

27 May 2023

## **MEDIA RELEASE: RECONCILIATION WEEK 2023**

The National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) urges all Australian's to reflect on Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June). This year's theme '*Be a Voice for Generations*' recognises the role that all of us will play in decision-making for our future by honouring the anniversaries of the Uluru Statement and the spirit of the 1967 referendum. The week is bookended by Sorry Day and Mabo Day, the latter of which celebrates the achievements of Mer Island man Eddie Koiki Mabo, whose story inspires us to support change for future.

Indeed, this is a week of dates significant to our mob. Today, 27 May, is the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, in which 90.77% of Australians voted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have the same rights as every other Australian, and yesterday marked the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#). The Uluru Statement references the significance of this referendum, stating "*in 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard*". The Statement is an invitation to the Australian people to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a quest for three things:

- a Voice to Parliament
- Treaty-making and
- Formal truth-telling.

NAATSIHWP supports the Uluru Statement because we know that health outcomes are improved when we are able to lead decisions that affect all elements of our wellbeing. This Reconciliation Week, we encourage you to set aside time to learn about the Uluru Statement and the Voice. You can:

- Read the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)
- Check out NAATSIHWP's [simple explainers](#) on the Voice referendum
- Read these [responses to common concerns about the Voice](#)
- Listen to the [Triple A Murri Country 'Let's Talk' series](#) on the Voice

### *Mental Wellbeing*

Conversations about the Voice can be divisive and stressful for our mob. The increase in racist comments and behaviours across all parts of our life has a detrimental impact on our mental health. If you're feeling overwhelmed, it's important to seek out people who can help you feel better. It may be as simple as having a cuppa and a yarn with a loved one, but sometimes it's important to speak to a professional. To do this, you can:

- call 13YARN on 13 92 76 at any time to have a free, confidential chat to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis supporters.
- speak to your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker or Practitioner about how you're feeling
- ask your doctor for a Mental Health Care Plan
- check out the list of [support services](#) collated by Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia