

Uluru Statement from the Heart signatories 'unhappy' with Indigenous voice to parliament Yes 'consent'

EXCLUSIVE

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Numerous signatories of the Uluru Statement from the Heart were “surprised” to see their names on the document that calls for an [indigenous voice to parliament](#) and “unhappy” to be seen as endorsing the statement, parliament has been told.

Liberal senator and indigenous woman, Kerryne Liddle, told the upper house on Friday she had heard from signatories of the statement that they were uncomfortable with their signatures being “interpreted as consent” for a voice.

“I’ve heard from women surprised to see their signatures on the statement, unhappy that their attendance and consultation is likely to be interpreted as consent – but who are not prepared to publicly come forward,” she said.

And in a trip to Uluru last week, Senator Liddle was told by numerous Central Australian indigenous leaders that the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Voice to parliament that it called for were causing nothing but “trouble”.

Murray George, an elder who attended the referendum dialogues in 2017 ahead of

the Statement from the Heart being signed, said he was [unhappy with the sacred site of Uluru being used politically](#).

“I was listening that day ... that statement from Uluru ... that canvas has no meaning,” Mr George told Senator Liddle, in a video seen by The Weekend Australian.

“We’ve got to break that canvas, it’s a trouble maker.”

Trevor Adamson, another Central Australian elder and musician, said there was “in no way agreement” at the dialogues that the Statement from the Heart should “go ahead”.

Senator Liddle said the Prime Minister needed to “reflect very carefully on the concerns raised by the senior Aboriginal law men”.

“There has been nowhere near enough consultation and such little detail about how it will work,” she said.

While the Uluru Statement from the Heart received endorsement and signatures from hundreds of delegates, the dialogues held ahead of its ratification in 2017 were not without controversy.

Seven delegates, including former Greens senator Lidia Thorpe, walked out of the Uluru convention because of concerns over a loss of sovereignty and no guarantee of a treaty process.

Senator Liddle said the four men she spoke to at Uluru last week were among many who felt “deceived, disrespected and ignored”.

“They are gutted that their most sacred place continues to be used for political and promotional purpose. They don’t see their hopes and dreams delivered by Voice – but they know Australians want and can do better,” she told the Senate.

“Tension about the much-publicised Statement from the Heart has been simmering since its creation – yes since its emergence in 2017.”

However the traditional custodian of Uluru, Anangu leader Sammy Uluru Wilson, has rejected claims the rock should not be associated with the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Mr Wilson, who lives at Mutitjulu in the shadow of Uluru, has also disputed the cultural authority of the men in Senator Liddle's video to speak for Uluru.

"They not living in this community," Mr Wilson told The Australian on Sunday.

"Where these people come from I don't know where they living. They come from Adelaide and talk behind this community."

Mr Wilson said the men in the video had always opposed the voice.

"I was there that day they didn't want to sign it," Mr Wilson said.

"They didn't sign it."

Asked if Indigenous people at Uluru for the presentation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart knew what the document was, Mr Wilson said: "Yes".

"People who don't want to sign it they don't join in," he said.

Opposition Indigenous Australians spokeswoman Jacinta Nampijinpa Price on Friday also used her speech to the Senate to raise concern with the Uluru Statement from The Heart, which she said was signed by "hand picked individuals" that weren't representative of the wider indigenous population.

"Of those 250 (signatures), I am even told some signatories didn't know what they were signing!" she said.

Despite recent polling showing a slippage in support for the voice, Anthony Albanese has declared he is "positive" about the referendum, due to take place between October and December this year.

The Australian understands the Yes campaign is gearing up to lobby more strongly across the country after legislation for the referendum on the voice passes in this

parliamentary sitting fortnight, with a federal-election style strategy to be put in place from October that is set to include daily press conferences and rallies to garner public attention.

- *Additional reporting Paige Taylor*

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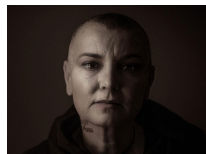
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