



Supporting the Voice to Parliament

Australian Childhood Foundation stands as allies to First Nations People.

Artwork by Amunda Gorey 2020

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Australian Childhood Foundation recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples formed the first sovereign nations on this country we now call Australia and acknowledge that their sovereignty was never ceded. We honor and respect that they have given voice for millennia to what is in the best interests of their peoples and that these voices have been silenced through processes of colonisation, discrimination and racist policy on behalf of successive governments.

Australian Childhood Foundation supports the need for meaningful change and believes that such change is long overdue. The ongoing over-representation of First Nations' children and adults in our child protection and justice systems has not changed despite many inquiries, reviews and commitments made over many years to address these issues. We cannot claim to be ignorant of the truth of the past and the current experience of First Nations peoples. They have told their stories time and time again in the hope that accounts of their own lived experience and those of their ancestors will prompt us to act to address these injustices and give full effect to the principle of self-determination.

At the heart of the debate about the Voice to Parliament is the question of the best way to achieve meaningful change,

to avoid tokenism and promote unity. We respect the diversity of views in this debate. We acknowledge that complex issues are rarely, if ever, solved by simple solutions. We urge everyone to inform themselves in the lead-up to the referendum as we make this important commitment.

Australian Childhood Foundation stands with First Nations peoples in taking steps towards reconciliation. We have long supported the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for truth and treaty in addition to voice.

An enshrined and enduring Voice to Parliament is part of this ongoing journey. So too is the need for all of us to listen, learn and respect the knowledge of First Nation's peoples, their world views and wisdom to know what can work for their people.

Australian Childhood Foundation supports the Voice to Parliament as the first step towards the critical establishment of a Makarrata Commission through which we can engage in processes of truth-telling and treaty-making. Together we can make Australia a more just and fair country for all of us.

Artwork by Amunda Gorey 2020, commissioned by Australian Childhood Foundation. The painting entitled 'There is always room for one more' emphasises that everything and everyone is connected. We are connected through family, language, shared history and experiences. There is always a way that we can find connection if we take the time to look - no matter how small or how big the connection may be.