



## MEDIA RELEASE



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### **Federal Government's Rejection of Uluru Proposal a Missed Opportunity**

The ACT Human Rights Commission and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body are disappointed in the Australian Government's rejection of the genuine request to consider the Uluru Statement seeking serious discussion of Constitutional reforms.

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Chairperson, Katrina Fanning said, "by rejecting the Uluru proposal it fails us as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it does not provide us with an opportunity to enjoy equitable outcomes or have an equal say in our future. Furthermore this decision removes our right to have a seat at the table to make decisions which impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this country at the highest level".

Our political systems and institutions have not closed the gap of disadvantage enough, and remain inadequate at providing a voice in matters that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives, futures and communities.

This decision does not give the Parliament and the Australian community the opportunity to listen to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' reform proposals contained in the Uluru Statement, including enshrining a First Nation's Voice in the Australian Constitution.

As stated by the Australian Council of Human Rights Authorities, a national Indigenous voice included in the Constitution would affirm the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the Australian Government endorsed in 2009.

The ACT Government has shown leadership by creating Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body in 2008, and including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural rights in the Human Rights Act (section 27(2)) in 2016.

The Federal Government has missed an opportunity to lead the nation by creating a body that would ensure the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are heard nationally.

We note that the Australian Government has not commented on the Uluru Statement's proposed Makarrata Commission to supervise an agreement-making process between Indigenous people and governments, and honest discussion of past injustices.

We hope this means that the Australian Government remains open to allowing respectful debate aimed at reaching Australia's full reconciliation with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

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