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Responding Together to the 2023 Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement 'Listen, Learn, Love'

The '[One Journey, Together](#)' initiative encourages the organising of '[Kitchen Table Conversations](#)' as a meaningful response to the newly released 2023 Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) Social Justice Statement titled *Listen, Learn, Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. These guided conversations aim to foster deeper understanding and engagement among Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the lead up to the Australian constitutional referendum.

This week the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) is posting hard copies of the Conversation Guide to every parish in Australia, asking Catholic communities to deepen their understanding of the upcoming referendum and reconciliation going forward.

The ACBC's Social Justice Statement emphasises the importance of recognising the truth of past injustices, engaging in genuine listening and learning, and cultivating a spirit of love and solidarity to walk together on the journey of healing and justice, and names the upcoming referendum as an important opportunity in this endeavour.

Inspired by the 'One Journey, Together' Conversation Guide resource, St Mary of the Cross Parish — Mordialloc and Aspendale, held a Conversation evening on the Voice to Parliament.

One of the organisers, Nicole Dobrohotoff, said the experience “proved to be a wonderful opportunity for people to gather, pray, learn, listen and discuss the upcoming referendum. We created a safe space where people felt comfortable sharing their different views and concerns, and most importantly to ask questions. The group discussions were rich and I felt everyone took great care to really listen and learn from each other. I encourage all parishes to host a conversation in any way that suits their community. The most important thing we can do is take up this invitation and start a conversation.”

The 'Kitchen Table' Conversation resource is a simple guide designed to facilitate open dialogue and shared learning in a variety of settings. These conversations encourage Australians of all backgrounds to gather, in their homes, community centres, or places of worship, to engage in respectful discussions about the upcoming referendum.

John Lochowiak, Chair of NATSICC, expressed the organisation's support for this work: "Kitchen Table Conversations are about bringing people together in a comfortable and familiar setting, to create a safe space for respectful dialogue. By engaging in meaningful conversations, we will come to understand that, as Australians, we share more similarities than differences. Our commitment to justice and reconciliation should underpin our discernment regarding constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a Voice to Parliament.”

“The 'Kitchen Table Conversations' initiative is a practical step, and is one way of enacting the ACBC's call to listen, learn, and love — as together the nation takes steps towards building a more inclusive and just Australia where all can live life to the full.”

The Conversation Guide can be downloaded directly [here](#). Other complementary resources can be found [here](#)

For media inquiries, please contact:

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Our mission is to educate and inform our fellow Catholics on this pivotal moment in Australia's history. We have collated and created statements and resources – grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching – to help you on your process of discernment. www.indigenousvoice.church



The One Journey, Together Initiative has collated statements from 26 Catholic organisations and bodies from across various ministries and contexts, including Catholic Health, Education and Social Services as well as 14 individual statements from Catholic Bishops and Religious Leaders, who all urge positive engagement with the upcoming referendum.

These include:

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council
Caritas Australia
Catholic Social Services Victoria
ACRATH
The Association of Ministerial PJPs
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform
CatholicCare Victoria
Catholic Religious Australia
Catholic Social Services Australia
Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
Edmund Rice Education Australia
Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
Jesuit Social Services
Justice and Peace Office, Archdiocese of Sydney
MacKillop Family Services
Marist Schools Australia
Marymead CatholicCare Canberra and Goulbourn
Mercy Works
Missionary Sisters of Service
National Catholic Education Commission
Sacred Heart Mission
Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart
St John of God HealthCare
St Francis Social Services
St Vincent de Paul Society



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