



Media Release: ATODA Welcomes the Referendum on the Voice to Parliament

18 September 2023

The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) welcomes the opportunity presented by the upcoming referendum on the Voice to Parliament to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ATODA CEO, Anita Mills said “ATODA supports Constitutional recognition and the Voice to Parliament as the next steps on the journey to recognition, arising from the Uluru Statement from the Heart.”

“While we understand there are a diversity of view in the community around the referendum, ATODA believes that what is being proposed strongly aligns with the work we do to achieve health equity and better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

“ATODA welcomes the opportunities proposed by the Voice to Parliament to shape policy that is reflective of the needs and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

“We recognise the contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and experience has made to the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT and want to continue to support and learn from this to deliver culturally safe and responsive services.” Ms Mills said.

ATODA is committed to advancing self-determination and reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Underpinning ATODA’s work is a commitment to health equity, the social and cultural determinants of health, and the values of collaboration, participation, diversity, human rights, social justice and reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

Ms Mills said “ATODA will continue to work with the alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) sector and the ACT Government on further opportunities to grow and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific ATOD services in the ACT and opportunities to increase and better support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ATOD workforce.”

ATODA encourages people to consider the spectrum of information available around the referendum and to prioritise respectful discourse, being especially mindful of the impact of the debate on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

These resources include:

- Anti Discrimination NSW and 13YARN resource: <https://antidiscrimination.nsw.gov.au/anti-discrimination-nsw/tools-and-resources/Referendum-resilience.html>
- Australian Human Rights Commission support services: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/support-services-voice-referendum>
- The Uluru Statement: <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement>

For more information or comment, please contact Anita Mills, CEO, ATODA on 0431 504 805.

ATODA is the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT. Its purpose is to lead and influence positive outcomes in policy, practice and research by providing collaborative leadership for intersectoral action on the social determinants of harmful drug use, and on societal responses to drug use and to people who use drugs. ATODA's vision is a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms.

Advice for media: Communicating about alcohol and other drugs

Mindframe is funded by the Australian Government and supports safe media reporting, portrayal and communication about suicide, mental ill-health, alcohol and other drugs. Relevant resources include:

- Mindframe Guidelines for communicating about alcohol and other drugs: <https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs/communicating-about-alcohol-other-drugs/mindframe-guidelines>
- Mindframe guidelines for image use in communicating about mental ill-health, suicide and alcohol and other drugs: <https://mindframe.org.au/images-matter-mindframe-guidelines-for-image-use>
- Adding help-seeking information: <https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs/communicating-about-alcohol-other-drugs/adding-help-seeking-information>