

Joint statement from philanthropic funders for Yes campaign

We are saddened by the result of the Referendum, and our hearts and gratitude go out to the inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who led this campaign for many years, and to the First Nations people, families and communities who are deeply impacted by this result.

We are grateful to all the advocates for Yes; to the millions of Australians who voted for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. In light of the weekend's wounding Referendum result, we reaffirm our ongoing commitment to supporting and advocating for First Nations peoples to have a greater say in the issues and decisions that affect them. We acknowledge that many of our First Nations partners are now in a week of silence following the result.

Our group of more than 30 philanthropic foundations banded together to support Constitutional Recognition through establishing a Voice, and this referendum result will strengthen philanthropy's dedication and commitment to ensure First Nations voices are recognised and heard.

Philanthropic foundations will continue to work closely with communities, First Nations-led organisations, governments, and each other to help advance community-led, place-based solutions and systemic change to advance First Nations justice and close the gap across a range of areas, including education, housing, health, and employment.

Philanthropic supporters of the Yes campaign are listed below.

Quotes from a selection of funders:

"We honour the invitation by First Nations people through the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the many who worked so tirelessly to develop such a generous invitation to all Australians. The best outcomes are achieved when the voices of those affected are at the table – and in the absence of a constitutionally enshrined Voice, we affirm our commitment to strengthening efforts in working alongside First Nations peoples. Our foundation will continue to listen to First Nations people to advance justice and to advocate for better outcomes including the elimination of rheumatic heart disease, a disease that predominately only affects First Nations communities."

Georgina Byron, CEO, Snow Foundation

"I feel incredibly disappointed that as a country we have chosen not to recognise First Nations people in our constitution or give them a constitutional right to a Voice. I feel pain with those who put everything into asking for, championing and supporting this modest request. Philanthropy's support did not begin with this Referendum, nor will it end with this result. Collectively, philanthropy has funded and worked with First Nations-led organisations and social enterprises for many years and worked alongside communities for better outcomes. We will continue our support and are here for the time that social change takes."

Professor Kristy Muir, CEO, Paul Ramsay Foundation

"We knew that this was going to be a difficult referendum to win but we went into this because it was the right thing to do, not because we thought it would be easy to win. Even though the proposed Constitutional amendment didn't receive majority support, it has started a critical national conversation about the importance of First Nations peoples having a say in the decisions that impact their communities, culture and land."

Leonard Vary, CEO, The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund

"The referendum result is deeply disappointing to all who supported the YES case. How must it be for First Nations peoples, especially those who issued the profoundly generous invitation in the Uluru

Statement from the Heart? More than ever before, philanthropy needs to work collaboratively with First Nations peoples and their communities. We need to shift power, mobilise resources, improve granting practices, and do all we can to unite the Australian people in a movement towards a better future. Until then, the national project remains unfinished and our soul torn.”

Jack Heath, CEO, Philanthropy Australia

“As funders we know that social change is not linear and meaningful reform often requires decades of advocacy, campaigns and movement building. We remain unwavering in our commitment to supporting advocacy for First Nations justice, which is fundamental to a fair and equal society.”

Jill Reichstein, Reichstein Foundation

“Self-determination is not won or lost based on the outcome of a vote. Our First Nations peoples continue to extend a gracious, generous and powerful invitation to reconciliation in the Statement From the Heart. Millions of Australians have already accepted that invitation, and the work of allyship, truth telling and justice continues.”

Maree Sidey, CEO Australian Communities Foundation

“While we and millions of Australians are disappointed that this opportunity for Constitutional Recognition with a Voice has been missed, the result only deepens our resolve to ensure First Nations communities and voices are heard. Our thoughts are with all First Nations people during this time, acknowledging resilience is tested again.”

Sarah Hardy, CEO The Ross Trust

“Our funding to support the Yes campaign was a privilege for our family foundation. The impact of the referendum campaign, that included over 50,000 volunteers, is that it opened up many thousands of new conversations about the needs of First Nations communities. Many were conversations that households and communities around the country had not had before, and that step alone is both a positive and an opportunity as we continue to work with First Nations people.”

Paula McLean, Trustee, McLean Foundation

“The Referendum was a significant and important opportunity for reflection upon Australia’s past and the creation of a new and respectful shared future through consultation and action for positive change. We are deeply disappointed that the invitation in the Uluru Statement From the Heart was not supported by the majority, but we will not stop advocating for positive change and supporting First Nations communities to shape policy and decisions that impact on their lives. We are committed to working with First Nations-led organisations, cultural institutions, groups and First Nations artists to ensure their voices are heard and their vision for their future is supported.”

Tabitha Lovett, CEO, Besen Family Foundation

Philanthropic supporters include:

- Alberts | The Tony Foundation
- Annamila First Nations Foundation
- Australian Communities Foundation
- Balnaves Foundation
- Barlow Impact Group
- Besen Family Foundation
- CAGES Foundation
- Dusseldorp Forum
- Eisen Family Private Fund
- Equity Trustees (various trusts and foundations)
- Naomi Milgrom Foundation
- Nelson Meers Foundation
- Oranges & Sardines Foundation
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- Perpetual
- Reichstein Foundation
- Siddle Family Foundation
- Skrzynski Family Sky Foundation
- Sydney Community Foundation
- The Fairley Foundation
- The Keys Family

- Ferris Family Foundation
- Georgina Byron
- Hansen Little Foundation
- Heath Family Fund
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- Maple-Brown Family Foundation
- McLean Foundation
- MECCA M-POWER
- The Myer Foundation
- The Ross Trust
- The Scully Fund
- The Snow Foundation
- Tripple
- Wyatt Trust
- Plus anonymous donors

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