

Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT) Board Statement



The Board of Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT) (SCC) acknowledges, respects, and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognises that they are the Traditional Custodians of the Countries, which our residents, clients and our employees now call home.

We are enthusiastic supporters of SCC's recently commenced journey of Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by working to create and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan. Reconciliation is the building of relationship between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples of all cultures. Just as Aged Care is everyone's business, so is Reconciliation everyone's business.

We see Reconciliation as building a bridge between our country's past, present and future. Recognising the First Peoples of Australia in the Nation's Constitution provides an honest foundation for our Nation. All Australians can embrace the oldest continuous culture on earth and make it part of our present and future.

The principles of our Reconciliation Action Plan are that we need to listen to the needs and concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people if we are to be their preferred employer or aged care provider.

We see the same principles applying to Australian society, including Government laws, policies, and programs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples having a direct voice in the laws and policies that impact them is the best guarantee of positive change.

Six years ago, in the Uluru Statement from the Heart¹, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, invited all Australians to *"walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future"*. This invitation included three central calls of: Voice, Treaty, and Truth: (1) a constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament, (2) Treaty and treaties, and (3) a national truth-telling commission. It is also a national priority to Close The Gap.

This year, in 2023, the Australian peoples will vote in a referendum to alter Australia's Constitution to recognise the first peoples of Australian by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament. The Board of SCC supports a Yes vote in the 2023 Referendum. We see a yes vote bringing benefit both now and into the future. We see this benefit resulting from the proposal's two parts:

1. recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia; and
2. establish a body where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will give independent advice to the Parliament and Government² and may make representations on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples³.

The Board encourages everyone to engage in respectful conversations as we seek to come together as a nation in our understanding of the diverse perspectives on this important issue. We respect that some people including some of our residents, clients and employees will hold a different view to us.

All citizens have a responsibility to ensure that they have quality information to make a decision that they will feel comfortable with both now and in later years. Each of us must make our own decisions independently at the ballot box as is our democratic right.

The Board of SCC hopes that all people, through this once in a generation event, will take this opportunity to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and work towards Reconciliation without judgement. Regardless of our views and our vote, as Australians may we all live our SCC values of: Honesty, Empathy, Acceptance, Respect and Teamwork.

You can learn more about [The Uluru Statement from the Heart](https://ulurustatement.org) at ulurustatement.org an [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament](https://voice.gov.au/about-voice) at voice.gov.au/about-voice Southern Cross Care's (NSW/ACT) [mission, vision and HEART values](https://sccliving.org.au/about-us/vision-mission-and-principles) at sccliving.org.au/about-us/vision-mission-and-principles

¹ ulurustatement.org

² [Voice Design Principles](https://voice.gov.au/about-voice)

³ [Constitution Alteration \(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice\) 2023](https://www.gov.au/constitution/alteration/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-voice-2023)