

Wednesday 12 October 2022

ACTU commits to support ‘Yes’ campaign on First Nations Voice

ACTU Executive has passed a resolution committing to the success of the ‘Yes’ campaign at the upcoming referendum on the question on whether a First Nations Voice should be enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

Executive heard a report and recommendations from the ACTU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee and will work with the First Nations Workers Alliance to get union members involved in the campaign and educate working people about the importance of a yes vote at the referendum.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Indigenous Officer Lara Watson:

“The referendum on a First Nations Voice is an historic opportunity for this country to take a step towards reconciliation which we cannot afford to miss.

“The First Nations Voice will give a permanent line of communication for Indigenous peoples to the Australian Government and allow us to have a say on issues that affect us before laws are drafted.

“We have seen two centuries of failed policy directed towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by governments which had little or no engagement with our communities.

“The CDP, deaths in custody, the Northern Territory Intervention and other policy failures show us that without a First Nations Voice, Australian Governments will continue to make policy which disadvantages and disempowers Indigenous people. This has to end.”

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“The union movement has listened to the call of First Nations workers who want our movement’s support for a Voice to Parliament. Unions had already committed to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and this is the next step in that process.

“For too long our Parliaments have made laws about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples without proper consultation with First Nations peoples. These policies have often entrenched discrimination and disadvantage, forcing First Nations peoples to work for free or below legal minimum wages over two centuries.

“The minimum First Nations peoples deserve is that their voice be respected and listened to before laws are made. For these reasons the ACTU commits to supporting the ‘Yes’ campaign in any referendum.”

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200