

**The choices before Australia**  
**Greg Craven Lecture on**  
**Ethics and Politics**

Julian Leeser MP

Melbourne  
11 October 2023







**The choices  
before Australia**

**Greg Craven  
Lecture on  
Ethics and Politics**

Julian Leeser MP

# Julian Leeser MP

Mr Leeser has been the Federal Member for Berowra since July 2016. In June 2022, Mr Leeser was appointed the Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians.

He held those positions until April 2023 when he resigned and went to the backbench, so he could support and campaign for the Voice referendum.

He was the youngest councillor in Australia when he was elected to Woollahra Council at age 19 and an elected delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1998 aged 21.

Mr Leeser has degrees in arts and law from the University of NSW and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

He spent a year as a Visiting Fellow at the Taubman Centre at Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government.

Prior to his election, he was Director of Government Policy and Strategy at ACU, Executive Director of the Menzies Research Centre, a lawyer at Mallesons Stephen Jaques and an associate to High Court Justice Ian Callinan.

He served on several boards including those of Mercy Health and Teach for Australia.



# The Choices before Australia

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, the Boonurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

It is wonderful to be here for the launch of the Greg Craven Centre and to deliver the Greg Craven Lecture on Ethics and Politics.

I acknowledge the presence of so many friends here tonight.

His Grace Archbishop Peter Comensoli.  
The Chancellor of Australian Catholic

University (ACU), the Honourable Martin Daubney AM, KC.

ACU's Pro-Chancellor Virginia Bourke and Vice-Chancellor Professor Zlatko Skrbis.

And of course, I acknowledge our guests of honour: my friend Emeritus Professor Greg Craven AO and Anne Craven.

It is wonderful to be here to honour someone who is a friend and an inspiration to us all.

## THE WAR ON ISRAEL

Tonight, I want to honour Greg Craven and speak about the cultural challenges we face in the public square in Australia and elsewhere, but first let me say a few words about the attacks on Israel over recent days.

Israel is the only democracy in the middle east. It is a country that shares Australia's values: a belief in the rule of law and respect for human rights. It is one of the few places in the Middle East where not only Jews but Christians too can practise their faith freely.

What we have seen this week is a tragedy.

The largest loss of Jewish life since the Holocaust. The depraved acts of Hamas which we in Australia have listed as a terrorist organisation. Women being dragged from their homes and assaulted in the streets, holocaust survivors being abducted, children being kidnapped, caged and killed. Young people being massacred at a music festival.

And yet sadly a response from organisations in Australia, which should know better, celebrating the loss of innocent lives and calling for the death of Jews both here in Australia and in Israel.

This week has been a terrible reminder that antisemitism is alive in the world.

At a federal and state level, Australia's response has been haphazard. This has followed many months of mixed messages from the Federal Government in relation to Israel.

Almost five days on, there are only the beginnings of a plan to evacuate Australians trapped in a country at war.

As well, Australia must reconsider our diplomatic relations with Iran.

Iran is a criminal regime.

It represses its own people, especially women and Christians, and funds terror around the world.

Hamas's actions against Israel, which are supported and sponsored by Iran, are the fruit of Iran's deadly doctrine of global disruption.

Iran should be treated like the outcasts they are.

In NSW, we need a serious conversation about antisemitism and, as well, police preparedness.

To be honest, I never have imagined the day where Jewish people in Sydney would be told by the police that the streets were not safe for them.

I could not have imagined those same police would arrest a man carrying an Israeli flag while giving an escort to the steps of the Opera House for antisemites celebrating the murder of Jewish innocents.

Nor could I have imagined that antisemites would chant "gas the Jews" on the steps of Australia's greatest cultural symbol.

Not only did Australians hear and see it, the world saw it too.

At every level, the police and the NSW Government failed to manage a serious and unfolding situation. There needs to be an inquiry because at every level the state government failed – and failure, when it comes to public safety, can never be accepted. Likewise, indifference to antisemitism cannot be accepted.

The behaviour of many parliamentary members of the Greens at the federal and state levels has been appalling. The false-equivalence that was tied to every statement about the violence against civilians has been sickening.

For all the talk from the Greens about hate speech, for all their talk about tolerance, for all their talk about inclusion – we know, when it comes to the Greens, they have an indifference and disregard for Jews. It has been on full display this week.

Though this is a trying time for Jewish people around the world, I draw strength from the many non-Jewish people around the country who are reaching out to stand with the Jewish people at this time. I agree with the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks who said of the Jewish people:

*"Our ability to survive some of the worst tragedies any people has known without losing our faith in life itself; to suffer and yet rebuild; to lose and yet recreate; to honour the past without being held captive by the past – all of which are embodied today in the State of Israel, living symbol of the power of hope – are vitally important not just to ourselves but to the world."*

I remember Greg Craven saying to me on many occasions that as a Catholic he was taught that antisemitism was a mortal sin. I know that in a lecture that honours him it would be wrong not to say anything about the greatest threat to religious freedom in the world today.

## **GREG CRAVEN**

What makes tonight's gathering unique is that from Kevin Donnelly to Kate Carnell, and from Sean Gordon to Fr Frank Brennan to Damien Freeman, we have all argued at some point with each other.

In so many ways, this is why we are all here tonight.

In the Jewish tradition, we refer to these arguments as "arguments for the sake of heaven" – arguments to seek the truth.

Those arguments and disagreements have not torn us apart, but have developed in us a shared respect, friendship and an understanding of our different histories, philosophy, background and values.

When Sir Robert Menzies founded the Liberal Party, one of the terms he used to describe it was as a "community of thought".

It is a lovely ideal not only for politics but across life as well.

As one of Australia's foremost public intellectuals, Greg Craven has done so much to foster this side of a community of thought.

In his 2008 St Thomas More Lecture, Greg said with tongue in cheek that the ferocity of his mother's prayers were possibly for nothing less than the papacy – but being Vice-Chancellor of Australian Catholic University was not a bad consolation prize.

We can all give thanks – particularly Anne – that Greg's mother's prayers were misdirected.

Greg many years ago said that “a Catholic university must boldly and outwardly face the community as a whole”.

I believe that statement is a reflection of how Greg has engaged throughout his life.

He has boldly and outwardly faced the world, particularly when his views have not been the prevailing views.

That is his courage.

That is his gift.

That is the source of his outstanding leadership.

But Greg's gift is more than his bravery – it is also his ability to take positions in public life and to present them in a forceful, humorous and clear way that provokes debate and comments.

He sees the intellectual debate as a reflection of one's integrity. So he's not afraid of people disagreeing with him, nor is he afraid of being controversial.

Greg is a scholar and academic in the classical sense.

He has a well-furnished mind. He is a polymath.

He is at home as much when having a discussion about the framers of the Constitution as he is discussing Aussie Rules, botany, Irish history, Italian sculpture or the novels of Trollope.

Like our mutual friend the late Professor George Winterton, he is generous and patient in imparting his knowledge to others.

Greg is always master of his subject matter.

He is a seeker after the truth. He is also a champion debater.

He is not a clueless politician who rigidly holds onto his or her talking points because it's the only thing that hides his or her lack of knowledge in an area. He knows how the premises, facts and arguments hold together.

That's why he can always advance an argument.

It's why he is often at the front of an argument.

He is the happy warrior.

And as one who worked with him during my time at ACU, I understand the loyalty he generates, a loyalty best expressed by Shakespeare in *Henry V*:

*“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother.”*

And the happy warrior has not shied away from the most difficult debates.

In the 25 years I have known Greg, that is the way it has always been.

I first heard of Greg in 1997. I was a law student. Greg was a renowned academic. That year he gave the Alfred Deakin lecture: a fearless and explosive speech calling out what he, if I may say rightly, regarded as the made-up jurisprudence of the High Court of Australia.

The speech was like a lightning bolt.

It divided the legal community across the country and saw Greg's name struck from many dinner party lists.

But it was a speech that had to be made, and like everything else that Greg has done, it had a real effect on changing the direction of an Australian institution.

The following year I met Greg when we both served as delegates to the Constitutional Convention. I was a delegate for the No Republic cause.

Greg at that convention proved the Catholic teaching that no human being is without error, because he supported the republic.

A quarter of a century on, Greg has not yet recanted, but maybe like St Paul, he will have his Damascus Road experience soon enough.

My experience is that Greg Craven does not go missing during the debates that matter.

During his time as ACU Vice-Chancellor, Greg fought against the death penalty being applied to Australians in Indonesia; he took on the group of eight and their monopolisation of university funding; and he not only sought to preserve the demand-driven university education system, he argued to expand it as well.

Leadership and courage change institutions and they have the power to change the course of history.

And that is what Greg did when he took on the leadership of Australian Catholic University, transforming it from a marginal institution at the edge of the university sector unsure about its Catholic identity and mission to the largest mission of the Catholic Church in Australia; the largest educator of teachers and nurses in the country; and the largest Catholic university in the English-speaking world. An institution proud of its Catholicity and a beacon of hope to a Church in its time of trial.

On the matters that were relevant to the Church, he never said “this is not my fight” or “there are bishops to fight for this”. Greg stood with the Church on everything from the seal of the confessional to the sanctity of human life.

On matters of law, he took his experience as an educator and could explain complex legal matters to Australians in a way that was easily understood – from the intricacies of constitutional law to the appointment of new judges.

If there have been moments when all of that came together – respect for proper legal process, a defence of Catholicism from the excesses of the authoritarian left, and the willingness to stand against the tide alone if need be – it was in his consistent defence of Cardinal George Pell, along with Fr Frank Brennan. It was a view that was ultimately endorsed by a unanimous decision of the High Court.

Such is Greg’s fidelity to truth, commitment to principle and courage to right wrongs.

All of this is to say that Greg has been one of the great influences on my life.

Along my own journey over recent months, many have stopped me and reflected on my decision to move from the frontbench to the backbench on a matter of principle. There has been praise and brickbats too.

For me, I can only say that Greg Craven modeled principled decision-making for me over many, many years.

Tonight, I pay tribute to his and Anne’s influence on my life.

## **THE JUXTAPOSITION OF HISTORY**

Friends, we gather tonight at the intersection of two events – both very different and yet both of them deeply connected with Australian Catholic University.

Those events are the Synod of Synodality inaugurated by Pope Francis, and the coming referendum, a referendum whose modern origins are found here at ACU.

Let me first turn to the Synod.

I have to confess, I was puzzled the first time that I heard there was a Synod on Synodality.

It felt like a meeting to discuss meetings, or a memo on how to structure memos. Surely, I thought, the Pope has bigger things to worry about.

Then as you look deeper, Pope Francis is asking the Catholic Church to reflect on something much deeper.

How do communities walk together when there is difference among them?



How does a community interact with the wider world, if part of that community's unique difference appears to be at odds with the world?

How do we stay in community with each other, when we differ?

How do we respond to the unfair attacks of others on our character?

The questions being asked are not unique to Catholics. In this day and age, they are universal.

They apply to countries, geographic communities, political groupings and almost anywhere where different people come into contact with each other.

On course, none of these questions are new. But these questions are accentuated in our age.

In many ways these are questions that Greg has been grappling with for many years:

To understand the tension of being true and faithful to who you are with your interactions with the broader world.

To believe you have something unique to contribute to the world.

To engage with today – and not retreat from it.

To sit with the discomfort of disagreement without losing confidence in the gift that your own tradition brings to the world.

To bring Glory to God through your Catholic missions: hospitals, aged care homes, schools, universities, disability and welfare services.

I believe our country needs the voice of a confident and open Catholic Church to the debates that shape it.

That is what was so integral to Greg's vision for ACU.

A university that blends the marriage of faith and reason, with the goal of excellence. A university that sought to support distinctive Catholic social teaching of the dignity of the human person and the common good.

Greg's vision of how you achieve this in a university was first in understanding and appreciating this university's own unique difference. As he once said:

*"In a nation full of broadly similar, secular universities, the Catholic universities represent a distinct intellectual tradition and a fundamentally distinct philosophical and educational mission."*

And then, having understood that difference, he embraced it.

In his words, "To be successful as a Catholic university, an institution must be supremely good at only two things: it must be supremely good at being Catholic and supremely good at being a university."

Greg in his time did that very effectively.

I believe the Church itself needs to embrace this thinking.

As a sympathetic outsider, I sometimes see a reluctance of the Church to engage in public debate and discourse.

Australia needs Catholic voices.

The Catholic Church is one of the few institutions in our national life that has adherents from every ethnic background, every socioeconomic group, every point on the political spectrum. It has the potential to be the great intermediary in our national life.

The Church is an institution which changes lives for the better bringing the light of faith and hope into the lives of millions. And it impacts Australians of every faith and none through its mission – in health, ageing, education, disability and across so many fields.

Sometimes I think the Church underrates its own strength and doesn't see the unique contribution it can make to Australia and that Australia is better for it making.

That does not mean it is easy.

You know this here in Victoria and in the ACT, where freedom of religion and freedom of conscience and the social licence of the Church to be what it is uniquely called to be is constantly under attack.

Nor will your contribution always be welcome. But nor were the teachings of the founder of your Church always welcome in his own day.

But part of the role of the Church in our national life is to stand for the sanctity of life, the dignity of the human person and the freedom of conscience.

And that is needed now more than ever. And without the Church there will be no one to defend values which underpin the success of our society but whose positions in our society are more under attack.

A Catholic university has a particular role to provide the social science research and public policy foundations for the teaching of the Church.

For instance, only the Catholic Church has the calling and the belief in the sanctity of human life to monitor the euthanasia laws in this country so that pressure is maintained on governments not to expand their remit – as is proposed in the ACT where 16-year-olds are to be euthanised – but that the intellectual case is eventually made for their repeal.

We need Catholic voices, to engage with the heart of our national life.

Yes, the Church over the sweep of our national life has made mistakes, you know them more than anyone. But you have educated more children, helped more sick people, stood with more broken families and hurting people than any other organisation in our national life.

So let me say it is time for the Church to re-engage with confidence and optimism in the debates of our national life.

I believe our public square is richer and stronger when we have differing voices that draw out the best of our different traditions and lived experiences.

But I also recognise this is not always easy for an institution such as the Church. The Pope at the Synod summarised the tensions, or as he called them “the temptations”.

The temptations of “being a rigid church, which arms itself against the world and looks backwards; of being a lukewarm church, which surrenders to the fashions of the world; of being a tired church turned in on itself”.

We see these themes across every public square. Rigidity which finds oneself locked in the arguments of the past and an inability to hear the fears and concerns of another; passivity when one withdraws into a well of cynicism and disillusionment at the changing of the times; and irrelevancy that is found when one spends one’s time seeking ideological purity from like-minded brethren.

As I said earlier, these challenges apply to every community that seeks to involve itself in public life.

I am of the absolute conviction that the answer to these challenges is found in a worldview that is based on intellectual engagement, empathy and listening.

## **INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT**

Greg’s work at ACU was deeply informed by Cardinal John Henry Newman’s work *The Idea of a University*. That the role of a university was to teach people how to think. Not what to think but how.

How, as distinct from what, creates the settings whereby we can be inquisitive, where we can ask questions, and where we can test our beliefs, views and outlooks.

Those who inhabit the extremes see that as weakness or being wishy-washy. It’s not, it is being rigorous.

You see, when you are rigorous, when you have questioned, when you have studied and probed and tested, you can engage with the world with confidence.

Such an intellectual setting means you are not defensive, you can focus on optimal outcomes, and see trade-offs not through the lens of outcomes being zero sum, but as means of making change more sustainable.

As importantly, you can prosecute your ideas with confidence knowing the foundation that

you are working from.

It means you can engage in acts of persuasion.

Part of what we have lost in recent times is the vibrant intellectual centre.

Maybe, in part this is due to the ferocity of the extremes, who attack those who seek common ground or who see more nuance than the polarising extremes.

I believe it is also in part a lost understanding about the importance of debate.

We should celebrate debate and not deride it.

We should understand that it is our differences that make us Australian.

Our differences are a reflection of our freedom and our uniqueness as individuals.

One of the joys of being a parliamentarian is the school groups that visit Parliament House.

You meet these children – either totally overawed or fundamentally bored at visiting the home of our democracy and meeting their federal MP.

I remember my own Year 6 trip to Canberra, and I always wonder who will emerge from these groups I meet as leaders in 10, 20 and 30 years' time.

Our schools teach our children about the institutions of democracy: the Parliament, the Crown, the Courts and the various levels of government.

But the ethos of democracy is as important as its architecture – and as a democracy we don't speak much about it, or work at making our debate healthier and more accessible.

Debate is the central means by which change occurs in our country. It is the arteries of democracy; it pumps the oxygen of ideas.

We must celebrate debate, we must esteem debate and, equally, we must find ways of making our debates more accessible, engaging and civil. We must engage in arguments for the sake of heaven.

We are hearing in the current referendum

that the referendum debate is "division". No, it's not divided. It's a debate.

Differences in a democracy are healthy. In a democracy, it is through debate and engagement that people decide.

In my community, I have on three separate occasions been elected to the Federal Parliament.

Not everybody votes for me in Berowra. That might be a shock to my mother, but that is what happens in a democracy.

No one ever says, "Berowra is divided", because forty-something per cent of people vote against me.

Debate and difference are central to democracy. They aren't something we should deride or try and quiet down because they make people uncomfortable.

We need debate, and more of it, because it is how we persuade.

And of course, it should be respectful – because when there is respect in debate, we don't diminish the bonds of community that we all share.

## **EMPATHY**

But it is not just debate that matters, it is empathy as well.

I started 2023 with a speech at the Young Liberals National Convention.

I spoke about the challenges for the Voice referendum and I spoke about empathy.

Over the summer, I had been reading a book by Dara Horn with the provocative title *People Love Dead Jews*.

Horn's premise is that we don't really engage in empathy in modern life.

We often think empathy is about identifying with people "just like us".

But that is not an understanding and a reckoning with difference, it's not true empathy.

As I said to the Young Liberals, empathy is bigger.

It's not about accepting and embracing people because we can see ourselves in them. It is about standing with people and their right to dignity, freedom and self-expression when we can't see the similarities.

And we must do this as a country.

Because without it, there's a drought of human kindness.

That is the glue of communities and countries as well.

I don't want Australians to go down the American path that demonises difference, and leaves people behind.

I believe the Catholic Church and its schools and universities are integral to creating a deeper sense of empathy across our communities and national life.

And engaging doesn't mean forsaking what you believe. Rather, it is about creating connection where there is none.

Let me give a small example. Over the past nine days I have been working on prepoll.

Even over 11 days, we have had heat waves and storms.

It is the nature of prepoll, there are either frosty relations, or you become friendly with all of the other workers – and mostly, across Berowra, we've all been friendly.

Despite our differences on the referendum, a number of times over the past few days, no supporters have walked up to me in their no t-shirts and enquired about my welfare. They let me know they were thinking about me following the attacks on Israel.

That's how true empathy shows itself: it is demonstrated by the kindness of those with whom we have a difference.

As my friend Dr Michael Casey wrote:

*"We need to re-discover the idea of life in common as a shared landscape, adjust the thresholds so that, instead of seeing the person who disagrees with us as an enemy with a malign intent which must be unmasked, we see them as a friend with a different, deeply held view of the right thing to do."*

At a national level, we must also find a way to deeply engage with Indigenous Australians.

Yes, the Voice is a way of grounding policy, but we also have to engage in the work of strengthening the bonds between us all.

To hear and see each other in a way that we haven't.

I have reflected a fair bit on the words from the Uluru Statement of the Heart:

*"When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country."*

I keep thinking of the words "walking in two worlds" because all of us in some ways do.

And when we do, our journeys are richer, our lives are happier and we do become a gift to others.

## LISTENING

And the way to empathy is always through listening.

Which of course, leads me to the Voice.

I cannot speak about the Voice without saying a few words about the extraordinary contribution of Australian Catholic University to this referendum.

It was almost a decade ago that Noel Pearson sought to engage with constitutional conservatives about constitutional recognition for Indigenous people.

Noel and Shireen Morris sought out Greg Craven, Damien Freeman and me, and we spent many hours, many days listening and engaging with each other.

I cannot think of another university that can lay claim to being the place where an idea that is being put to a referendum was born.

All those discussions on the Voice happened in the Vice-Chancellor's conference room, in Edward Street, North Sydney.

Joining us along the way were Anne Twomey, Marcia Langton and Megan Davis – and over several months we worked on this proposal.

Regardless of what happens this Saturday, it can only say something about the impact and influence of ACU that the only referendum question put to the Australian people this century was developed at this university.

The university and the Catholic Church in Australia can take pride in this.

The work led by Greg Craven was motivated by his deep faith, his yearning to find a better way forward for Indigenous Australians, and his deep commitment to the constitutional architecture of Australia.

It speaks of how serious intellectual engagement can influence our country greatly.

### THE VOICE

In three days, Australians will be asked to vote at the referendum.

This is an important moment for the country.

It is a moment of consequence.

Potentially, a before and after moment for Australia.

For far too long, we have failed as a nation when it has come to Australia's First Peoples.

As Australians consider their vote, I ask them to consider that what we have been doing for decades has not worked as it should.

There has been enormous goodwill, enormous sums spent, and yet despite this, there is an enormous gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and the rest of the country.

Indigenous Australians are living on average eight years less than other Australians.

The unemployment rate for an Indigenous person is up to nine times that of other Australians.

One in two Indigenous Australians live below the poverty line.

One in five Indigenous households are living in accommodation that does not meet an acceptable standard – either lacking a kitchen or sanitation.

The suicide rate for Indigenous Australians

is two-and-a-half times that of other Australians.

We know that, for far too many Indigenous women and children, their lives are not safe.

In NSW, an Indigenous woman is 30 times more likely to present at a hospital with injuries from violence than other Australian women.

And across Australia, an Indigenous boy is more likely to go to jail than university.

The status quo is broken and it needs fixing.

I've thought for a long time, why that is?

Why are we consistently failing to make any real progress on Indigenous health, education, housing, safety and economic advancement?

I think the answer is found in listening.

Deep listening.

Saint John Paul II during his visit to Alice Springs in 1986 spoke about why we need to listen. He said Aboriginal culture was:

*"...not prepared for the sudden meeting with another people, with different customs and traditions.... They were different from Aboriginal people. Their traditions, the organisation of their lives, and their attitudes to the land were quite strange to you. Their law too was quite different. These people had knowledge, money and power; and they brought with them some patterns of behaviour from which the Aboriginal people were unable to protect themselves."*

John Paul II was right: there are profound differences and that requires us to listen.

As we listen, we hear what the Uluru Statement from the Heart calls "the torment of our powerlessness".

And what is this torment? I believe the answer is cultural and is found in the words of the poet Oodgeroo, Indigenous Australians want "freedom, not frustration; self-respect, not resignation".

From the beginnings of European settlement even until today, we have robbed Indigenous people of their most precious possession –

and that is their agency. Agency that can help their communities thrive and prosper.

It is a point even the Productivity Commission makes in its recent report into the Closing the Gap efforts. The Commission says:

*“There appears to be an assumption that ‘governments know best’.... Too many government agencies are implementing versions of shared decision-making that involve consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on a pre-determined solution, rather than collaborating on the problem and co-designing a solution.”*

The Voice is about changing this mindset.

It’s about genuine partnership.

It’s about giving voice and respect to local and regional communities. It’s about forsaking a belief that we know best.

It’s about giving Indigenous communities the opportunity to say what works and what doesn’t.

To ensure decisions about health, education, housing and safety are the best decisions for local conditions.

Indigenous communities aren’t asking for control, or power, or money, they are only asking to be heard. For decision-makers to stop and listen.

In the words of the wonderful songwriter Paul Kelly, “How long can we keep walking with this stone in our shoe?”

We can change this on Saturday.

I believe the disconnect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia is the root

cause of the economic disconnection in Indigenous communities and lives.

Frankly, the idea of giving Indigenous communities voice, listening to local communities and giving people greater responsibility to shape the politics that affect them is totally consistent with my political tradition and the Catholic social teaching.

## **CONCLUSION**

I know there are great pressures on Australians. This is not an easy time, with financial pressures, stagnant wages, and wars and conflict in the world.

In such a time, the temptation is to say no to more change.

But this is a time when Australians need to lift up their eyes and see the challenges that our Indigenous brothers and sisters face.

This is a time to reflect, a time to emphatically engage, and it’s a time to listen to voices that have been silenced for too long.

Tonight, like the thousands of yes advocates across the country and across the political divide, I’m appealing to your hopes and not your fears.

This Saturday, join us in our work to get Indigenous Australians to the same starting line that other Australians are at.

That is what this referendum is about.

It’s about Indigenous children, their lives and their future, and trying to create the conditions so that Indigenous children can walk confidently in two worlds.

And it is about completing the work Greg Craven started in his conference room a decade ago.

# PM Glynn Institute

The PM Glynn Institute was established in 2016 as a public policy institute paying careful attention to the philosophical and ethical questions in public debate. Building on the success of this work, the institute now also serves as ACU's think tank for public ethics.



## BRIDGING DIVIDES

The institute's focus is public policy for the common good. Its contributions to policy discussions and public debates encourage discussion across the divides of political, intellectual and religious life, to help build a good society where everyone can flourish.

## PUBLIC POLICY

The institute has produced recommendations on policy issues such as protecting religious freedom, the provision of palliative care, constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the role of schools in fostering social cohesion.

## PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

Through its imprint, The Kapunda Press, the institute has also produced a range of publications discussing larger issues such as religion and democracy, the future of human rights, political tribalism, and the major political traditions in Australia.

## INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS

The institute is supported by international advisors drawn from North America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, with expertise in public ethics encompassing law, history, higher education, philosophy, sociology, public policy, interreligious affairs and political science.

**THE CHOICES BEFORE AUSTRALIA**

**GREG CRAVEN LECTURE ON  
ETHICS AND POLITICS**

**JULIAN LEESER MP**

11 October 2023  
Greg Craven Centre, Melbourne

PM Glynn Institute  
Australian Catholic University  
2023