

# 'Not a race': Marcia Langton on why Voice to parliament so important

Ellen Ransley July 29, 2022 10:32AM



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will attend the Garma Festival in the Northern Territory this weekend.  
NCA NewsWire / Gary Ramage Credit: News Corp Australia

First Nations academic Marcia Langton says a rising rebellion within the Coalition against a constitutionally enshrined Voice to parliament is “mischief making”.

Professor Langton, who is a co-chair of the senior design group on the Voice, will speak at this weekend’s Garma Festival, which will be attended by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

She said the Voice to parliament – called for by the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart – was necessary because Australia’s constitution “remains racist”.

“There’s two racist provisions in it and the High Court decision that the commonwealth can do harm to us stands,” she told ABC Radio.

“What we’ve recommended is a very straightforward plan that I think resolves the problem (of) how do we ensure ... our people survive into the future.”

She hit out at reports – revealed by Nine Newspapers – that some within the Liberal ranks are threatening to derail any potential bipartisan support.

Earlier this week, CLP senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price used her maiden speech to say a Voice to parliament would divide black and white Australia.

She slammed it as a “symbolic gesture” that would not empower Indigenous Australians.

The opposition has said it requires more detail before committing support; however, Indigenous spokesman Australians Julian Lesser will attend the Garma Festival with Mr Albanese this weekend.

Professor Langton said it was clear the opposition hadn’t read the report.



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will attend the Garma Festival in the Northern Territory this weekend. NCA NewsWire / Gary Ramage Credit: News Corp Australia

“All the detail is there ... This demand for more detail is just mischief making and selling confusion,” she said.

"We couldn't be more clear than we have been."

She said for far too long Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had to tolerate "a type of structural racism that treats us as a race".

"All arguments against the Voice are based on the concept that we're a race of people and that no race should have more recognition than another. That is complete furphy," she said.

"We're not a race – we're over 600 cultural groups ... This was our land until 1788.

"We're not a race, we're the peoples of this land. We ask for decency, a rightful place in the nation."

Mr Albanese is set to unveil more details about what the constitution would look like during his speech at the festival this weekend.