

AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATIONS UNITE TO SUPPORT ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

29 May 2019 | Australia, Asia Pacific
Firm news

Fourteen of Australia's leading organisations have united for National Reconciliation Week to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice in the Constitution and a Makarrata Commission on agreement-making and truth-telling between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments.

The 'Response to the Uluru Statement' was developed by the participating organisations including, BHP, Curtin University, Herbert Smith Freehills, IAG, KPMG, Lendlease, National Rugby League, PwC Australia, PwC's Indigenous Consulting, Qantas, Richmond Football Club, Rio Tinto, Swinburne University of Technology and Woodside, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders within and connected to the organisations.

The response supports the call for a referendum to enable constitutional reform and encourages others to join in the national dialogue.

All of the participating organisations actively promote and support reconciliation and are among a small group of organisations that have an Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement. There are four tiers of RAPs with Elevate being the highest level of endorsement, recognising organisations that are taking a leadership role in advancing national reconciliation. Currently, 24 organisations have an Elevate RAP out of more than 1,000 RAPs.

Karen Mundine, CEO of Reconciliation Australia, which is the organisation behind Reconciliation Action Plans, welcomes the collective effort.

“RAP organisations understand the important role that the wider Australian community has to play in progressing national reconciliation,” Ms Mundine said.

“Our research shows that an overwhelming majority of Australians support the aspirations within the Uluru Statement from the Heart. A collective public statement from our Elevate RAP partners not only demonstrates their leadership and commitment to reconciliation, but also helps to build momentum towards genuine reconciliation.”

Aboriginal leader and Alyawarre woman Pat Anderson AO said: “The Uluru Statement from the Heart was issued as an invitation to the Australian public to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

“It is significant that the leadership of corporate Australia has accepted our invitation. I want to thank these organisations for their leadership over the years, their commitment to reconciliation and their historic support for the referendum on a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament,” said Ms Anderson.

The collective response to the Uluru Statement reads as follows.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE ULURU STATEMENT

We represent 14 diverse organisations across a range of sectors including academia, aviation, construction, energy, engineering, insurance, legal, professional services, sport and resources. Collectively we educate, employ and provide services to people across all of Australia. Together, we make this response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart:

Thank you for your invitation to walk with you in a movement of all Australian people for a better future.

We recognise the Uluru Statement from the Heart as an historic mandate to create a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

We hear your call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and for a referendum to amend the Constitution accordingly.

We hear your call for a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In a spirit of reconciliation, we look forward to working with and supporting you, as a matter of national priority, to develop and enact specific proposals in relation to Voice, Treaty and Truth.

We call upon our people, industry colleagues and fellow Australians to join us in this important national dialogue.

BHP - Libby Ferrari, BHP Manager Indigenous Affairs

"BHP stands side-by-side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in support of this country hearing the call for a shared future. We've not always got this right in our history but we know clearly that strong relationships, centred on listening and respect, get the best outcomes for everyone."

Curtin University - Professor Deborah Terry, Vice-Chancellor

"The University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, the Senior Executive Team and the University Council all unanimously support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

"The profound Uluru Statement from the Heart is a critical step to formally embracing our shared history and walking together towards a better future for all Australians - one that is based on self-determination and justice."

Herbert Smith Freehills - Brooke Massender, Global Head of Pro Bono

"The historic consensus reached at Uluru was a major milestone in the journey towards achieving substantive constitutional reform. Through this diverse, collaborative response we are signalling clearly that First Nations voices matter and should be heard."

IAG - Peter Harmer, Managing Director and CEO

"We stand behind the Uluru Statement from the Heart because we believe it is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are given the opportunity to have a voice on decisions that affect their communities.

"This is an opportunity to use our collective voices to continue to drive conversation about the importance of this statement and the potential for positive change that can empower and support First Nations peoples and communities."

KPMG - Catherine Hunter, Partner - Corporate Citizenship

"At KPMG, we imagine a future where all Australians are united by our shared past, present, future and humanity - this is our vision for reconciliation.

"With the gift to the nation that is the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we have been invited by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to "walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future". With this gift, we have the opportunity to create a bridge between an ancient past and a hopeful future.

"Now is the moment for all sectors of business and the community to stand behind the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Not only is this the right thing to do, our national identity depends on it. KPMG stands in unity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to actively support the Uluru statement from the Heart."

Australian Rugby League Commission - Peter Beattie, Chairperson

Rugby League has a long and special relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and as a sport we are committed to listening and working together with communities to achieve reconciliation. The Australian Rugby League Commission is proud to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and we look forward to walking together with our First Nations peoples towards a constitutionally enshrined voice in the Parliament.

PwC Australia - Luke Sayers, CEO

There are few issues more fundamental to building trust in Australian society than reconciliation. It is core to Australia's national identity, and remains a confronting challenge for us as a nation. To achieve reconciliation, we believe it is critically important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a constitutionally enshrined voice to empower their communities. That's why I'm proud to confirm PwC's support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

PwC's Indigenous Consulting - Jodie Sizer, Co- CEO

Our vision at PwC's Indigenous Consulting is to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and support self-determination, through empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led solutions. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a historic mandate to create a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood and is central to fulfilling a truly reconciled Australia - we are proud to stand behind it.

Qantas - Alan Joyce, CEO

"Corporate Australia has a leadership role to play in discussions that matter to this country, including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia's constitution. It's something the national carrier is very proud to support."

Richmond Football Club - Brendon Gale, CEO

"Richmond Football Club stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in support of the Uluru Statement. Walking together we can deliver the future we all want but it must be based on an acknowledgment of the past and a commitment to a future built on respect and justice."

Rio Tinto - Jean-Sebastien Jacques, Chief Executive

"As one of the largest private-sector employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and with all of our Australian operations on Aboriginal Native Title land, we welcome the extra support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and encourage more discussion around its objectives, which we believe are an important step towards reconciliation."

Swinburne University of Technology - Professor Linda Kristjanson AO, Vice-Chancellor and President

"Swinburne supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their journey to have their unique experience and knowledge to be reflected in the policies and programs that govern and determine their futures.

"As a university, we are driven to pursue innovation, seek understanding and share knowledge with others. We are humbled by this responsibility and the impact we have on students' lives - Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

"We are shaping the future together. We are stronger together. And we stand with First Nations people and communities."

Woodside - Peter Coleman, CEO and Managing Director

"We are a group of diverse organisations who share a common passion for reconciliation. As Elevate RAP Partners, we hold a responsibility to show national leadership and we are proud to give our collective voice of support to Indigenous communities by responding to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Uluru Statement is a unique opportunity for Australia to make a change. We need to walk together with courage towards a reconciled Australia."

MEDIA CONTACT

For further information on this news article, please contact:

**KELLY MURRAY, EXTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS LEAD**

SYDNEY

Tel: +61 2 9322 4472

Email: kelly.murray@hsf.com