

We say 'YES' to Indigenous Voice to Parliament

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) urges all Australians to be part of a defining moment in the nation's history by voting 'Yes' to the establishment of a First Nations Voice to Parliament.



As the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing in Victoria, VACCHO believe that having an Indigenous voice enshrined in Australia's Constitution is critical to addressing the health and wellbeing inequalities that continue to devastate Community.

The *Uluru Statement of the Heart* was developed after years of meaningful consultation with Community. Keeping in-step with the *Uluru Statement of the Heart's* Community roots, VACCHO reasserts that it must be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the forefront in leading the design of the Voice to Parliament.

Over the last 250 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been completely disempowered by a brutal and rapid colonisation. These devastating events have created intergenerational and ongoing trauma cycles that have perpetuated disadvantages – and that have culminated in catastrophic health and wellbeing inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Children being placed in out of home care, higher rates of chronic disease, systematic racism, a deeply distressing increase in suicides, and innumerable avoidable deaths in custody continue to have a devastating impact on the Aboriginal families and Communities.

An Indigenous voice to Parliament will be a powerful mechanism that will ensure the Australian Government is held to account on rectifying the issues that continue to have a harmful impact on the livelihoods of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Having an Indigenous voice enshrined in Australia's constitution is about providing hope for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community – and hope for our Boorai (children) and future generations.

Hope that the world's oldest living culture can be truly empowered to have a real say and a significant standing in the Country they have nurtured for thousands of years.

In the 1967 Referendum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were counted – in the 2023 Referendum your 'Yes' vote will empower us to be heard.

Jill Gallagher, AO
CEO, VACCHO