



The Northern Territory land council chairs signed the Barunga Voice Declaration, calling on Australians to vote "yes" for the voice to parliament.

LAND COUNCILS ASK AUSTRALIANS TO SUPPORT THE VOICE

The four Northern Territory land councils passed the Barunga Declaration which asks all Australians to vote "yes" for a voice to the Australian parliament and executive government. The declaration calls for a voice in

the constitution that cannot be easily abolished, as happened to ATSIC and so many other national representative bodies before it.

The delegates want their voices to be heard loud and clear in Canberra before politicians make decisions

about them. They said they know best what solutions will work in their communities. They spoke about how 'business as usual' has failed them and why they hope that the voice will lead to policies that will improve their lives.

Members called the voice referendum an opportunity for positive change that won't come again and queued up to sign the declaration.

Minister for Indigenous

Australians Linda Burney gave a speech and listened as three female land council delegates read out the declaration. The chairs of the Central, Northern, Tiwi and Anindilyakwa land councils then presented the declaration to Ms Burney and gave a media conference about the voice.

The members also heard from representatives of the national "yes" campaign, such as Pat Anderson and Dean Parkin.



CLC deputy chair Warren Williams and Geoffrey Matthews signed the Barunga Voice Declaration.

TAKING POWER IN THE BUSH

People need to be enrolled to vote if they want to have their say in the voice referendum. Alison Anderson, Thomas Mayo and Matthew Ryan told members that enrolment out bush is still way too low, and many people will miss out.

They want electoral commissions to use automatic enrolment.

That's when they use information from Medicare, power companies and other trusted organisations to automatically put adults on the electoral roll.

They urged unenrolled people to fill in enrolment forms in the meantime.



Roseanne Ellis and Mildred Inkamala and other CLC and NLC members signed the Barunga Voice Declaration.



BOLD AND STRONG WATER REFORM

Land council members called for stronger water laws that respect the knowledge, rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal people. They want the NT government to develop “bold and strong” water reform in consultation with Aboriginal people “from the start”.

They passed a detailed resolution about the legal changes needed to protect drinking water, sacred

sites, country and development opportunities. “All decisions and projects that may impact Aboriginal lands and waters require free, prior and informed consent”, they said.

They want residents and land councils to drive funding and programs for safe drinking water in remote communities. “All programs must cover ongoing maintenance and should invest in local training and job opportunities.”



Uluru traditional owner and former CLC chair Sammy Wilson speaks up about the voice.



Patrick Collins, Roderick Kantamara and Arnold Butler are proud supporters of the voice.

NT ABORIGINAL INVESTMENT CORPORATION, NT GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOSSES ANSWER QUESTIONS

The chief executives of the Central Desert, MacDonnell and Barkly regional councils presented about local service delivery in the CLC region on day one.

On day two NT Chief Minister Natasha Fyles, opposition politician Steve Edgington and representatives of the NT’s Local

Government Association addressed the delegates of the land councils.

NT Aboriginal Investment Corporation chair Barbara Shaw and acting chief executive Leanne Caton also updated the members about the new corporation’s grants program and other activities.

NEXT COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

Council: later this year at Yulara Pulka (TBC)

Executive: 25/26 July, 19/20 September and 17/18 October in Alice Springs



Ross Purvis knows how he will vote in the voice referendum later this year.

STOP LAND CLEARING ON CATTLE STATIONS NOW

The joint meeting demanded that the NT government act immediately to stop land clearing on cattle stations.

It wants the government to change the Pastoral Land Act to give native title holders a right to negotiate when graziers want to start cotton plantations or horticulture projects. They want the Pastoral Land Board to have to

notify affected Aboriginal people, so they can have a say about how such proposals affect their native title rights and interests and sacred sites.

The land council members also want the Australian and Territory governments to strengthen cultural heritage protection laws in consultation with them.

MINERAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

The land councils are worried about a push by the mining industry to undermine the rights of Aboriginal Territorians, and about the NT government’s refusal to acknowledge the rights of native title holders in regard to mineral exploration.

Members want the government

not to fast-track exploration licence applications (“expedited procedure”), so that traditional owners can negotiate under the Native Title Act with applicants for exploration licences.

They also want the government to make sure that royalties for affected communities are not cut.



NT Aboriginal Investment Corporation chair Barbara Shaw spoke up at the Barunga council meeting.