Australian Medical Students’ Association
Supports the Voice to Parliament
31st August 2023

The Australian Medical Students’ Association stands in support of enshrining an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament within the Australian Constitution.

By endorsing the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament as advocated by the Uluru Statement from the Heart, AMSA acknowledges health is intrinsically linked to broader social, political and cultural factors.

AMSA believes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with a direct platform in Parliament to influence legislative decision will lead to policies that better and more effectively address the specific health needs and concerns of these communities.

"AMSA stands by any and all actions that strive to elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, paving the way for a more inclusive, equitable and culturally sensitive healthcare landscape," says Tish Sivagnanan, President of AMSA.

Prioritising the empowerment and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people while respecting societal cultural values has been proven to lead to successful health outcomes through effective co-design.

A notable instance can be seen in the National Indigenous COVID Advisory Committee, jointly chaired by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and the Department of Health. This endeavour is recognised as a pivotal factor in lowering the mortality rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations throughout COVID-19 in comparison to the projected pandemic-related mortality.

"Time and time again, it has been shown that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are in control of their own communities, health outcomes improve," said Kyle Ryan, AMSA Indigenous Co-Chair.

"This extends to all areas such as justice, education and policy. These things only work if they are designed, created and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," said Mr Ryan.

AMSA recognises enshrining an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament is just a single stride.

This change must be followed by further involvement and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in national decision-making, including supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart and advocating for a Makarrata Commission to oversee an agreement-making and truth-telling process.

"It should be acknowledged progression towards Treaty is important in providing authentic and genuine self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, who have always been sovereign to the lands from which they come", said Mr Ryan.
AMSA is the peak representative body for Australia’s 18,000 medical students. AMSA Indigenous is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students across Australia and advocates for equitable healthcare, justice and cultural safety in medicine for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia.

AMSA’s statement was developed by AMSA Indigenous and the AMSA National Advocacy Team through consultation with the Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association (AIDA).

**Media contacts**

Tish Sivagnanan, AMSA President

[president@amsa.org.au](mailto:president@amsa.org.au)

0433 446 220

Mihan De Silva, Public Relations Officer

[pro@amsa.org.au](mailto:pro@amsa.org.au)

0406 944 567