

29 March 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Health Justice Australia is committed to supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This commitment is reflected in our Board's endorsement of the Uluru Statement from the Heart; and within our strategic plan. It is also shared broadly across our national network of health and legal assistance services working to support improved health and legal outcomes in their communities.

This letter provides our contribution to the public consultation for a National Indigenous Voice. We offer support and endorsement to the First Nations voices leading this process.

Health Justice Australia is a national charity and centre of excellence for health justice partnership. We support health and legal services to work together to improve health justice outcomes for people who experience complex, multiple and intersecting health and legal need. We work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations who are leading the development of service responses that meet the needs of their communities.

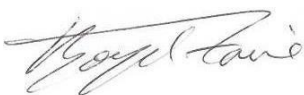
We strongly endorse the [From the Heart](#) submission in response to the Interim Co-Design Report. We echo calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for the establishment of a First Nations voice enshrined in the Constitution, to guard against any future risk to erode that voice.

The Government made an election commitment to hold a referendum. We call on the Government to honor this commitment in the next term of Parliament, once the model for the National Indigenous Voice has been confirmed. Whilst we understand that enabling legislation is required to establish the National Indigenous Voice, this legislation should not be passed until the referendum has been held.

The National Indigenous Voice must reflect the full diversity of Australia's First Nations people. To this end, a membership model should be developed which enables access and representation for previously unheard members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important work.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine, CEO