

MEDIA RELEASE

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Supporting the Uluru Statement From the Heart

The Board of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) has reconfirmed its strong support for the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and its recommendations regarding the establishment of a constitutionally enshrined 'Voice to Parliament' alongside a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling.

At its meeting in Katherine on 12th May, the AMSANT Board considered current circumstances impacting on the recognition and achievement of the Statement's objectives.

"Our Board Directors are strongly of the view that the *Uluru Statement From the Heart* provides the nation a precious opportunity to begin to resolve our unfinished business and to achieve fundamental change for our people", said AMSANT Acting Chair, Rob McPhee.

"The vision and goodwill that has been offered to the nation through the Statement requires and deserves our trust.

The AMSANT Board emphasised its strong endorsement of the First Nations-led process that culminated in the National Constitutional Convention at Uluru in May 2017, bringing together First Nations delegates from across Australia to meet and to form a consensus position on the form that constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should take.

"We are now faced with a fast-approaching opportunity to progress the Statement's call for the establishment of a National Voice to the Australian Federal Parliament that is established through a referendum and enshrined in the Australian Constitution," Mr McPhee said.

"We must do our best to ensure that the referendum is given every chance of succeeding so that we can take the next steps with trust in our parliamentary process.

"AMSANT will be urging a 'yes' vote at the referendum.

"As a peak Aboriginal community-controlled health body we recognise only too well the substantive structural change that is required given the ongoing burden of poverty, discrimination and ill-health that our people continue to bear.

"The *Uluru Statement From the Heart* will make a difference but can only do so if we allow it to succeed. It is both a gift and a challenge that we ignore at our peril," Mr McPhee concluded.

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*AMSANT is the peak body for Aboriginal community-controlled health services in the Northern Territory. Our members are located from Darwin to the most remote regions of the NT.