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CHAIR OF LABOR FIRST NATIONS CAUCUS COMMITTEE**

STATEMENT ON FIRST NATIONS VOICE TO GOVERNMENT INTERIM REPORT

Labor thanks members of the advisory groups who worked on this interim report under difficult circumstances.

Many will be disappointed with the Government's refusal to consider a constitutionally enshrined voice to the parliament.

Three and a half years ago, First Nations leaders clearly expressed our desire for a First Nations voice to the parliament enshrined in the constitution – through the Uluru Statement – while the Government banned its advisory group from even considering this.

It is also difficult to see any progress being made before the next election.

It is critical to real and lasting progress for First Nations people that we have a say in the policies and laws that affect us.

A voice must be able to provide full and frank advice. It must be secure and it should not be subject to the whims of the government of the day.

This report fails in that context.

Labor remains committed to all three elements of the Uluru Statement: a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice to the parliament; a Makarrata Committee to oversee a process for agreement and treaty-making; as well as a process for Truth-telling.

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