



A Buddhist response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart

Developed by representatives of diverse Buddhist communities at a workshop convened by the Buddhist Council of NSW in Sydney on 2nd September 2023.

The invitation

In the Uluru Statement of the Heart Australia's First Peoples call for a Voice enshrined in the Constitution, truth telling about Australia's history and a process of agreement making between Governments and First Nations people. They invite us all to walk with them in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Our history

Australia's First Peoples are the oldest continuing culture in the world, having lived here for more than sixty thousand years. Since 1788 the effects of colonisation - genocide, dispossession of their lands, forced removal of their children and prohibitions on practising their cultures and languages - continue to impact on them, their families and communities. With no treaty between invaders and First Nations Peoples, lands were never ceded. While they are resilient, maintaining their culture, reinstating their languages and establishing their place in contemporary Australia, many First Nations Peoples are still marginalised and subject to discrimination and institutional racism, resulting in poorer outcomes in health, education and wealth and a disproportionately high rate of imprisonment.

Our cultural diversity

Australia's Buddhist communities come from many lands and speak many languages. Many of us have come to Australia as refugees or economic migrants, leaving our original homes to establish ourselves and maintain our culture in a place we now call home. We may have had little opportunity to engage with Indigenous Australians but know too what it can be like to lack a voice and be a stranger one's own land.

Our Buddhist values

We are grateful for the gifts that Australia's First Peoples have shared with us: their cultures, connections to Country and commitments to family and community. We are humbled by their forgiveness for past and present wrongs. We recognise similarities in our values of loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy, our recognition of the deep connections between all things, and our practices of mindfulness and deep listening. We also recognise the need for truth telling so that we can come together to address injustices and heal the suffering for all of us who call Australia home.

Our Buddhist response

We accept with gratitude the invitation to walk together to create an Australia in which First Nations Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians come together in a just and cohesive society for the benefit of all. We look forward to the healing that will come from a true reckoning with Australia's past and present. We support a Voice for First Nations Peoples, so we can all benefit from their wisdom and lived experience and their connection to and understanding of the natural world as we face the climate and ecological crises of our time.

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness