

‘Recognise’

A Statement by the AASW to support the recognition of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People in the Australian Constitution

The Australian Association of Social Workers supports the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian Constitution. We support the removal of discriminatory clauses and we urge the Government to act in a timely manner with respect to the holding of a referendum. The AASW believes that this is an important step in righting an historic wrong and reducing the capacity for laws to unintentionally hurt Australian people.

Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution as Australia’s First Peoples is an important strategy in promoting belonging and reconciliation. It is a powerful stance against isolation and social exclusion. It will shape interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, as exclusion has shaped interactions until now.

The AASW recognises that any proposed amendments to the Constitution might not address the ongoing desire for sovereignty and treaty amongst Indigenous Australians. Nor does Constitutional recognition directly address challenges faced by Indigenous Australians with respect to health, housing, child protection interventions, poverty and the justice system. The AASW is committed to standing alongside the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the pursuit of self determination and the ongoing discussions about sovereignty and betterment while acknowledging that Constitutional change will play a significant role in these pursuits.

Endorsed by the Board of Directors of the Australian Association of Social Workers

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