



The Voice to Parliament Referendum Scenarios 2023

Collaboration for Impact acknowledges the resilience, knowledge, wisdom and teachings of the oldest living culture on our planet and pay our respects to all First Nations Elders past and present.

Collaboration for Impact (CFI) is an Australian non-government organisation with a purpose to transform systems to be more equitable. CFI works in partnership with communities and cross-sector collaborations nationally to strengthen the relationships, practices, resources and platforms needed for creating a more equitable, inclusive and just Australia.

Deep Collaboration is a practice of CFI that focuses on the collaborations between First Nations and other multicultural Australians.



The Invitation

The Voice to Parliament Referendum 2023 scenarios are designed to prompt thinking and discussion based around five potential outcomes of the Referendum, and their impact on existing and future collaborations.

The scenarios are based on the YES and NO votes, and whether the votes are HIGH or LOW.

The scenarios are not a prediction of the Referendum outcome, nor is it intended to provide an indication on the likelihood for any scenario or existing campaigns.

Every effort has been made to remain neutral in language and to remain focused on impacts for collaborations.

It assumes existing knowledge of referendum voting, the Australian Constitution, and an awareness of the 2023 campaigns.

This is an opportunity to develop further thinking and discussion on the Referendum.



CFI's Deep Collaboration

The Scenarios for The Voice to Parliament Referendum 2023

A stylized number 1 composed of overlapping geometric shapes in yellow, orange, and pink.

Stabilising the Base

A surprisingly high level of NO votes in the Referendum.

A stylized number 2 composed of overlapping geometric shapes in yellow, green, and teal.

Changing the Game

A surprisingly high level of YES votes in the Referendum.

A stylized number 3 composed of overlapping geometric shapes in pink, teal, and blue.

Just Over the Line

A marginal win for the YES campaign.

A stylized number 4 composed of overlapping geometric shapes in teal, yellow, pink, and blue.

Narrow Escape

A marginal win for the NO campaign.

A stylized number 5 composed of overlapping geometric shapes in yellow, pink, blue, and teal.

Mixed Message

A majority of Australians vote YES in the National vote, but the states are locked at 3 YES and 3 NO.



Stabilising the Base

High NO Vote

Victory for the NO Campaign

Scenario 1 – *Stabilising the Base*

ATTRIBUTES

- Surprisingly high NO vote.
- Vindication of reading of mood of Australian people.
- Validation of messaging and mandate to pursue policy platform.
- The matter of First Nations recognition in the Australian Constitution, and the proposed changes are emphatically rejected.
- There is a strong mandate to maintain current arrangements or develop alternatives to address the interface between First Nations and the Australian parliament.

A major challenge for this scenario is while strong mandate has been delivered through the Referendum, the proponents are not yet the ruling party and cannot capitalise fully on the endorsement.

Therefore, how will the NO campaign channel the wave of momentum?

COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

- How will winning position impact collaborative efforts? Will there be an openness to include divergence or will the winning margin result in entrenched positions?
- Collaborations will be challenged to work with strong theme of “unity” prosecuted by NO campaign while attempting to bring in diverse perspectives.
- YES voting Australians will be asking “how did we get it wrong?”
- Collaborations at the margins will emerge to champion the voices of those who were left out.

FOR REFLECTION

1. What would this result mean for my context?
2. Am I (are we) prepared enough for this eventuality?
3. How will this impact our partners and collaborations?
4. What social and political conditions does this scenario create? How will I (we) navigate that?



Changing the Game

A High YES Vote

Victory for the YES Campaign

Scenario 2 – Changing the Game

ATTRIBUTES

- Surprisingly high YES vote
- Vindication of reading of the mood of Australian people
- Validation of messaging and mandate to pursue policy platform
- The matter of First Nations recognition in the Australian Constitution, and the proposed changes are emphatically endorsed.
- There is a strong mandate for The Voice is to proceed and other elements of the Statement From The Heart are given implicit encouragement.

A major challenge for this scenario is managing the momentum for change and expectations for change, while delivering on The Voice and other elements of the Statement From The Heart.

There will be failed expectations and political necessities to work through that may not align with the endorsement from the Australian people.

COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

- How will winning position impact collaborative efforts? Will there be an openness to include divergence or will the winning margin result in entrenched positions?
- Collaborations will be challenged to work with the strong themes of “listening and inclusion” prosecuted by the YES campaign while attempting to include the perspectives that did not want change.
- NO voting Australians will be asking “how did we get it wrong?”
- Collaborations will need to work with marginal perspectives and partnerships that will exercise power to resist change and remain faithful to loyalties from the NO campaign.

FOR REFLECTION

1. What would this result mean for my context?
2. Am I (are we) prepared enough for this eventuality?
3. How will this impact our partners and collaborations?
4. What national social and political conditions does this scenario create? How will I (we) navigate that?



Just over the Line

Marginal Yes Vote
Victory for the Yes Campaign
Divided Electorate

Scenario 3 – *Just over the Line*

ATTRIBUTES

- A marginal YES vote
- Divided electorate
- Recognition that enough Australians people ‘made the right call’ to tip the scales
- Acceptance of messaging as a valid platform for policy
- The matter of First Nations recognition in the Australian Constitution, and the proposed changes are endorsed.
- It is accepted that The Voice can proceed and perhaps unclear authorisation for other elements of the Statement From The Heart.

A major challenge for this scenario is the reality of a split electorate. That means that large numbers of Australians feel the loss.

The victorious campaign will need to engage with and bring along those that have just lost to ensure that the Voice will include their interests.

COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

- How will people feel like their interests, loyalties and concerns are treated fairly going forward?
- How will the narrow win impact political and social conditions for collaborations? Will there be a willingness to collaborate on alternatives to the Voice proposal?
- Collaboration efforts will likely focus on how to reset and re-convene to explore next step strategies.

FOR REFLECTION

1. What would this result mean for my context?
2. Am I (are we) prepared enough for this eventuality?
3. How will this impact our partners and collaborations?
4. What national social and political conditions does this scenario create? How will I (we) navigate that?



Narrow Escape

Low NO Vote

Victory for the NO Campaign

Divided Electorate

Scenario 4 – *Narrow Escape*

ATTRIBUTES

- A marginal NO vote
- Divided electorate
- Recognition that enough Australians people 'made the right call' to tip the scales
- Acceptance of messaging as a valid platform for policy
- The matter of First Nations recognition in the Australian Constitution, and the proposed changes are rejected.
- It is accepted that current arrangements remain in place or alternatives can be developed to address the interface between First Nations and the Australian Parliament.

A major challenge for this scenario is the reality of a split electorate. That means that large numbers of Australians feel the loss.

The victorious campaign will need to engage with and bring along those that have just lost to ensure that the arrangements going forward include their interests.

COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

- How will people feel like their interests, loyalties and concerns are treated fairly going forward?
- How will the narrow win impact political and social conditions for collaborations? Will there be a willingness to collaborate on alternatives to the Voice proposal?
- Collaboration efforts will likely focus on how to reset and re-convene to explore next step strategies.

FOR REFLECTION

1. What would this result mean for my context?
2. Am I (are we) prepared enough for this eventuality?
3. How will this impact our partners and collaborations?
4. What national social and political conditions does this scenario create? How will I (we) navigate that?



Mixed Message

National YES Vote

State NO Vote

Divided electorate

Technical victory for the NO campaign,
however moral victory for the YES
campaign

Scenario 5 – *Mixed Message*

ATTRIBUTES

- Divided electorate
- Contestation about reading the mood of the Australian people
- Lack of certainty about messaging and authorisation for political platforms and policies
- Political and social discontent and dissatisfaction with the result
- The matter of Constitutional change for proposals about First Nations in Australia is put to rest (sort of)
- It is accepted that current arrangements remain in place or alternatives can be developed to address the interface between First Nations and the Australian Parliament.

A major challenge for this scenario is the reality of a split electorate and the uncertainty of mandate. In this scenario, large numbers of Australians feel the loss and victory.

The victorious campaign will need to engage with and bring along those that have just lost to ensure that the arrangements going forward include their interests.

COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

- How will collaborations provide the space for dissonance about the outcome to be worked through?
- How will people feel like their interests, loyalties and concerns are treated fairly going forward?
- The mixed result will likely impact willingness to collaborate on alternatives to the Voice proposal?
- Collaboration efforts will likely focus on how to reset and re-convene to explore next step strategies.

FOR REFLECTION

1. What would this result mean for my context?
2. Am I (are we) prepared enough for this eventuality?
3. How will this impact our partners and collaborations?
4. What national social and political conditions does this scenario create? How will I (we) navigate that?

The Opportunities

Attend:

- Join CFI's The Voice to Parliament Referendum Scenarios 2023 webinar.
collaborationforimpact.com/learning-programs
- Go to information sessions and campaign events to learn more about the referendum.

Engage:

- Find out about what discussions about The Voice to Parliament Referendum 2023 are taking place in your local community, local government, workplace, social club etc.
- Find out more about different perspectives on The Voice to Parliament Referendum 2023 through these links:
- [Official YES/NO Referendum Pamphlet](#), [Yes23](#), [Fair Australia](#),
[Blak Sovereign Movement](#), [Labor Party](#), [Liberal Party](#), [The Nationals](#), [One Nation](#),
[Uluru Statement From the Heart](#), [The Australian Constitution](#)

Convene:

- Set up your own conversation space to get the dialogue started.
- Use the CFI discussion tool to navigate how to host a group conversation.





Thank You!