

# Let's Yarn Together!

Edition 3 – October 2023

## A Message from our Reconciliation Committee Chair and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety and Partnerships

Welcome to the third edition of the 'Let's Yarn Together' newsletter! It's been a while since the previous edition as it's been a busy year. This newsletter seeks to share stories about our reconciliation efforts and how we can all participate and be a good ally to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we work with on our reconciliation journey. A significant focus over the last eight months has been on the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



I am proud Anglicare NT has been a strong ally on the '**Voice, Treaty and Truth**' in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and accepted the generous invitation issued on 27 May 2017, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to walk together for a better future for all. Our commitment to support the statement aligns with our purpose of 'a full life and social justice for all' and our reconciliation commitments.

When asked why Anglicare NT supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a **Yes** vote, our response is that Anglicare NT has a proud history of advocating strongly on social justice issues. We are one of over 150 Reconciliation Action Plan partner organisations that together with Reconciliation Australia supports a **Yes** vote. In fact, recognition and voice have been at the heart of our reconciliation movement for decades and through our RAP we committed to the principles of voice, treaty and truth well before 2023. Anglicare NT is stronger because we listen to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people we work with. When we listen to people about the decisions that affect them, we get better results.

Reconciliation is founded on respectful relationships. This is a defining moment in our nation's history, with Australians deciding to change our Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia and enshrine the Voice; a body where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, chosen by community, will provide advice to Parliament and the Executive.

The proposed amendment to the Constitution is straightforward and simple. Should the referendum succeed, it will recognise First Nations Australians, listen to their voices about matters affecting their communities, and make a practical difference.

Over 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people support the **Voice** and believe it will make a practical difference; designed and agreed on by Indigenous leaders over many decades. For the past 250 years, we haven't properly listened to the people who have been here for 65,000. This is our chance to fix that!

I recently heard a statement, which resonates with me ... 'this is our grand final'. It's a moment where we can move forward as a nation to reconcile with the First Peoples of Australia and truly unify our country.

Be mindful that for many First Nations people this is a particularly difficult time. Be careful and respectful of the conversations you have and of the cultural load First Nations people are carrying. This applies in the lead up to and after the referendum.

If you are unsure, then find out more! My door is always open for a yarn and for those not located in Darwin, you can reach me by phone or email.

*Leonie Patterson*

**Reconciliation Committee Chair and Executive Manager, Cultural Safety and Partnerships**

## The Voice Referendum – Saturday 14 October 2023

**The Voice Referendum is less than two weeks away**, with early polling underway in regional and remote areas across the NT. The Australian Electoral Commission website is updated daily providing information around where voting is scheduled. To find out more visit <https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/vote/mobile-polling-schedule.html>

### Why do we need a referendum?

Our nation's rule book, the Constitution took effect on 1 January 1901.

It sets out how our nation is governed. It enables Parliament to create or change laws (legislation). The Constitution has a special status as it overrides all other laws. It can't be changed by politicians or Parliament and can only be changed through a vote by all Australians, a referendum.

### What is the question for the Voice Referendum?

When Australians vote, they will be asked to write Yes or No to the following question:

*"A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?"*

## What is the proposed change to the Constitution?

If the referendum succeeds, the following chapter will be added to the constitution:

### ***In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia:***

- i. there shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice;
- ii. the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- iii. the Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures.

## What does enshrining a Voice in the Constitution mean?

If the referendum succeeds, it means:

- Recognising 65,000 years of Indigenous culture for the first time in Australia's 122-year-old constitution.
- Listening to advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about matters that affect their lives, so governments make better decisions.
- Better results for Indigenous health, education, employment and housing, so people have a better life.

Putting the Voice in the Constitution protects it and means it can never be removed, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must always be consulted.

The elected members of Parliament and the Executive (government ministers and the public service) will continue to make decisions and create legislation around the Voice, its composition, how it functions and how it operates.

Community will decide who is represented on the Voice advisory group, as determined by Parliament in the legislation it creates.

## 2023 Reconciliation Week Events

### **National Reconciliation Week, 27 May to 3 June**

The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2023 was **'Be a Voice for Generations'**.

This year's theme urges all Australians to use their power, words and their vote to create a better, more just Australia for all of us. It encourages all Australians to be a voice for reconciliation in tangible ways in our everyday lives – where we live, work and socialise.

Across our offices, several events were held including 'a conversation with Georgie Corrie, the NT coordinator of the YES23 campaign', a lunchtime BBQ and quiz at Ludmilla, BBQ and information stalls at headspace in Katherine, a movie session and family activities in Nhulunbuy, BBQ and talk with staff and residents in Alice Springs.

Anglicare NT acknowledges and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of this country. We pay our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging. We accept the invitation from the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create a better future for all Australians.

## Our People

### Introducing Milly Busch

Milly Busch (pictured here on the right, celebrating NAIDOC week), a Larrakia woman, mother of two and a grandmother of two girls. Milly has always lived in Darwin and says she could never live anywhere else. Her mother's family are the Bristons and she grew up with a strong family held together by her grandparents. It's this sense of family that Milly brings to her role as a Family Support Worker in the Family Support Services team, located at Ludmilla.

"Growing up with a huge family we all looked after each other. We did a lot of goose shooting, sometimes we would get 100 geese and they would all get eaten because we'd share them with all the family. My uncles were into the NTFL and NTRL and we would go as a family and watch them, even if we were sick, we still had to go! I have many memories playing on the beach with my cousins and brothers and sisters. I had a good childhood."



I work with families at their lowest point and by building relationships I support them with day-to-day things like housing, schooling, transport to appointments, access to food and helping to understand the law court system. I get a lot of satisfaction seeing people achieve their goals, even if they are just small steps."

## Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework

The **Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework** was launched during this year's NAIDOC Week.

Aboriginal cultural security embeds Aboriginal cultural values and rights at critical points in service design, policy and practice. It goes further than shifting or changing attitudes and behaviours of individuals. Cultural security includes organisational change through addressing structural inequalities.

The Framework will be rolled out across Anglicare NT over the next 12 months.

Keep an eye out for more information and updates from our Reconciliation Committee Chair.

