



VOICE

Referendum

SYMBOLIC CHANGE OR SUBSTANTIVE
REFORM



IndigenousX



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

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What is symbolic change?

A symbolic change to the Australian Constitution is a change that does not affect any existing duties, powers or legal relationships.

For example, some people support the idea of constitutional recognition in the form of an introduction or 'preamble' to the Constitution. Such a preamble would recognise that Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the lands and waters now known as Australia. However, that recognition would not have any direct legal consequence.

The Australian Constitution does not currently have a preamble.

What is substantive reform?

The proposed Indigenous Voice to Parliament is an example of substantive legal reform. This is because it would provide for a new constitutionally entrenched legal entity with the function of making representations to the Parliament and the Australian Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

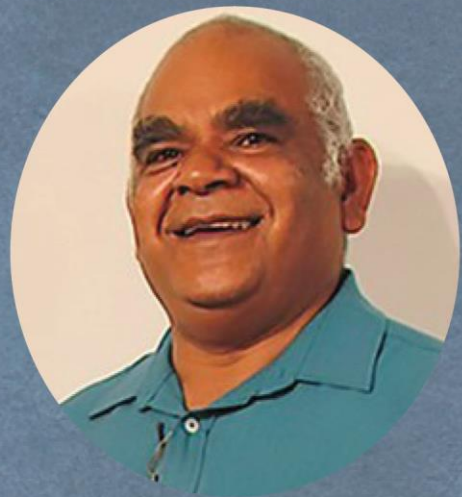
The proposed amendment to the Constitution would also give the Parliament a new power to make laws about the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Voice.

Whether or not the substantive reform being offered is appropriate and/or adequate is something individuals must ask themselves when considering whether they will write yes or no in the upcoming [referendum](#). Take the time to learn more about the proposed changes as well as the long history of Indigenous advocacy, starting with the [information available in the 'history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples advocating for the right to be heard' section of the Voice referendum resource kit](#).



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Paul Bong (aka Bindur Bullin), is a descendant of the Yidinji tribe who occupied the fertile rainforest lands from Cairns in the north to Babinda in the south and west into the Atherton Tablelands. His ancestral history is rooted in this region. Paul's father George was forced to reject the traditional ways and to assimilate into white society. This broke the continuity of Paul's culture, language and heritage from being passed down through the generations.



Paul's grandmother spoke Yidiny and taught him stories and legends about the rainforest - its bush food, animals, young warriors and special places. These stories are the inspiration for many of his works. Paul's work reflects the stories and culture that was lost to European settlement. Bong incorporates traditional designs with modern techniques, with each design having its own spiritual meaning.