

## STATEMENT

### Allies for Uluru call on Australians to vote 'Yes' in Voice Referendum

**9 October 2023**

This coming Saturday, Australians will vote 'Yes' or 'No' in the Referendum to recognise First Peoples in our Constitution and establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

Allies for Uluru, a 300 member strong cross-sector collaboration, calls on all Australians to accept the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together for a better future, and vote 'Yes'.

As Allies representing 97% of the Australian population, we must stand in solidarity with the vast majority of First Nations people who are calling for this change – to get 'Yes' across the line.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been clear in their request for this substantive change over many years of consultation and deep reflection. Now it is up to us as the Australian people, not politicians, to take our nation forward.

The many decades of inquiries, reports and recommendations have shown us that the current system cannot lead to meaningful change. The status quo cannot be allowed to stand. 'Yes' opens the door to something new and better.

It's time to listen to First Nations Peoples for they hold the knowledge and solutions necessary for their communities. The bedrock of this country is 65,000 years of continuous culture – the worlds oldest – and a great source of pride for all.

**Settlement Services International CEO Violet Roumeliotis:**

"The Voice to Parliament is a simple but powerful proposal that would harness the great strength and wisdom in First Nations communities. Referendum day is an opportunity to stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and show we believe in recognition, reconciliation and a more equitable Australia."

**Life Without Barriers CEO Claire Robbs:**

"We no longer have the right to advance policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without their Voice at the centre of the solutions. What we have done for decades has proved we don't have the answers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The

Voice is so very simple, it is an advisory body to Government, represented by First Nations people for First Nations people. Our nation's answer to the question on 14 October needs to be a simple and uncomplicated Yes."

**Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) CEO, Adj Prof Terry Slevin:**

"All Australians will be enriched by a 'Yes' vote. This modest change to our constitution will boost our pride in our country. It will give due respect to our First Peoples, help address the inequalities they experience, and will help improve health outcomes. It is fair. It is time. Please, please vote 'Yes'."

**The Fred Hollows Foundation CEO Ian Wishart:**

"Fred was a champion for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples when it came to good health, their right to sight, and self-determination."

"He once said "I do what the mob tells me, I'm just an eye tradesman", and as an organisation, we reaffirm our commitment to his legacy, and stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their call for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament."

"With less than a week to go before all Australians can have their say on a better future - one that embraces the Uluru Statement from the Heart and calls for a voice, reconciliation, agreement making and truth telling - it's time to do not only the right thing, but the smart thing, and say yes."

**Oxfam Chief Executive Lyn Morgain:**

"On October 14, let's do more than just cast a vote; let's craft a positive new chapter in our nation's story – one that embraces unity and equality."

"As allies, we must stand together with First Peoples and say 'Yes' to transformative change, 'Yes' to truth-telling, and 'Yes' to a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are included in decision-making that shapes their lives and communities."

**ACOSS CEO Cassandra Goldie:**

"As national peak body for the community sector with deep social policy experience, ACOSS urges all Australians to come together to change this nation for the better by voting Yes. We know that governments make better decisions when they listen to people directly affected by their policies. For far too long governments have ignored the advice of First Nations people. This Saturday, we have an opportunity to right that longstanding wrong and make our system fairer."

**ANTAR President Peter Lewis:**

"Allies must stand in solidarity with First Nations people on 14 October and say 'Yes' to recognition and listening. This Referendum is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for change – for us to take meaningful steps towards justice and equality as a nation. It's time to walk together for a better Australia."

**Cerebral Palsy Alliance CEO Rob White:**

“At its core, a Voice to Parliament is all about inclusion and ensuring all community members are heard. Every Australian deserves to be included in decision-making on the policy issues that directly affect them. We can make this happen on October 14th and accept the generous invitation to move forward together.”

**Australian Lawyers Alliance (ALA) President Shaun Marcus:**

“The ALA is committed to the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. This starts with recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia through the enshrinement of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the *Constitution*.”

“The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* powerfully expresses how the Australian legal system has served to disempower and marginalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, the ALA is confident that the law can be used effectively to create a more just and equitable society – that includes establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.”

“ALA members have determined that the provisions underlying the proposed constitutional amendment and the Voice are legally sound, well-drafted and appropriate. The ALA is proud to support ‘Yes’ on 14 October 2023.”

**The Wilderness Society (TWS) National Campaign Director Amelia Young:**

“The Wilderness Society supports all three principles from the Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty and Truth.”

“Right now, it is crucial that Australians make an informed vote and engage in this pivotal moment in a way that advances the rights and aspirations of First Nations people. Our organisation urges Australians to write ‘yes’.”

**For media inquiries contact:**

For more information or interviews with Settlement Services International (SSI), please contact Hannah Gartrell on 0423 965 956 or [hgartrell@ssi.org.au](mailto:hgartrell@ssi.org.au)

For more information or interviews with Oxfam, please contact Lucy Brown on 0478 190 099 or [lucyb@oxfam.org.au](mailto:lucyb@oxfam.org.au)

For more information or interviews with ANTA, please contact Phaedra Engel-Harrison on 0481 093 139 or [phaedra@antar.org.au](mailto:phaedra@antar.org.au)

For more information or interviews with The Fred Hollows Foundation, please contact Mark Holgate on 0400 535 627 or [mholgate@hollows.org](mailto:mholgate@hollows.org)

For more information or interviews with Cerebral Palsy Alliance, please contact Bronya Metherall on 0431 657 837 or [bronya.metherall@cerebralpalsy.org.au](mailto:bronya.metherall@cerebralpalsy.org.au)

For more information or interviews with Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), please contact Hollie Harwood on 0400 762 010 or [hharwood@phaa.net.au](mailto:hharwood@phaa.net.au)

For more information or interviews with ACOSS, please contact Stacey Batterham on 0419 626 155 or [stacey@acoss.org.au](mailto:stacey@acoss.org.au)

For more information or interviews with the Australian Lawyers Alliance (ALA), please contact Karyn Lemon on 0419 496 591 or [karyn@lawyersalliance.com.au](mailto:karyn@lawyersalliance.com.au)

For more information or interviews with the Wilderness Society (TWS), please contact Rhi Cunningham on 0419 992 760 or [rhiannon.cunningham@wilderness.org.au](mailto:rhiannon.cunningham@wilderness.org.au)

