

Philanthropy says Yes with pledge to support Voice

April 28, 2023

An alliance of some of Australia's leading philanthropic foundations has declared their support for Voice. Today, they announced a combined \$17 million pledge from the philanthropic sector to the Yes campaigns, with more funding to come. This announces new funding pledged in 2023, and builds on previous donations by a number of engaged philanthropists.

Thirty-one of Australia's leading philanthropic foundations and funders today unveiled a philanthropic pledge, all calling for the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a say in the matters that affect them through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Signatories to the pledge include Australian Communities Foundation, the Besen Family Foundation, CAGES Foundation, MECCA M-POWER, the Nelson Meers Foundation, The Myer Foundation, Oranges & Sardines Foundation, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, Perpetual, the Ross Trust, the Snow Foundation and many more (listed below).

The pledge continues to be circulated among the sector, encouraging others to join to show their support for Voice. Founding members of the Pledge agreed to a significant initial donation, reflecting the scale of funding needed to achieve a positive referendum result, and additional pledge signatories are now encouraged to join for any amount.

History shows that winning a referendum in Australia is both difficult and very expensive. The alliance is encouraging substantial donations from those with capacity to do so, recognising that this is a critical moment for nation-building change.

Paul Ramsay Foundation CEO Professor Kristy Muir said the referendum was a historic opportunity for all Australians to show they had listened to the voices of First Nations communities who have asked for Voice through the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

"Philanthropic organisations are deeply engaged in working with First Nations-led organisations and programs around the country," Professor Muir said. "As a sector, we've learned from experience that the best outcomes emerge when the voices of those affected are heard. Voice is a vital mechanism that's been missing for a long time.

Sarah Hardy, CEO of the Ross Trust agreed: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to have a say in their future to make a positive and enduring difference. Listening to the voices of those most impacted by the decisions our country makes, is the strongest and most sustainable way to improve the lives of others. We urge our friends and peers across philanthropy to engage in this critical moment in time and show their support for the Yes campaigns".

Australian philanthropic organisations have previously shown strong support for Voice with more than 70 representatives from across the philanthropic sector signing an [open letter](#) supporting the Uluru Statement in 2019.

Philanthropy Australia CEO, Jack Heath, welcomed the Pledge and said it was a great example of philanthropy doing what it does best – coming together to advocate for change that will have a profound, long-term impact in the lives of individuals and their communities.

“Philanthropy Australia’s [support for the Yes case](#) is based on listening to what First Nations peoples say is needed to improve their daily lives and it is backed by the overwhelming majority of our membership.

“We believe that a successful referendum will lead to a better future for all Australians and we acknowledge those philanthropists who are leading the way through this pledge.”

The pledge includes PRF’s recent contribution of \$5 million in cornerstone funding which was donated to Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition (AICR), while other funders are supporting the Uluru Dialogue. Some are funding other efforts for Yes. That there are a number of organisations involved in working toward Yes demonstrates the broad support for a successful referendum.

The philanthropic pledge is available to view on the Philanthropy Australia website [here](#).

Media contact: Pia Akerman, 0412 346 746

The Pledgers

- Alberts | The Tony Foundation
- Annamila First Nations Foundation
- Australian Communities Foundation
- Balnaves Foundation
- Barlow Impact Group
- Besen Family Foundation
- CAGES Foundation
- Dusseldorp Forum
- Equity Trustees (various trusts and foundations)
- Ferris Family Foundation
- Georgina Byron
- Hansen Little Foundation
- Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation
- MECCA M-POWER
- Naomi Milgrom Foundation
- Nelson Meers Foundation
- Oranges & Sardines Foundation
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- Perpetual
- Reichstein Foundation
- Siddle Family Foundation
- Skrzynski Family Sky Foundation
- The Keys Family
- The Myer Foundation
- The Ross Trust
- The Scully Fund
- The Snow Foundation
- Tripple
- Wyatt Trust
- Plus anonymous donors

People available for comment include:

- Rachel Ball (Reichstein Foundation)
- Hamish Balnaves (Balnaves Foundation)
- Catherine Brown OAM (Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation)

- Georgina Byron AM (The Snow Foundation)
- Chris Coker (ACF – Luritja man)
- Jane Hansen AO (Hansen Little Foundation)
- Jack Heath (Philanthropy Australia)
- Professor Kristy Muir (Paul Ramsay Foundation)
- Leonard Vary (Myer Foundation)
- Sarah Hardy (Ross Trust)