

2 November 2023

ACN First Nations Faculty Statement - The Voice Referendum

The First Nations Faculty of the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways where we all work and live.

The Referendum was a devastating result for many peoples across Australia. For many First Nations people, this continues to be a difficult period as, overwhelmingly, First Nations Peoples supported the Yes Campaign. We require time to process, grieve, and heal before we can move forward. We seek support from our non-Indigenous colleagues as we navigate these difficult next steps.

We would like to acknowledge the more than six million Australians who voted Yes and thank all our non-Indigenous supporters, allies, and families who walked with us and stood with us to bring about change. Change that would have been for the betterment of the First Nations Peoples of this land.

We would like to express our appreciation and respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates who met at Uluru in 2017 and drafted the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which first called for the Voice.

We believe the campaign has created momentum for recognition and change. A fire has been ignited. We know that our nursing tribe, led through the Australian College of Nursing, was instrumental in this fight for change.

Many of you came to this campaign with years of experience in supporting our calls for justice and many have taken up the challenge of campaigning for the first time. We ask now, more than ever, for collegial partnership and commitment that all nurses double down on our commitment and stay true to the journey as we acknowledge change is difficult and takes time. We invite you to walk with us through joining the First Nations Faculty to continue the fight for the recognition of First Nations peoples through strength in our nursing partnership to Close the Gap.

Always Was, Always Will Be.

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Notes to Editors:

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurses and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva in collaboration with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF). An organisation not afraid to challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, ACN is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN's membership includes nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics, and researchers.

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