



## MEDIA RELEASE

### First Nations Australians deserve a better future

*National Reconciliation Week, 27 May-3 June - 'Bridging Now to Next'*

26 May 2025

St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia recognises the past and present injustices experienced by First Nations people and in order to deliver a better and fairer future will continue to work for legal reforms and the progressing of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

'Mindful of the theme Bridging Now to Next, the Society celebrates the deep, abiding pride that First Nations peoples have in their diverse cultures, and we greatly value the contributions they make to Australian society', said National President Mark Gaetani.

'A significant number of those people we assist are First Nations, the national average being around 40 per cent, with more than 90 per cent in the Northern Territory. Our Members see the challenges they face first hand and do their very best to help, but a range of structural issues needs addressing.'

Mr Gaetani added that the Society has a long history of working with and for First Nations people, and is committed to providing employment and procurement opportunities, particularly through Reconciliation Action Plans.

He said in the leadup to the Federal Election, the Society had called for federal leadership to progress the Uluru Statement, for full implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and for increased community-led programs and services that support justice reinvestment and keep children safe.

'We were heartened to hear Prime Minister Albanese say in his election acceptance speech that his government will support reconciliation with First Nations people because we will be a stronger nation when we close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians', Mr Gaetani said.

'We believe the Albanese Government should not leave treaty and truth-telling processes to state and territory governments alone but should commit to a national approach to truth-telling that would inform and support the local, state and territory processes, and provide a national repository of Australian history.

'We are mindful of the past cruelty and oppression experienced by First Nation's communities and of how these acts are embedded in the memories of successive generations.

'In the absence of a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice to Parliament, alternative options for achieving this should be explored in close consultation with First Nations communities.

'The Society's Justice & Compassion policies make clear our support for First Nations people's rights and wellbeing. We hope to see more decisive action in these areas in the next terms of Parliament'.

[National Reconciliation Week - Reconciliation Australia](#)

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