

Supporting the Voice makes for better health outcomes

WA Primary Health Alliance understands that improved health outcomes are inexorably linked to the right to self-determination, to being treated with respect, and to being protected from discrimination.

As a nation, we are confronted day in, day out by the impact of cultural, social, environmental and physical factors, such as adverse living conditions, low incomes, lack of access to health care, and intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This plays out in the most important factor of all, how long people live for, with the average life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women significantly lower than for other Australians, currently 8.6 and 7.8 fewer years, respectively. [1]

These are just some of the compelling reasons why the WA Primary Health Alliance Board supports an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament, a sentiment that is echoed by our organisation's leadership.

By making our position public, we hope to encourage our staff and others to become part of the national conversation on the Voice so they can make well-informed decisions.

This referendum offers the Australian people a once in a generation opportunity to do something simple, yet extremely powerful, to significantly improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by saying "yes".

Each of the WA Primary Health Alliance Board Directors believes it is time for governments of all persuasions to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to take the lead on the issues that affect them, and that this will contribute to, and accelerate, the achievement of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Resolution of Support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament

The Directors of the WA Primary Health Alliance Board unwaveringly support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution. Constitutional recognition is vital to protect the rights and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, constitutionally enshrined, is a manifestation of the right to self-determination, which, at a minimum, entails the entitlement of peoples to have control over their destiny and to be treated respectfully. This includes peoples being free to pursue their health, economic, social and cultural development.



Clockwise starting top left: Chair - Dr Richard Choong, Professor Jane den Hollander AO, Melanie Robinson, Stephen Wragg, Dr Damien Zilm, Diana Forsyth, Rod Astbury, Tony Ahern

[1] <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/life-tables-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/2015-2017>