

Western Australian launch of the NO to the Aboriginal Voice Campaign

By Dr Marion Hercock.

The case for a NO vote in the referendum to insert a special Aboriginal Voice into the Australian Constitution was presented by three speakers at a seminar in Perth hosted by The Civilisationists and Professor Augusto Zimmermann's Western Australian Legal Theory Association.

The seminar provided information on why a constitutionally enshrined voice will not help the Aboriginal people it is meant to help.

The speakers covered multiple points, including why the Aboriginal Voice breaks the modern democratic principle of one person, one vote. How the Voice will divide the Australian people on the basis of race and origin; and the administrative and bureaucratic implications of effectively introducing another level of parliament.

Mr Nyungai Warren Mundine, AO, an Australian statesman of Aboriginal and settler origin was the keynote speaker. The seminar included Emeritus Professor Gabriël Moens, AM, who is an Australian legal scholar originally from Belgium; and Mr Luca Proietti Formaggio, a young Australian student, convener of Generation Liberty at the University of Western Australia.

Despite having been invited to the event, representatives from local newspapers, other than *The Light* Australia, did not attend. A journalist from *The West Australian* newspaper had spoken to the organisers of the event, but there was no coverage or even mention of the seminar in the State's leading newspaper.

Mr Mundine stated that a separate Aboriginal Voice in the Australian Constitution is a massive challenge to democracy.

He explained that the perception that Aboriginal Australians do not have a representational voice to government is false. There are about 1,000 communities advising government. Aboriginal Australians are citizens, having been British subjects since 1788. They had the vote before the 1967 Referendum, and since Federation in 1901, Aboriginal people in most States have always had suffrage.

He added that there is not one nation-state that has not had a rough start, and that discriminatory rules that once existed in the past have all disappeared. There are protections in place, so that many people from other countries see Australia as a place of opportunity and fairness and hence it is a 'melting pot'.

Around twenty years ago, we were told that this country is 'racist'. Yet that has not been Mr Mundine's experience because our institutions make it possible to address any such issues.

A group of Aboriginal people went to Uluru and came up with the concept of 'the Voice', but that concept would undermine those institutions that protect against discrimination, therefore and make things worse. We should start focusing on what the Aboriginal Voice really means, and stand up against it.

Corporations and organisations funded by the government promote the guise that 'the Voice' is about being 'nice' to Aboriginal people.

Real empowerment for Aboriginal Australians is economic participation instead of welfare: having a job, running a business, owning a home. Empowerment will not be

achieved by wrapping up a bureaucracy with another black bureaucracy to create an even bigger and more expensive bureaucracy.

Emeritus Professor Moens, one of the nation's leading constitutional lawyers encourages the NO vote and made a series of cogent arguments.

The subject of his PhD thesis (some forty years ago) was equality – a ‘colourblind’ society in which there is equal treatment for all; no special rights and no distribution of benefits on the basis of race. Australia will lose that colourblind society and become racist if ‘the Voice’ referendum succeeds. People should be appointed on merit rather than race. He wants ‘political equality to reign supreme’.

The professor made leading arguments and posed questions.

One. We are repeatedly told by government that ‘the Voice’ is going to be an advisory body only for matters that affect Aboriginal people. What does this mean? If there is an obligation to accept the advice provided, we run the risk of undermining the legislative arm of government.

All laws affect Aboriginal people (because the law is currently applied equally).

Two. ‘The Voice’ will be another example of ‘symbolism over substance’, just like the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Island flag displayed everywhere, but do not help anyone. We need substance, not an expensive symbol like the Aboriginal flag flying on the bridge over Sydney Harbour.

He quoted former senator, Eric Abetz. “Not one life will be improved by the Voice. If the money for the Voice referendum was spent on improving the school attendance of Aboriginal children perhaps the money would be better spent.”

We now live in an era where symbolism saturates progress and is promoted as progress.

Three. The composition of ‘the Voice’ as a solely Aboriginal advisory body is shaky because there will be a need to develop a system to establish who is Aboriginal to qualify, and who is not Aboriginal. Such a system will be onerous and dangerous, as it will characterise people by their appearance/blood – an unhealthy development which started in Nazi Germany.

Four. We are told by the Prime Minister that we need ‘the Voice’ as part of the reconciliation process.

But what does ‘reconciliation’ mean? It is an ambiguous term with no set definition of what it is and what needs to be achieved. Is there a movement to seek reconciliation by or with other people?

Five. The Aboriginal Voice in the Australian Constitution will be a slippery slope towards a treaty and Aboriginal sovereignty. The demand for a treaty is in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Six. Equality of opportunity. We all want to be treated equally and to share equally in the benefits of Australia. Of course, we want Aboriginal people to be treated equally and to have equal representation. As Australian citizens they already have representation.

The last, and the youngest speaker at the seminar was Luca Proietti Formaggio, the co-ordinator of Generation Liberty at UWA. He is an alumnus of the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation which sponsors Western Australian university students interested in philosophy, economics and public policy.

Mr Formaggio introduced his talk with the concept of law of *innocent until proven guilty* and contended that the government's promotion of the referendum for an Aboriginal Voice in the Constitution is a mistrial of the legislation concerning referenda.

For example, the government only wants information pamphlets for the 'yes' vote and wants a misinformation line specifically to target the 'no' vote.

He stated that fairness is not the point of 'the Voice' and presented the case of New Zealand which has a Maori 'voice' and a treaty. In less than fifteen years, that 'voice' went from an advisory body to a Maori-only court who made all kinds of decisions while unrestricted. It has become so bureaucratic that it is like an aristocracy. There are also Maori-only seats reserved in the New Zealand Parliament.

So, why is the Australian government pushing for an Aboriginal Voice?

It is an attack on national sovereignty. There is no such thing as co-sovereignty. You are either in charge of the nation-state or you are not in charge. If Australia has no borders, or values, etc. in common, we will be divided, and that division will tear down our institutions.

The reality is that more money and more bureaucracy cannot fix the plight of those people in the Aboriginal population who are in trouble, they can only do it themselves.

The Civilisationists are part of a worldwide movement of people keen to preserve, protect and promote our Western culture and our civilisation. The Civilisationists are particularly concerned about the take-over of institutions by anti-Western ideologies. The group is secular, non-religious, and has no political affiliations. It is small, loosely formed and run by volunteers who host social and educational seminars.

The Western Australian Legal Theory Association (WALTA) is a group of lawyers and law academics who host discussions on jurisprudence, legal theory and contemporary issues in the law. WALTA publishes an annual law journal, The Western Australian Jurist.