



ACWA Statement of Support for the Voice to Parliament

The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) actively supports the establishment of a First Nations' Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution, as called for in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The Voice is a critical first step towards reconciliation and healing that will, in the words of the Uluru Statement, lead to *"a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination"*.

Later this year, all Australians will be asked to vote on whether they agree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have the opportunity to have a say in matters that directly affect them.

"A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?"

This proposal recognises the importance of self-determination and the importance of First Nations peoples' participation and decision-making. It entreats us to listen, be guided by First Nations' wisdom and involve communities in designing policies, programs and services that will deliver meaningful change on 'Closing the Gap'.

Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make decisions about what happens in their communities keeps children and families strong, builds connection to culture and country, and improves outcomes in health, education, justice and employment.

The Voice to Parliament will offer Australia an opportunity for real change in our relationship with our First Nations peoples, and a chance to recognise and celebrate the oldest continuous living culture on Earth.

ACWA is committed to promoting open and respectful conversations with our members and the wider community alongside supporting a process which would empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We truly believe we must all join together in responding to this humble and generous request by voting 'YES'.