



**Anindilyakwa**  
Land Council

## Land Councils Joint Statement about the Referendum

Through the Uluru Statement, Aboriginal people asked to be recognised in the Nation's founding document and for a formal process to be established to inform government decision making on policy that affects our people and our communities.

Thank you to the supporters who stood with us during the campaign. The Prime Minister showed courage to take the proposal to the Australian people, through a referendum. Campaigners were steadfast in their support.

On referendum day the majority of Australians denied this simple request.

The mistakes of the past will be continued with the latest mandate. In effect it is an attempt to silence Aboriginal people which is likely to further disadvantage our communities. The request for a voice was simple. Listen to us before you make decisions about us.

“We are disappointed, but not surprised”, said Northern Land Council Chair Dr. Samuel Bush-Blanasi.

We recognise the result of the referendum cannot be separated from a deep-seated racism. It is fair to say that not everyone who voted “No” is racist but also fair to say that all racists voted “No”. The vitriol and hatred that were part of the campaign existed prior to, but were given licence through the process. The overarching theory we are incapable of managing our own affairs is dehumanising and degrading and most of all, deeply flawed.

It is clear remote residents across Northern Australia overwhelmingly supported the referendum proposal. Eager to break the shackles of poor government decision-making, a proposal for a new system to engage with government was the opportunity to break from the past.

Chair of the Tiwi Land Council Gibson Farmer Illortaminni said that “this outcome underscores the pressing need for us to find a way forward, one that ensures our voices are not only heard but respected when crucial decisions are being made by the government, decisions that directly impact our lives, lands, seas and culture.”

With an eye on the future, we remember in the Northern Territory, we make up 30% of the population. We control 48% of the land and 85% of the coastline. We remind the public and we remind politicians, prosperity in this jurisdiction relies on us. “We ask for and will continue to expect engagement and partnership”, said Tony Wurramarra, Chair of the Anindilyakwa Land Council.



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In response to the referendum outcome the Northern Land Council, Tiwi Land Council and the Anindilyakwa Land Council say:

We are the oldest continuous living culture on the planet, and we will continue to assert our traditional and legal rights and land title to strive for improvements in social and economic outcomes.

We will continue our journey toward self-determination.

We are strong and resolute.

The Northern Land Council, Tiwi Land Council and the Anindilyakwa Land Council will continue to champion the rights of our constituents, particularly those in remote areas – through political, legislative, policy processes & advocacy.

Every successful step toward recognition and equality has been hard won and we will continue to fight for the rights of our people and the right to be heard.