



MacKillop  
Family  
Services

## MacKillop Family Services Supports First Nations Voice to Parliament

**“When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to our country,”**

*– from the Uluru Statement from the Heart<sup>1</sup>*

MacKillop Family Services actively supports a constitutionally enshrined Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament as articulated by the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

We believe having a Voice shaping national policy is integral to reconciliation and self-determination, and we recognise the critical importance of truth-telling and Treaty to this process.

*“Truth-telling is essential and lies at the heart of building understanding and respect,” says Esmail Manahan, Director Aboriginal Service Development and a proud Yorta Yorta woman.*

*“It acknowledges the diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the impact their history has on their lives. By listening deeply to truth telling and sharing stories, we can develop a better understanding of the impact of past injustices, and ensure decisions affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are influenced by their wisdom and knowledge of what works best for them.”*

Whilst many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are thriving, resilient, and strongly connected to culture and community, too many continue to face disadvantage due to issues such as intergenerational trauma, structural inequality and racism.

We recognise that the right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a meaningful say on decisions that affect them is a human right, including the right to keep children safe, at home and connected strongly to culture.

We stand firm in our belief that answering the call in the Uluru Statement from the Heart is a critical step on our path to a reconciled nation, as stated in our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Action 7: “Build and demonstrate respect for the Uluru Statement from the Heart – and the essential components of Voice, Treaty and Truth.”

We also respectfully acknowledge the diversity of views of people across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous communities, some of whom have expressed concerns. These concerns include the lack of detail around the referendum process and commitment to Treaty, and the need for more information in this regard. However, we believe a Voice to Parliament is the right step forward.

*“Regardless of whether people think a Voice or Treaty should come first in the process it doesn’t matter. We as a peoples have waited long enough to be heard. Nothing less than a yes or we lose our chance to drive reform reclaim our rights to self-determination,”*

– Adjunct Professor Muriel Bamblett, Chair of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) and CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

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<sup>1</sup> Uluru Statement of the Heart, May 2017: <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>

