



COMMUNITY
BROADCASTING
ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA

31 August 2023

Statement from the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

Referendum for recognition of First Nations peoples in the Australian Constitution and the establishment of a Voice to Parliament.

The history of community broadcasting is built upon a belief in the intrinsically positive value of communities having a voice. Our sector is a stronghold for communities that demand to be heard, whether on the basis of cultural background, religious or political belief, gender, sexuality, disability or artistic interest. This is especially true for First Nations communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been telling their stories for over 60,000 years and their 50 years' engagement in community broadcasting has served to amplify First Nations voices in Australian society.

The first Indigenous-produced community radio programs aired in 1972 at the very inception of community radio and in 1980, the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) established 8KIN, Australia's first indigenous owned and controlled radio station.

First Nations organisations now make up 51 of the 317 Australian community radio services and First Nations programs and presenters feature across community radio. Many broadcast in remote areas and in-language, as vital connectors for their communities and sources of strength for their cultures.

Against this context, the Referendum on October 14 is an opportunity for all Australians to show they have listened to the voices of First Nations communities who, in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, have asked for a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

The CBAA Board has resolved to support the 'Yes' position after careful consideration. As a significant issue, the CBAA's position was determined by the Board.

With the views of First Nations people, communities and members front of mind, our key consideration is the positive impact constitutional recognition and a Voice to Parliament will have for our First Nations members by creating a forum for First Nations people to have a say on policies that affect them. The proposed constitutional reform, and the Uluru Statement's call for Voice, Treaty and Truth, clearly aligns with our sector's future-focused strategic vision for enhanced First Nations' representation and self-determination in media.

The CBAA's members are independent. We recognise members will have differing views and aim to facilitate constructive discussion, with education and engagement as our focus.

Regardless of viewpoints, community broadcasting has an important role in delivering accurate, informed and respectful reporting and discussion through this deeply significant moment in Australia's history.

CBAA will support community broadcasters to do what they do best - and to communicate about the Voice in a manner that supports community cohesion, promotes mutual understanding and ensures that the views of local, representative First Nations community members are heard, throughout the debate.

Jacquie Riddell
President

Peter Rohweder
Vice-President