

NAATSIHWP Board Statement on the Voice Referendum

The NAATSIHWP Board supported constitutional recognition and the enshrinement of a Voice to Parliament. Regrettably, the outcome of the referendum was negative. This process has caused and will continue to cause much hurt, for very little gain. The result has only served to reinforce the ongoing challenges and inequities that confront us daily in our roles within the healthcare system.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have called for a week of silence. We urge you to honour this time by drawing strength from each other, our cultures, communities, and Countries.

However, we cannot let the referendum's result distract or constrain us. We must channel our energies into fostering a better tomorrow and enacting the changes our communities deserve. Now is also a time for healing, unity, and resilience.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners working on the frontline, please know that you are valued. With lived experience and a deep understanding of the communities you serve, it is in our collective strength that we find the power to confront the injustices that persist and advocate for a more equitable and inclusive future.

The referendum process has amplified the urgent need for governments to unite and establish a national approach to combat racism. Anti-racism is not just a goal; it is a fundamental requirement for building a fairer and more harmonious society. In moving forward, we continue to call on Governments to act, to reform policies, practices, and procedures. This burden does not lie with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Further we call for an end to the politicisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. The baseless call for a Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, for example, will only lead to further trauma, harm, and racial discrimination. We stand with other Indigenous leaders to reinforce that if any politician, or anyone at all, has any evidence about the sexual abuse of children then they must report it to authorities.

NAATSIHWP remains committed to advancing the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and we will continue to work tirelessly to address the systemic issues that persist. Together, we will overcome these challenges and strive for justice and the rights of our people in our own Country.

Take care of yourself, friends, and family. Continue to seek [support](#) and stay deadly.
