



# Indigenous Voice to Parliament Poll

August 2022

# Limited knowledge about proposed Indigenous Voice to Parliament but support outweighs opposition by almost 2:1



Most Australians have heard of the idea of a body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advise the Australian Parliament and Government on laws and policies related to Indigenous Australians (79%).

However, there is largely superficial knowledge about this potential referendum topic – 37% claim to know only a little about the idea of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and a similar number (34%) are aware of it in name only and know nothing about it.

Just 8% of adults claim to already know a lot.

Awareness differs significantly by age, being lowest among 35 to 54 year olds (71%) and highest among those aged 55 years and over (89%), with younger adults aged 18 to 34 years somewhere in between (77%).

In principle support for the idea of establishing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament is just shy of a majority of adults (47%) but almost twice the current level of opposition (24%), with a sizeable number neutral (23%) or undecided (6%).

When presented with the Government's proposed three-point draft amendment to the Australian Constitution and referendum question, 43% of Australians say they would support this change to the constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

It is seen as recognition of the special history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's Indigenous people and an opportunity for them to have a say about policy that impacts them.

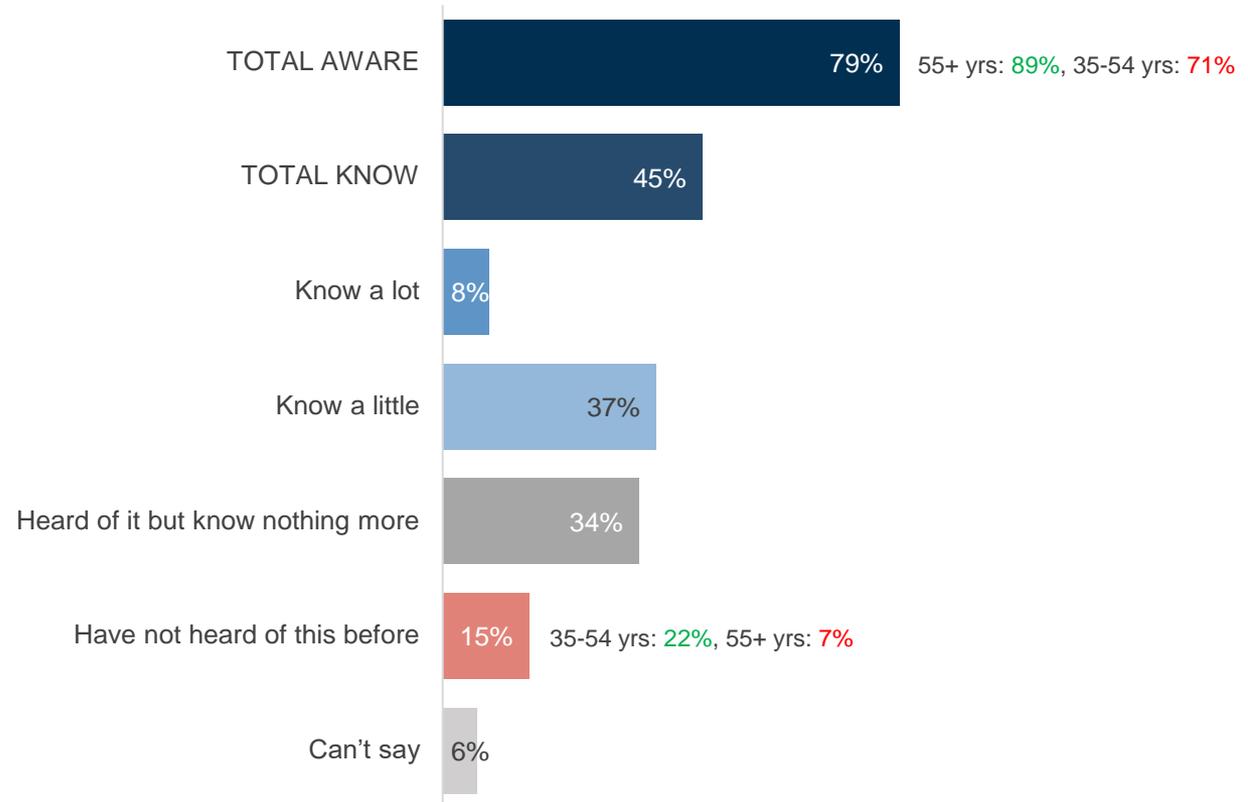
Fewer adults, 23%, would not support this Constitutional change, with some questioning the need for representation beyond Indigenous MPs, the Ministry for Indigenous Australians, etc. and the fairness of giving special voice to one group of Australians.

A further one in three adults are either in need of more information (20%), e.g. around the purpose, composition and powers of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, or are undecided (14%).

# Most Australians have heard of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament but understanding of the idea is limited



## Awareness of the idea of establishing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament



Significantly higher / lower than the national total at the 95% confidence interval.

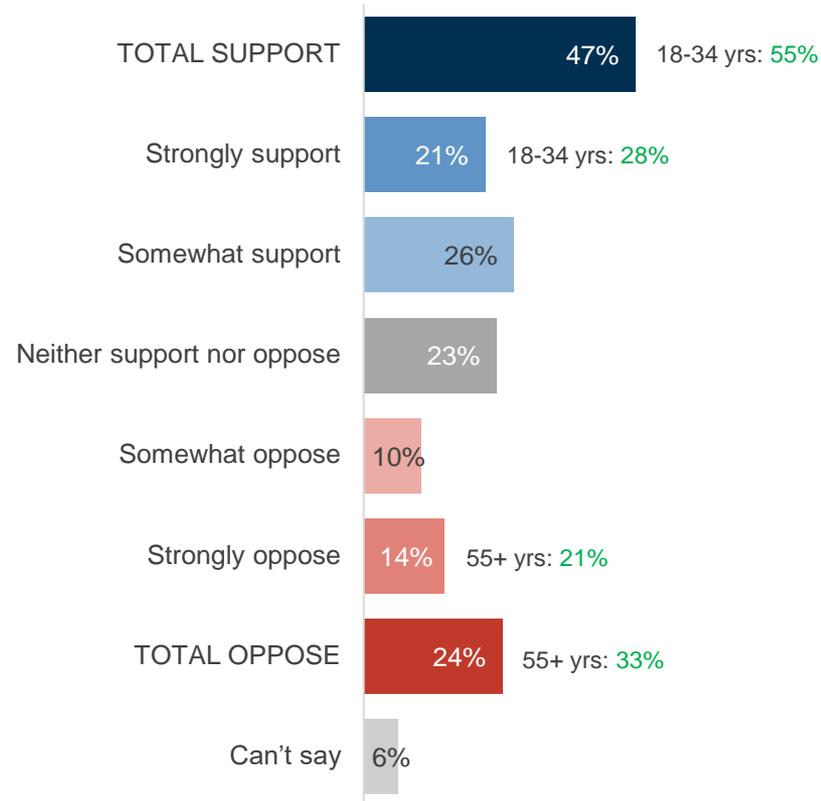
Q. Now about establishing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. This is the idea of forming a body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advise the Australian Parliament and Government on laws and policies related to Indigenous Australians. How much would you say you know and understand about this idea?

Base: All respondents (n=1,000).

# In principle support for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament outweighs opposition by almost 2:1



## Support for the idea of establishing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament

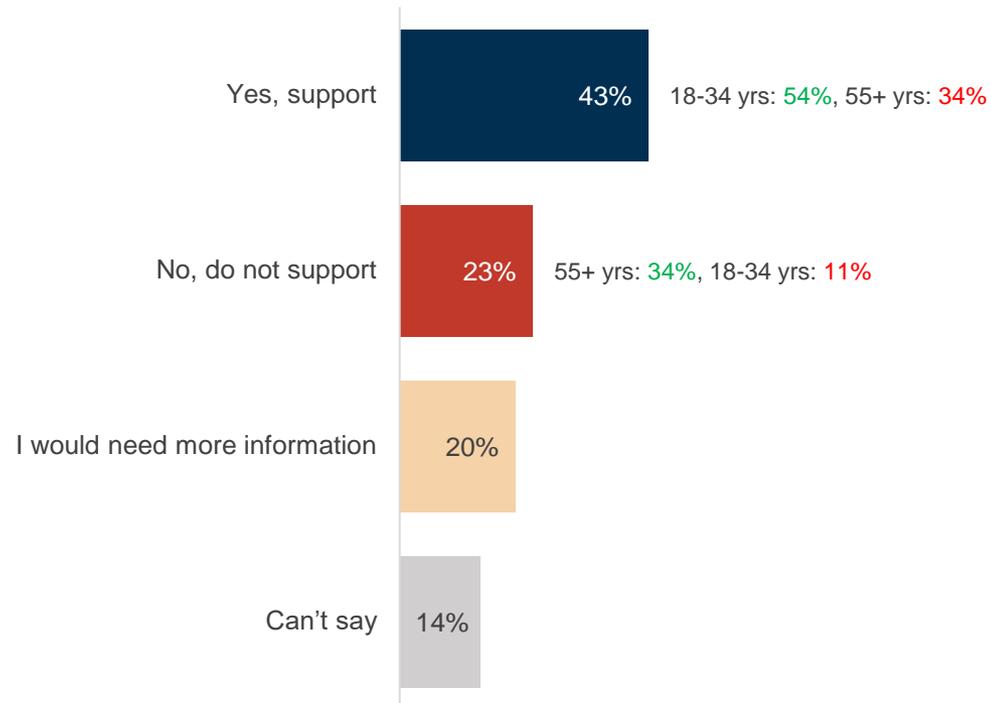


Significantly higher than the national total at the 95% confidence interval.  
 Q. Even if it is just a leaning, do you support or oppose the idea of establishing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament?  
 Base: All respondents (n=1,000).

# One in three need more information or are undecided on supporting a Constitution change to establish an ATSI Voice



## Support for alteration to the constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice



Significantly **higher** / **lower** than the national total at the 95% confidence interval.

Q. The Australian Government is proposing to add the following points to the Australian Constitution. This would ensure an Indigenous Voice to Parliament that continues under future governments.

1. There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.
2. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
3. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

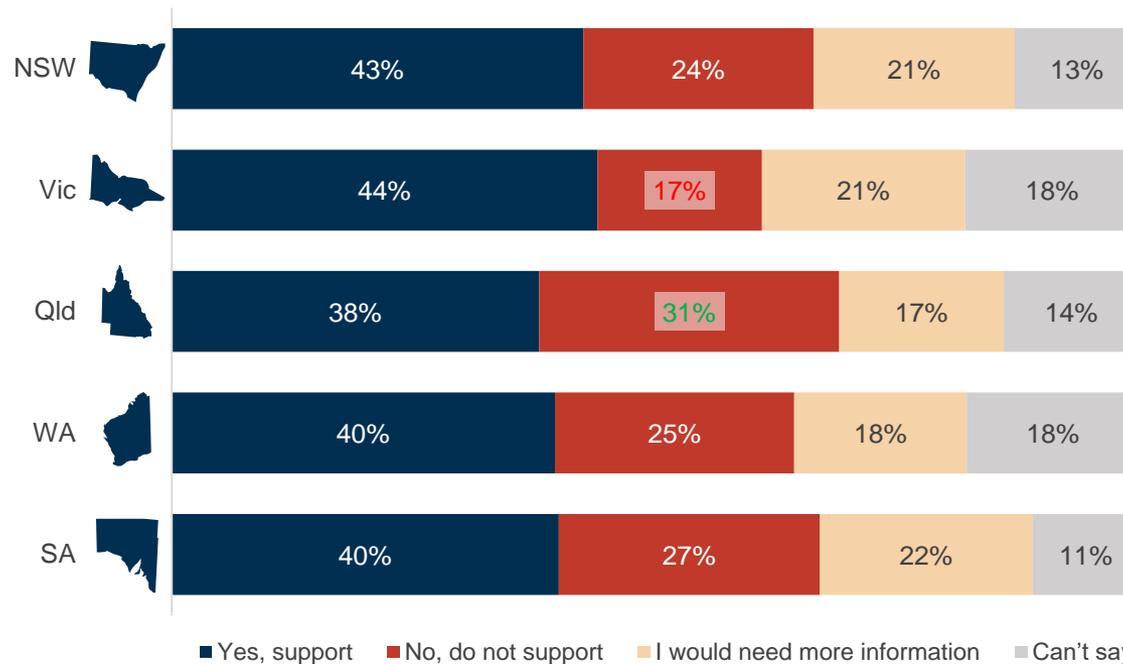
A referendum (national vote) must be held to make these changes to the constitution. Even if it is just a leaning, do you support an alteration to the constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?

Base: All respondents (n=1,000).

# Similar levels of support across the mainland states – but opinion most mixed in Queensland



Support for alteration to the constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice (by state\*)



Significantly higher / lower than the national total at the 95% confidence interval.

Q. The Australian Government is proposing to add the following points to the Australian Constitution. This would ensure an Indigenous Voice to Parliament that continues under future governments.

1. There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.
2. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
3. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

A referendum (national vote) must be held to make these changes to the constitution. Even if it is just a leaning, do you support an alteration to the constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?

Base: All respondents (n=1,000). \* Tasmania, NT and ACT excluded due to small sample size.

# Why Australians support establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice



*“It is an important step to reconciliation and having ATSI voices heard in the future for shaping the nation.”*

*“Indigenous peoples of Australia are the longest continual culture in the history of the world being circa 60,000-70,000 years old and we should proudly acknowledge this fact in our Constitution. It would also be an acknowledgement of the harm done to them by the English colonisation.”*

*“We need to have their voice as this will be another step in the healing, and if it is used appropriately it will allow Indigenous people to feel heard and respected.”*

*“It is important for all Australians as it is about protecting the dignity and rights of First Nation people and is good for or national identity.”*

*“It is essential for the harmony of our society. We need to recognise the original inhabitants of this country.”*

*“As the founders and traditional owners of this country that is so sacred to them, I believe they should have a large say in Australian Politics ... They have been oppressed and treated unfairly since the day British Convicts landed, they deserve the chance to finally speak up and have their voices heard.”*

*“Their voice is just as important as everyone else's and they are underrepresented in our government currently.”*

*“For so long their needs have been ignored, I think largely because there's not a collective understanding about the Indigenous experience by the demographic who populate government (i.e. white and male).”*

*“I feel like they need to be fully represented in a document that they were excluded from when it was written. Our constitution is over 100 years old, it needs to be amended to include all people in our country, including those who were here for thousands of years.”*

*“ATSI people deserve to have a voice in government. They are too often spoken for by white people.”*

*“As our First Nations People they deserve a voice in the issues in our country. As an indigenous woman myself who has seen the trouble and lack of care this country has, it would be amazing to have more perspective.”*

*“Their voice is important and vital as they can only speak about these matters. If you are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, you cannot understand what they have been through. The rest of us are Australian born or immigrants from another country.”*

*“We are a disgrace that we have no treaty with Indigenous Australians, they need a voice.”*

*“Need consultation and guidance from the Aboriginal community, as they have occupied the land for many years before European settlement. The knowledge would help policy and land management.”*

# Why Australians do not support establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice



*“You are creating a wider divide and segregating the Australian population of white/Indigenous. If you are Australian, you are Australian.”*

*“I don't think one section of our population should have more rights than any other. We are all Australians regardless of if our ancestors were here or we migrated here.”*

*“There is no clarity as to what this body is going to do and how. Until I know how its aimed to function, I am not in support of making changes to the constitution.”*

*“There are already representatives of these people in Parliament. Members should be elected on what they stand for, not what colour they are. If this is voted for, representatives of UK, Italian, Greek, NZ and other nationalities should also have a say. Very, very divisive move.”*

*“Dividing the nation by race is a waste of money, would be better spent by helping communities. Getting rid of the welfare card and allowing alcohol into communities was disgraceful and not helping only virtue signaling.”*

*“We are one country. ATSI represent only 3% of the population, are we going to make the same arrangements for every other identity?”*

*“We are all Australians, one country, one population. There is no reason why a small percentage of the population should be singled out for special privileges.”*

*“We are one country and no group should have a special voice. All people regardless of race, religion or gender should be treated the same, have the same rights and responsibilities.”*

*“This can happen now through the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and does not add any further emphasis by putting this into the constitution. This proposal is just ‘feel good’ propaganda that will not improve the issues facing ATSI people.”*

*“Our Constitution covers ALL Australians. Indigenous People are already well represented in Parliament. This proposal is divisive and from my observations Indigenous communities are themselves divided over this issue.”*

*“I do not understand why this is at all necessary and do not think this is the best way to address issues faced by these communities.”*

*“This proposal is just ‘feel good’ propaganda that will not improve the issues facing ATSI people.”*

*“Modifying the constitution will not change anything. Real action will, which is sadly lacking.”*

*“This doesn't give any further clarity to the actual impact it will have on ATSI and non-ATSI people. There doesn't appear to be any objective benefit to ATSI people. If this is just word play and rhetoric, legislation should be sufficient, not a referendum.”*

# Questions Australians have about establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice



*“Why are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders any different to others in the Australian population? Why do they need a separate voice?”*

*“How would this voice represent all the different factions and mobs? Will it give them better health education, etc.?”*

*“What is listed here is the tip of the iceberg and labour are trying to push it through without detailed scrutiny for the sake of gaining 'brownie points'. I They are insulting our intelligence.”*

*“There is already a Department in Government dealing with Indigenous Affairs. How will the Voice be different?”*

*“My fear is that the 'voice' would be that of one or two very belligerent people who would be so full of their own importance, the real needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait people would be overlooked.”*

*“How the representatives will be selected and how it will be different from an Aboriginal person who enters parliament in the usual way.”*

*“Would there be any guarantees that the Indigenous people would be listened to in terms of their ideas being implemented into laws?”*

*“Will the Australian people have any say (vote) as to who is on the body?”*

*“Is this going to be a third chamber in Parliament? Will legislation have to be approved by them as well?”*

*“I need to know WHO this group will include. The power they would have. What controls Parliament would have over this group. The size of discretionary budget they would have. What oversight parliament would be able to exercise over any excesses.”*

*“Will this cause/not cause segregation within the Australian population? Why are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders any different to others in the Australian population? Why do they need a separate voice?”*

*“Will the panel opinion be the final? How wide will their consultation be? Should this be a temporary measure?”*

*“I would like to know how this would work in practice. I understand that might be difficult but a few examples or anecdotes. I generally have a distrust for politicians and would like to know this could not be unethically manipulated.”*

*“So far the proposals are expressed in academic, idealistic, political and public service jargon. I want more realistic and workable expressions of intent and practicality.”*



## Survey methodology



### National Online Survey

#### n=1,000 Australian adults

- Conducted Friday 12<sup>th</sup> – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022.
- Sample quotas on age, gender and location, with post-survey weighting to actual age / gender / location proportions from Census data.
- Maximum margin of error on n=1,000 is +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence level.
- Differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding.

#### Explanation of index scores:

To facilitate ease of reporting and comparison of results over time, an **index score** has been calculated for performance measures (*very good* to *very poor* ratings).

The index score is represented as a score out of 100.

To calculate this score, the **survey percentage result** for each scale category (excluding 'don't know' responses) is multiplied by an **index factor** to produce an **index value** for each category. These values are then summed to produce the **index score**, equating to 43 in this example.

| Rating category    | Survey percentage | Index factor | Index value (percentage x factor) |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Very good</i>   | 5%                | 100          | 5                                 |
| <i>Good</i>        | 17%               | 75           | 13                                |
| <i>Average</i>     | 40%               | 50           | 20                                |
| <i>Poor</i>        | 19%               | 25           | 5                                 |
| <i>Very poor</i>   | 15%               | 0            | 0                                 |
| <i>Don't know</i>  | 4%                | -            | -                                 |
| <b>Index score</b> |                   |              | <b>43</b>                         |

**THERE ARE  
OVER  
25 MILLION  
PEOPLE  
IN AUSTRALIA...**

**FIND OUT  
WHAT THEY'RE  
THINKING.**



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