



## Statement of Support for the Voice to Parliament

July 1, 2023

The Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017) called for a First Nations Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution.

The referendum this year is an opportunity for Christians to respond to the generous invitation made by First Nations Australians in the Uluru Statement.

We believe that it is time to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution.

We see this as a significant step toward honouring the sovereignty of First Nations Australians in this land and furthering the work of truth-telling and treaty.

We acknowledge the strength, wisdom and resilience of Australia's First Nations people and believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know and understand the best way to deliver real and practical change in their communities.

A Voice to Parliament will ensure that local communities at the grassroots level can give advice to Parliament and Government about the issues that directly affect their families and communities.

As the Uluru Statement affirms, "when we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country".

The Churches of Christ in Australia have a strong legacy of Aboriginal Christian leaders, advocating for justice and bringing about social change, including Sir Doug Nicholls in the 1967 referendum.

We draw courage and hope from this legacy and ask the church community to once again walk with us in "a movement of the Australian people for a better future".

As Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi man, Stan Grant, reminds us, "There is politics and then there is justice. The Voice must be a voice of justice. ... The Voice must not lose the trace of the divine. Politics has its place, but we must speak of God too in this moment".<sup>1</sup>

As followers of Jesus, we are called to live out God's love and justice in the world; both in word and deed.

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5:24)

We find great strength in these words.

*This Statement reflects the views of Indigenous Ministries Australia's Aboriginal leadership and includes the endorsement of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Elders and Leaders within its broader network.*

*In walking with and alongside our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander friends, Global Mission Partners believe it is time to recognise First Nations Australians in the Constitution. We encourage you to prayerfully consider this statement in your communities and to foster broader conversation in a manner that reflects the compassion and humility of Jesus.*

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<sup>1</sup> Grant Jnr, Stan. 2023. "Listening to Scripture." Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. April 5, 2023. Accessed June 1, 2023. <https://about.csu.edu.au/community/accc/about/latest-news-assets/2023/listening-to-scripture-by-prof-stan-grant>.



## **IMA Statement of Support – Supporting Document**

### **1. Who has made this statement?**

This statement has been developed in consultation with Indigenous Ministries Australia's (IMA) Aboriginal Christian Elders and Leaders and has also received endorsement from within its broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander network. This statement reflects the views of Indigenous Ministries Australia's Indigenous leadership and is supported by Global Mission Partners.

### **2. What is the intent of the IMA Statement of Support?**

Global Mission Partners hope that the Churches of Christ in Australia will share the Statement of Support across their faith communities as an act of solidarity, enabling their churches to hear the voices of First Nations people connected to our faith movement.

### **3. How was the IMA Statement of Support for the Voice developed?**

This statement has been developed in consultation with Indigenous Ministries Australia's Aboriginal Christian Elders and Leaders. As part of this process, IMA representatives received detailed information about the intent of the Voice and the referendum process in February 2023, to assist them in making an informed decision. IMA partners were also invited to express their questions and concerns about the Voice. The IMA Statement of Support for the Voice reflects the views of IMA's Aboriginal leadership and is supported by Global Mission Partners. It has also received endorsement from IMA's broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander network.

### **4. Where can I find more information about the Voice to Parliament Campaign?**

We understand there may be some GMP supporters who have concerns about the Voice to Parliament. We are providing opportunities for supporters to learn more about the Voice and to hear more from our IMA partners, through the following resource page on GMP's website:

[www.gmp.org.au/thevoice](http://www.gmp.org.au/thevoice)