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MEDIA RELEASE

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Uniting Church and UnitingCare Australia Support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), Uniting Church in Australia and UnitingCare Australia have expressed their strong support for the proposed Constitutional Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) Bill 2023. In a joint submission to the Inquiry, the three organisations express support for the proposed constitutional changes to recognise a First Nations Voice as the first step to the full implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which encompasses Voice, Treaty and Truth.

Alison Overeem, UAICC National Executive member, said, "The UAICC is proud to stand with the Uniting Church and UnitingCare Australia in advocating for the full implementation of the Uluru Statement. The Voice to Parliament is an opportunity to listen deeply to the dark history of this nation and injustices First Peoples experience every day and to hear the wisdom of the many voices that sit on and around Country."

Rev Sharon Hollis, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, said, "The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a powerful call for justice and reconciliation. Our support for the Bill represents our commitment to walk with First Nations People in the journey towards self-determination and healing."

Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia, added, "As the largest network of community service providers in Australia, we see firsthand the urgent need to address the disparities faced by First Nations People. A constitutionally enshrined Voice is a critical step towards ensuring that the solutions and supports provided are culturally appropriate and effective."

The submission emphasises the importance of understanding and celebrating First Nations People and their culture, acknowledging their sovereignty, and recognising Australia's true history and the ongoing impacts of trauma on First Nations families and communities. The submission reflects the Church's Covenant with the UAICC, which commits the church to work in solidarity with First Nations people towards a more just church and nation.

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