

Palmerston Association Supports the Voice to Parliament

Palmerston proudly supports the 'Yes' campaign for constitutional recognition for First Nations Australians through a Voice to Parliament.

At Palmerston, we hold a deep understanding of the rich culture and spiritual connection the First Nations people have with the land, sea and waterways. We understand the deep connections to family, community, country and culture for First Nations people. We respect and accept the changes and commitments that will pave the way for First Nations people to heal from the effects of colonisation, oppression and assimilation that occurred, and we commit to being a part of the healing journey that will assist in closing the gap for First Nations people. We recognise that we are on a journey of cultural learning and that our journey is impacted by the past and each moment of the present.

Almost six years ago, First Nations leaders from across the country came together at the National First Nations Constitutional Convention at Uluru. The Convention delegates drafted and overwhelmingly endorsed the **Uluru Statement from the Heart** on 26 May 2017, which calls for a constitutionally-entrenched First Nations Voice to Parliament, and a Makarrata commission to oversee a process of treaty-making and truth-telling. Embedding a Voice in the Constitution recognises the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia's history, but importantly would also mean that it can't be shut down by successive Governments. The process for establishing a Makarrata Commission, and ultimately commencing treaty negotiations, has already begun.

In discussions with our Aboriginal staff, Elders, and stakeholders the following key messages have been heard:

- There is active and ongoing momentum in the importance of valuing First Nations Culture and wisdom
- First Nations people have been seeking formal recognition of being the first Australians for many years
- First Nations people have a fundamental human right to have a say in matters that effect their lives which will lead to better outcomes for First Nations people
- Voting YES in the referendum is the next step in the right direction for reconciliation
- It is about walking with and alongside our First Nations people for a better future so all benefit
- The Voice for reconciliation is a story of change and the great courage and tenacity shown by First Nations people who have made the fastest adaption in the history of humanity
- To not support the Voice could lead to further fracturing of the community and for Palmerston it could question our commitment in being a Cultural Safe organisation
- With reconciliation comes opportunity and we must be brave

As an ally, we choose to publicly affirm our support for a Voice to Parliament. A Voice to Parliament will give First Nations Peoples the best position from which to negotiate a treaty, or treaties, moving forward and we will do whatever we can to support this process.

