

Health Equity Matters Statement of Support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation from First Nations People to all Australians to walk together to build a better future. The Statement calls for establishing a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission to supervise agreement-making and truth telling about our history.

Health Equity Matters recognises the significance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart as an historic mandate to create a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. Health Equity Matters accepts this invitation and supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.

The first reform called for in the Statement is constitutional recognition through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Later this year a referendum will be held to ask the Australian people to change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice will be an independent advisory body made up of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people, chosen by local communities. The Voice will make representations to the Australian Parliament and the Executive Government on matters related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Parliament will have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to The Voice, including its composition, functions, powers, and procedures.

Health Equity Matters recognises the importance of First Nations People having a say in matters that affect them. This is the best way to improve outcomes for First Nations People.

We know from the successes we have had in the response to HIV in Australia, having communities centred, visible and meaningfully involved in that response is vital.

Health Equity Matters also understands the importance of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the lead up to the referendum, acknowledging the impact a national vote will have on First Nations communities.

Health Equity Matters wholeheartedly supports the 'Yes' vote in the upcoming referendum on the Voice.

We encourage all Australians to vote 'Yes' in the referendum, for a stronger future for our First Nations People, a stronger government, and a stronger nation for us all.