

NAPWHA Statement of Support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Constitutionally Enshrined National Voice to Parliament

The 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation made by the Indigenous People of Australia to all Australians to walk with them in a movement for a better future. It calls for the establishment of a First Nations' Voice to Parliament, enshrined in the Constitution, and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling about our history.

NAPWHA recognises the generosity of this offer, the reconciliation potential that it holds, and we share its vision for our collective future. We support all three recommendations of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

One of these recommendations is for a National Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

A referendum on a Voice for First Nations People will be put to the Australian people this year. The referendum will ask Australians if they support an alteration to the Constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

If successful a body called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice [National Voice] will be established by the Constitution. It will be empowered to make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Parliament shall have the power to make laws with respect to its composition, functions, powers and procedures.

NAPWHA unequivocally supports the 'Yes' position in the upcoming referendum on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament (The National Voice).

We recognise that the "Yes" vote, enabling the National Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution, is the first step and will pave the way for the delivery of the remaining two recommendations of the Uluru Statement from the Heart: the negotiation and agreement of the long-awaited Treaty, and the creation of a Makarrata Commission.

NAPWHA embraces this once in a lifetime opportunity to give Constitutional recognition to Australia's indigenous peoples and to chart our way forward together.

We thank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for this generous offer and opportunity to confront the mistakes of the past and to move forward together.

We undertake to play our part in ensuring it's success, to make our support public and to make it visible. In doing so we undertake to maximise the potential for a successful "YES" vote and for a better future for all Australians, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

We call on our fellow citizens to engage in respectful and measured debate where that is necessary. While we support free and open public deliberation on a wide range of views, we condemn racist and politicized attempts to undermine this historical moment.

We look forward to the Voice becoming part of the Constitutional fabric of the Nation and to the parliamentary process that will follow a successful outcome.

NAPWHA supports the Voice.