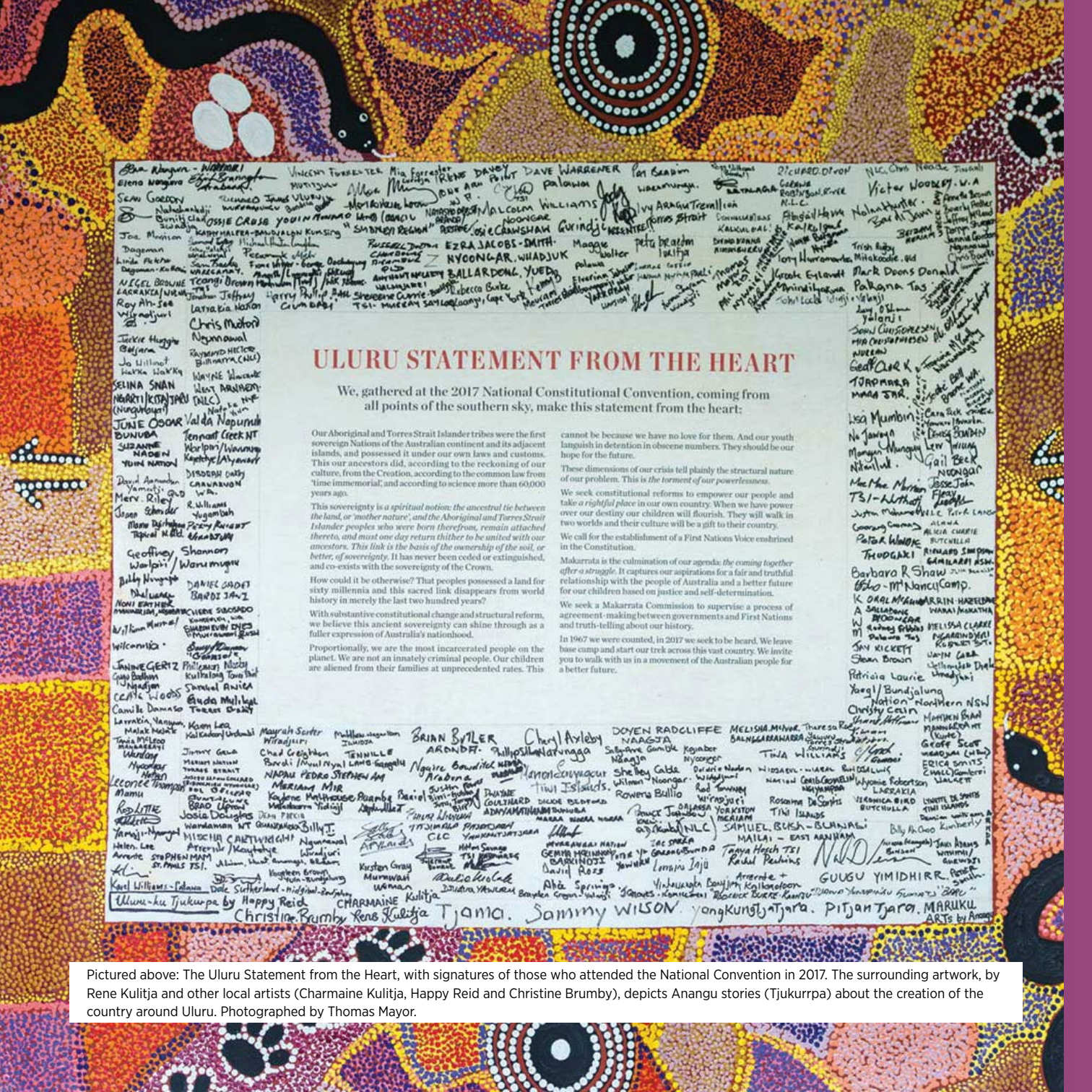


The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare embraces the Uluru Statement from the Heart and **strongly supports** a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament.





ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion; the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia in this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years.

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened 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.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda; the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted. In 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

(The following text contains the full content of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including the introductory paragraph, the main body text, and a large collection of handwritten signatures in various colors and styles surrounding the central text.)

Pictured above: The Uluru Statement from the Heart, with signatures of those who attended the National Convention in 2017. The surrounding artwork, by Rene Kultiya and other local artists (Charmaine Kultiya, Happy Reid and Christine Brumby), depicts Anangu stories (Tjukurrpa) about the creation of the country around Uluru. Photographed by Thomas Mayor.

*“When we have power
over our destiny our
children will flourish.*

*They will walk in two
worlds and their culture
will be a gift to their
country.”*

- Uluru Statement from the Heart, 26 May 2017

We accept the invitation to walk with First Nations peoples in pursuit of their rightful place in Australia.

The Voice presents an opportunity for First Nations peoples to hold the Federal Government accountable and have a say in the decisions that affect their children, families, and communities. It presents a crucial step forward in the journey toward reconciliation and self-determination.

As the leading peak organisation for child and family services in Victoria, we stand in solidarity with our First Nations colleagues and communities. We pledge to listen deeply to, collaborate closely with, and support First Nations children, families, communities, and organisations to self-determine on their terms.

We are committed to promoting Treaty and truth-telling in Victoria and will continue to do so while empowering the realisation of a First Nations Voice to Parliament.

The Centre stands by First Nations peoples in support of the Voice.