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CSSA stands with the Catholic community in strong support for the Voice

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) stands with the Catholic community and others of good will in embracing the principles articulated in the Uluru statement of the Heart and supports a Yes vote in the upcoming referendum to constitutionally enshrine an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

CSSA believes a Yes vote will provide the constitutional power that can close the gap in life circumstances for Indigenous people.

But the Voice must not just be to Parliament on the issues Parliament determines, it must also be to the Executive Government, as originally proposed by Indigenous leaders and endorsed by many of Australia's most senior constitutional experts.

It must allow them a say in determining policy before it is legislated and in having access to the Executive Government, Ministers and the Prime Minister, as policy is developed and as urgent and pressing issues emerge.

Indigenous Australians, through the Voice, must be part of the solution. The Voice must be a partnership between the Government and Indigenous people that empowers them to take charge of their destiny and the future.

As the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council ([NATSICC](#)) have reminded us "...those closest to an issue are best equipped to address and understand that issue.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations are working tirelessly in every State and Territory to improve the lives of our people. These groups must be utilised by the Voice on both National and Regional models to inform the decision-making processes."

As indicated recently by Noel Pearson, if the referendum is not successful an entire generation of Indigenous leaders will fall away, Indigenous Australians will rightly feel they are second class citizens, and the cause of reconciliation will be set back decades.

While we welcome an ongoing discussion, we firmly believe that the opportunity being presented to the Australian people cannot be allowed to slip through our fingers.

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Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) is the Catholic Church's national peak body for organisations that deliver its social services ministry. The CSSA network operates across all Australian States and Territories and has a combined total of nearly 600 sites. We provide national advocacy on behalf of poor and vulnerable Australians and the Catholic social services organisations that serve them.