



## Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

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The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) is the not-for-profit organisation responsible for training emergency physicians and advancement of professional standards in emergency medicine in Australia and New Zealand. ACEM is committed to advancing health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. ACEM's vision for reconciliation is that Australian emergency departments deliver quality, acute healthcare that is culturally safe, resulting in health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACEM strongly supports the proposal put forward by the Senior Advisory Group for a Local and Regional Voice, and a National Voice to Parliament.

A Voice is critical for health and wellbeing. The current lack of Voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia is a health emergency. The ongoing failure to Close the Gap in healthcare outcomes attests to this. Without a say in policies and decisions that impact their lives, without an input into their future, Australia's First Nations Peoples will continue to endure poorer health and remain over-represented in our emergency departments and healthcare services.

Solutions for better health outcomes encompass more than the biomedical model, and often go beyond the doors of mainstream health services. The health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of their community. Mainstream health organisations will benefit from being guided by and engaging meaningfully with the Voice of recognised local and regional First Nation bodies that have the authority to speak for community, and can provide insight into the unmet needs of their communities.

ACEM stands with the 90 per cent of Australians who believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should have a voice in the matters that affect them, and who believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples hold a unique place as First Australians.<sup>1</sup>

ACEM urges the Government to implement the recommendations put forward by the Senior Advisory Group, and to take this a step further, by enshrining the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution. ACEM [supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) and the recommendations of the Referendum Council established to consider constitutional recognition for First Australians.

ACEM also reiterates our support for a formal agreement making and truth telling process through a Makarrata Commission<sup>2</sup>. We cannot heal the scars of the past until the true story of those scars is shared, acknowledged and respected.

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<sup>1</sup> Reconciliation Australia (2016) [Australian Reconciliation Barometer](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#).