



Community Sector leaders urge Australians to back Voice to Parliament on October 14th

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The community sector is launching a final campaign push for the Voice to Parliament, with more than 80 leading community groups across housing, health, legal, disability, financial aid and social welfare today releasing a joint statement urging Australians to vote Yes to ensure First Nations voices are heard.

ACOSS, State and Territory Council of Social Service (COSS) bodies, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Oxfam, Save the Children, Sacred Heart Mission, Mission Australia, Life without Barriers, Community Housing Industry Association, Economic Justice Australia are among groups urging people to vote Yes on October 14.

Sacred Heart Mission CEO Hang Vo (ACOSS Chair and President) said: “We know the answers to communities’ problems lie in their right to participate more fully in community life, by addressing the underlying causes of deep, persistent disadvantage and social exclusion. The Voice to Parliament aims to do the same, by offering a path to justice, equity and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie AO said: “As the community sector has seen time and time again, the success or failure of policies affecting historically marginalised communities depends on whether the people they affect are at the centre of the advice. The status quo has not worked to close the gap between the health and wellbeing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Next week’s referendum represents a once-in-a-generation chance to finally recognise First Nations peoples in the Constitution, and through the Voice, turn this around and chart a new path forward.”

“As the peak body for the community sector with deep social policy experience, ACOSS implores all Australians to come together to change this nation for the better by voting Yes and listening to the Voices of our First Nations communities calling for real change. We understand that some people are still not sure and encourage people to be in touch with trusted community representatives to help make an informed decision.”

Brotherhood of St Laurence Executive Director Travers McLeod said: "Our experience working across the Australian community shows that listening to those most impacted by policies and services delivers better services and better outcomes. This is what the Voice to Parliament enables. Most importantly, Indigenous people have themselves organised, consulted and determined that this is the best way forward to achieve change. In this spirit, we accept the generous offer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to walk with them in a movement for a better future."

Matt Gardiner, CEO of 54 reasons, part of Save the Children Australia said: "Voting Yes for the Voice to Parliament moves us towards real reconciliation by ensuring the views and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are heard, and the consultation of First Nations children is on-going."

You can read the joint statement in full here: <https://www.acoss.org.au/community-sector-voice-statement/>

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