



ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

St Vincent's Health Australia's response

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a profound expression of the desires of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

At its core, it is a call for all Australians to recognise the ancient and sacred connection our First Nations peoples have with the land while acknowledging the historic injustices they have experienced – and still experience – since colonisation.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for a First Nations voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission – a body to oversee a process of truth-telling, recognition, peacemaking and forgiveness for past injustices.

It culminates with a generous invitation for all Australians to work together to achieve true reconciliation within a united nation where flourishing is possible for all.

St Vincent's Health recognises that all Australians benefit from a nation that is reconciled to its past and united as it faces its future.

We recognise the unbroken sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over their lands and waters, and that it has existed – without being ceded or extinguished – for more than 60,000 years.

We recognise the resilience, strength and survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures despite the injustices they have experienced over centuries.

As an organisation that has provided health and wellness ministries in Australia for more than 180 years, we have always endeavoured to work with and for our communities and we continue to bear witness to the effects of past and ongoing injustices.

From the beginning, our ministries in this land were established to serve the poor and vulnerable. However, while we have seen positive results from these endeavours, we sincerely express our regret at missed opportunities to engage in meaningful relationships with First Nations peoples.

We strongly believe that practical measures designed to address disparities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples and other Australians in terms of health, social, and economic outcomes will only achieve long-term success if they are matched with a meaningful change to provide a First Nations voice in our Constitution and the spiritual healing that comes from 'makarrata'.

We support our First Nations people having a greater voice in decisions affecting their lives and communities.

St Vincent's Health Australia gratefully and unreservedly accepts the Uluru Statement from the Heart's generous invitation to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in achieving a fair and truthful relationship and a hope-filled future based on justice and self-determination.

We encourage all Australians – whatever their political persuasion or personal circumstance – to embrace the ambitions of the Uluru Statement and engage in a national dialogue over its terms with open-heartedness, sincerity and generosity of spirit.

We wholeheartedly commit our organisation and its resources to doing all that we can advance this cause.



**ST VINCENT'S
HEALTH AUSTRALIA**

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES