

November 2023

## **IDAA affirms commitment to Indigenous voices and Reconciliation in wake of Referendum outcome**

In light of the recent referendum outcome rejecting the Voice to Parliament, the Indigenous Dental Association Australia (IDAA) feels compelled to reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the advancement and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The result of the referendum deeply saddens us. It underscores a prevailing disconnect in understanding the rich tapestry of Australia's history and the core essence of our Constitution. It's undeniable that the legal and societal systems in place perpetuate racial biases. The Voice was envisioned as a transformative tool to address these systemic issues — to challenge the misconceptions rooted in the doctrine of Terra Nullius; to honor the legacy of the original custodians of this great land; and to pave the way for authentic self-determination, replacing age-old protectionism with genuine respect for Indigenous perspectives.

As the peak body for Indigenous dental health in Australia, our organisation promotes dental health and awareness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We remain committed to supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The principles of Voice, Treaty, and Truth are more than mere words to us; they symbolise the path to genuine reconciliation and equity.

The true narrative of this land must be told and recognised. The sovereignty and rights of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remain undiminished. We urge all Australian governments and mainstream institutions to confront deep-seated racism and to actively foster a culture of genuine inclusivity and safety.

The 2021-2031 National Health and Health Workforce plans remain paramount. Their proper and collaborative implementation, paired with transparent monitoring frameworks, is essential for the progress we seek. We further implore governments to rededicate themselves to forging agreements with Indigenous organisations and communities. Genuine advancement in bridging the health disparities can only be achieved through these cooperative efforts.

The IDAA is unwavering in its mission. We will continue championing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in all oral health matters. Collaboration is the cornerstone of lasting change. As we move forward, we lean on our allies and advocates who have always stood with us. Together, we can redefine the narrative and build a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

IDAA Directors 2023

