

Alliance supports Uluru Statement from the Heart

The Board of the National Rural Health Alliance has voted unanimously to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, following a lengthy consultative process with Council members.

NRHA Chair, Tanya Lehmann, said the Board's vote acknowledged the Uluru Statement and the Alliance's support of the call for Constitutional reform to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise their sovereignty with the land.

Ms Lehmann said the Alliance Board had engaged with its 41 Council members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and stakeholders to ensure support for the Uluru Statement reflects the views of its members that deliver health services to 7 million people in rural, regional and remote Australia.

"The Board's vote to support the Statement from the Heart, and the activity that the Alliance already undertakes with its Council members and the broader Indigenous population across the country, is also underpinned by our recently approved Reconciliation Action Plan," she said.

"Some 65 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in rural, regional and remote areas – they need to be involved in the decision making process.

"Their voice needs to be recognised, accepted and included in the design of what needs to happen to improve health outcomes and the delivery of appropriate services."

More than 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, academics and delegates gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, with the main outcome being the Statement from the Heart. The Statement seeks substantive constitutional change and structural reform to recognise the rights and role of Indigenous people in Australian society.

"We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history," the Statement says.

"We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination."

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The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia's peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health.