

1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

## **STATEMENT BY ABM NATIONAL COUNCIL**

The National Council of Australian Baptist Ministries (also known as the Baptist Union of Australia) accepts the invitation of our First Nations sisters and brothers in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”. We declare our support for the Statement’s calls for a “First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution” and “a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history”.

We welcome the intention of the Commonwealth Government to hold a referendum on the Voice to Parliament. This represents a historic occasion for our nation in the creation of a more just future. It is our hope that it will be very widely supported across our Parliament, across our churches and across our nation.

In the Baptist way of being church it is the responsibility of every local church to seek the mind of Christ for its life and mission. Consequently, we speak as leaders of State Baptist Associations and Baptist National Ministries, meeting together as the National Council of Australian Baptist Ministries, not on behalf of our churches but to our churches. We urge every local Baptist church and affiliated Baptist agencies across Australia to engage with the Uluru Statement from the Heart and take up its generous invitation.

In view of the impending referendum, we urge Baptist churches and affiliated Baptist agencies to make space in their 2023 calendar to familiarize themselves with the Uluru Statement, to be prayerful about the issues it raises, to facilitate informed discussion on the proposal for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, and to map out how they will take up the invitation from First Nations sisters and brothers to walk together towards a just future. To assist churches and affiliated agencies in this we have established a webpage at [ajustcause.org.au/first-nations](http://ajustcause.org.au/first-nations) that links to resources they may find helpful.