

## Statement from the Australian Physiotherapy Association on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia, who have been the custodians of these lands and waters for more than 50,000 years. The APA also acknowledges the injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since colonisation, and their continuing impacts on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities today.

The APA is committed to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we recognise that doing so will require addressing a raft of other determinants such as education, employment, environmental and cultural factors, that have a direct impact on health and wellbeing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long been calling on governments to address the needs of their communities through collaboration, ensuring solutions are led and informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. The APA affirms its support for the establishment of a constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice (Voice) to Parliament and Executive Government, on the principle of self-determination and to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have more say about the laws, policies and services that impact their lives. This is fundamental to achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and provides an opportunity for positive and systemic change.

The Voice is one of three pillars of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, alongside truth-telling and treaty processes, that will provide a mechanism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advise Parliament and the Executive Government on issues that directly affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The APA also supports truth-telling of Australia's history and a treaty process.

The APA has a vision for reconciliation that is for all Australians to acknowledge and value the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge, expertise, connections to land and sea and traditional ways of healing. We also have a vision for stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians that are based on trust, respect, and free of racism. We believe that the Voice is a critical step in advancing reconciliation and moving forward as a nation.