Central Land Council delegates have endorsed the historic Uluru Statement and demanded an active role in designing the ‘voice to parliament’ ahead of a referendum on constitutional reform.

Meeting at Brumby Plains, a remote outstation four hours north-west of Kalkaringi, more than 70 elected CLC delegates discussed the double-edged sword that is the ‘races power’ of the Australian constitution.

It has delivered them land rights but also the failed Intervention.

The delegates released the Brumby Plains Statement, saying they need to be part of designing an Aboriginal body advising the Australian Parliament in order to ensure it represents remote community residents and acts as a powerful voice against racially discriminatory laws:

“We, the members of the Central Land Council are sovereign people drawing our strength and laws from country. We sing for country, we dance for country and our laws and systems of governance are still strong.

The Australian constitution must recognise us as First Nations of Australia. Nothing will be lost, instead Australia will gain 65,000 years of culture and history.

We endorse the Uluru Statement, which calls for constitutional protection for a voice to Parliament, supports treaty making and truth telling.

We have long called for Aboriginal self-determination and Aboriginal self-government, and greater control over our own communities. Local treaty negotiations should be protected by a national treaty framework.

In the NT we have benefited from the Commonwealth ‘races power’ through the enactment of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

We have also experienced the worst of the ‘races power’ with the imposition of the racist NT Intervention. The Australian Parliament should not pass racially discriminatory laws that harm our people.

We want to be part of designing the voice to parliament to ensure it represents people from the bush, and to ensure it is powerful.

This work should be progressed before we go ahead with a referendum.

A successful referendum requires the support of non-Indigenous people, and we invite all Australians to join us on this journey to achieve constitutional reform.”

20 September 2017

Images from the Brumby Plains council meeting are at https://photos.app.goo.gl/tRnHgd5toUeKcTmd2