

Makaratta Factsheet

Makaratta is a Yolngu word that expresses the idea of two parties coming together after a struggle and healing the divisions of the past. To move forward from conflict and begin the healing process, there must be an acknowledgment of the harm that was done. The idea of Makaratta is to acknowledge that there has been wrongdoing and to seek to make things right.

Makaratta and Treaty

Makaratta has long been proposed as an alternative term to treaty for this nation, yet despite this, neither treaty nor Makaratta have come to fruition. The word and the concept it encompasses were introduced into the wider Australian consciousness in the late 1970's by the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC).

The NAC was established in 1977 to provide a forum for expression of Aboriginal views and was responsible for a Makaratta sub-committee which travelled across Australia consulting Aboriginal peoples on their expectations. They then made several recommendations based on their findings with the intention of entering into an agreement making process with the Australian government.

Makaratta and the Uluru Statement

In 2017, forty years on from the inception of the NAC, the Uluru Statement from the Heart was heard. As well as calling for an Indigenous voice to parliament, the Uluru Statement proposes a Makaratta commission to supervise the process of agreement making between First Nations and non-Indigenous people. A Makaratta commission would also supervise the process of truth-telling about First Nations history.

It is a crucial aspect of the Uluru Statement that recognises the sovereignty and enables the self-determination of First Nations Peoples in striving for a more fair and just nation.