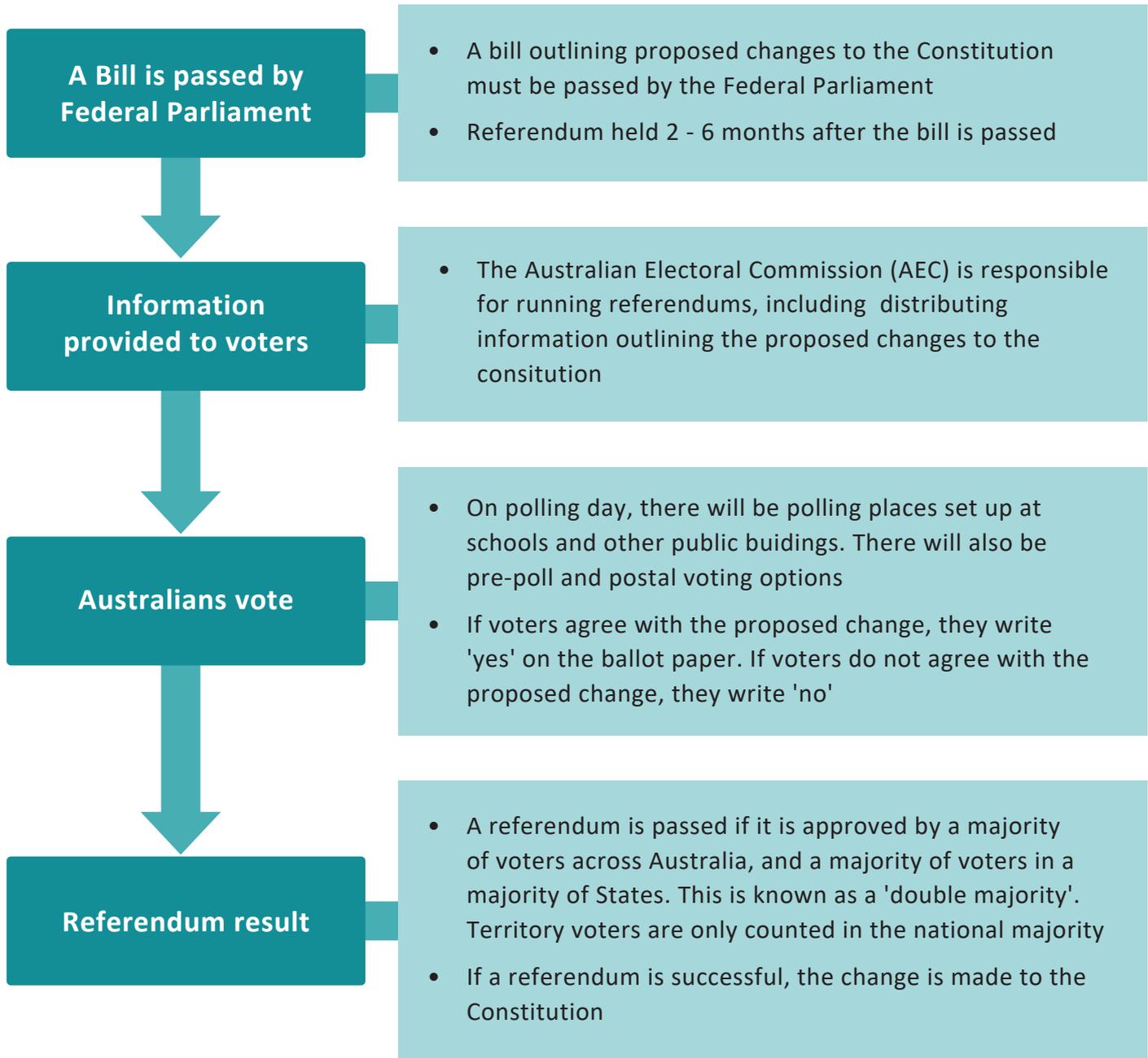
The draft referendum question is:

"Do you support an alteration to the Constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?"

These words will form the basis for further consultation. See: <https://voice.niaa.gov.au/#>

Is it compulsory to vote in a referendum?

Yes.



Uluru Statement from the Heart



The Australian Constitution

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A Bill is passed by Federal Parliament

- A bill outlining proposed changes to the Constitution must be passed by the Federal Parliament
- Referendum held 2 - 6 months after the bill is passed

Information provided to voters

- The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is responsible for running referendums, including distributing information outlining the proposed changes to the constitution

Australians vote

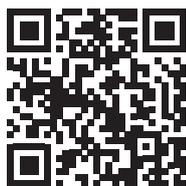
- On polling day, there will be polling places set up at schools and other public buildings. There will also be pre-poll and postal voting options
- If voters agree with the proposed change, they write 'yes' on the ballot paper. If voters do not agree with the proposed change, they write 'no'

Referendum result

- A referendum is passed if it approved by a majority of voters across Australia, and a majority of voters in a majority of States. This is known as a 'double majority'. Territory voters are only counted in the national majority
- If a referendum is successful, the change is made to the Constitution



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