Now is the time to strengthen our efforts and commitment to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

SSTUWA
State School Teachers' Union of WA



Today we acknowledge the elders and custodians of our diverse Nations and Countries. They are the knowledge holders and the educators of our communities. They have led us through the Referendum process and will continue to lead us as a nation that is still learning how to listen, to learn and to heal together.

In 2017, we accepted the invitation issued to all Australians by the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We accepted the generous offer from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to walk together to build a kinder, more compassionate country, in which we can all thrive.

While the referendum outcome may not have been what we were hoping for, **now is the time to strengthen our efforts and commitment to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.**

The referendum campaign saw people from all walks of life coming together with hope and a shared vision for the future. Each and every action that you took – from social media to phone banking, educational webinars to door-knocks – made a difference, and lit a beacon of hope even amongst the darkest of turns along the road of this campaign.

The referendum result, and the journey to this point, reminds us that change can be a long and challenging process, and that we can encounter obstacles along the way. As educators, we have a deep responsibility to build the skills, knowledge and understanding of our students, to help shape the world that our students live in. *This is transformative*, and public education is at the heart of our society and indeed democracy.

Education provides a path to knowledge, opportunity, and social progress for all. It is a powerful tool that can challenge biases, dismantle stereotypes, and create inclusive environments.

Australia is home to the longest continuous living human culture anywhere in the *world.* Increasing numbers of Australians of all backgrounds wanting to learn more about the expansive, foundational history of this continent.

As we walk together in hope for a better future, let us make sure that we do not take a step backwards. Let us foster an environment in public education where open and honest discussions about our history can take place. Let us inspire critical thinking, empathy, and a sense of responsibility amongst our students. **When we equip young people with the knowledge needed to truly understand the past, we empower them to be active, informed citizens who can shape a more just and compassionate future.**

Our work to achieve justice alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is not finished. Today, and every day, we recommit ourselves to walking together towards a better future for our students, their families and our communities.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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