

MEDIA RELEASE

National Reconciliation Week 27 May-3 June 2021

27 May 2021

The National Council of the St Vincent de Society is marking National Reconciliation Week by reiterating its support for a National Indigenous Voice to parliament enshrined in The Constitution.

National Council President, Claire Victory said the historic 1967 referendum saw more than 90 per cent of Australians vote to give the Australian government power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to recognise them in the Census.

'This rare, successful referendum is testament to what is possible where there is shared community and political will. It also reflects what can be achieved when there is bipartisan consideration for the drafting of a referendum. 'The Society also acknowledges the historical achievement of the Mabo decision on 1992, which paved the way for Native Title in this country.

'However, despite these significant steps, it is a source of great shame that the gap between life opportunities for Indigenous and other Australians remains.

'Better education and healthcare have led to career paths for some Indigenous Australians, but too many are still overrepresented in juvenile justice, prisons, out of home care, and across social services.

'In some parts of Australia up to 90 per cent of people using specific services provided by the Society are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is unacceptable.

'Further, significant legislative, constitutional and structural change is essential to ensure the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision-making.

'A National Voice enshrined in the Constitution strengthens empowerment, self-determination and subsidiarity.

'Communities are unique and constantly changing. Any consultative body need to be agile enough to respond to local issues but have the mandate to address national matters.

'The Society supports the notion that reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,' Ms Victory said.

A copy of the National Council's submission regarding the Indigenous Voice Co-Design Interim Report is available [here](#).

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

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