

REACH RESPONDS



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reach.org.au

REACH POSITION STATEMENT

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

Our work

Reach has been in operation for 25 years and has delivered workshops to thousands of young people every year since 1996. Reach delivers youth led workshops to young people across Australia in schools and the community. Our work is 100% designed by young people to enable others to discover their identity and make sense of experiences so they can build resilience and confidence in their capacity to reach their potential. In all these workshops we break down barriers and give young people tools and skills to understand themselves and others. Reach aims to provide a safe and positive environment for young people to explore their thoughts and feelings and build acceptance of difference for all participants.

The issue

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a national Indigenous consensus position on Indigenous constitutional recognition directed to the Australian public. It asks Australians to change the Constitution to allow Indigenous Australians a voice in the laws and policies that are made about them. The statement lays out a vision for substantive and structural reform that will make a difference in Indigenous communities.

Being young is not without its struggles. Today's world is pretty complex and young people can experience a bunch of challenges that adults may not be able to relate to. One of the biggest hurdles for young people today is just having the confidence and support to be who they want to be. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, there are additional obstacles that make adolescence even more challenging. The Uluru Statement reads *"Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future."* In fact, 1 in 10 Indigenous males indicated their happiness with life as a whole was '0' out of 10 compared with 1 in 100 non-Indigenous young people.^[2]

Our position

Reach recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. By extension, we believe that it should be enshrined in the Constitution of Australia that they have a voice in matters relating to laws and policies that are made about them.

We encourage all Australians to read and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart. As an organisation, we are committed to making Australia a more inclusive country where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people thrive and are able to lead their communities. Like most Australians, we too are at the beginning of our journey as we begin our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). For 25 years it has been implicit that we are an inclusive organisation and that we recognise Indigenous people as the traditional owners of the land. We realise that we must be explicit and need to ensure our organisation is truly one that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We will do this by beginning our RAP and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in which we work in.