

## **After saying NO to the Voice, Australia must re-commit to fundamental change in the pursuit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' wellbeing.**

The referendum outcome is a huge disappointment. A large part of the No campaign reflected a deeply immature understanding of Australia's history and of our foundational legal and political document – the Constitution. The evidence shows irrefutably that we have racially inequitable and discriminatory legal and political systems, and that successive Australian governments have failed to support our peoples' wellbeing. The Voice was to be a mechanism to begin changing this – to recognise the false claim of Terra Nullius under which this land was colonised; acknowledge the original inhabitants and custodians of this land and protect our unique status as First Nations peoples; authentically move towards self-determination, ending protectionism and paternalism; lay bare the policies and practices that have perpetuated racism and hurt our communities; and drive true, culturally safe reforms.

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations who fight for the wellbeing and empowerment of our communities every day, we will continue to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart – **Voice, Treaty, Truth**.

We want **the truth to be told** about the history of this land. Australians must recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not cede our lands, nor our sovereignty, and thus our right to self-determination continues unbroken. Governments and mainstream organisations must address the systemic, ingrained racism that our people face every day, and commit to promoting real cultural safety in their environments. **We call on all governments** to unequivocally recommit to the implementation of the 2021-2031 National Health and Health Workforce plans and to do so in partnership to develop clear monitoring and accountability frameworks.

We call for **governments to re-commit to agreement-making** with our organisations and communities, accompanied by partnerships with our allies and the organisations that impact on our wellbeing, to make genuine progress on closing the gap in health outcomes.

The NHLF will continue to advocate for **governments to listen to, and work with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** – to support our aspirations, implement our solutions, and change the way government works. Our peoples and our organisations need:

- **to have a greater say** in how legislation, policies, programs and services that affect our communities are developed, delivered and evaluated
- **the transfer of power and resources** away from governments to our communities so that we can scale up our highly effective, culturally safe services
- **access to the same information and data** as governments to drive policy and decision-making

**A new way forward can only emerge through genuine partnership and shared decision-making that puts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing at its centre. We thank our leaders and our allies who gave much of themselves to the campaign to educate, inform, and create opportunities for healthy discussion and to make real change. Now our allies – including Yes advocates within all governments – must continue to step up if we are to see that change.**

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**Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association**  
<https://aida.org.au/>



**Australian Indigenous Psychologists' Association**  
<https://indigenopsychology.com.au/>



**Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives**  
<https://catsinam.org.au/>



**Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia**  
<https://www.gayaadhuwi.org.au/>



**The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation**  
<https://healingfoundation.org.au/>



**Indigenous Allied Health Australia**  
<https://iaha.com.au/>



**Indigenous Dentists' Association of Australia**



**The Lowitja Institute**  
<https://www.lowitja.org.au/>



**National Association Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners**  
<https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/>



**National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health**  
<https://natsilmh.org.au/National>



**Torres Strait Regional Authority**  
<https://www.tsra.gov.au/>

**Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists**