



## The Indigenous Marathon Foundation Board Position Statement on the Referendum

August 2023

The Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF) is a registered not-for-profit health promotion charity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples by celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures, strength, and achievement through running.

The IMF Board's position is that a positive referendum outcome aligns with what IMF strives for; a reconciled, unified, and healthy Australia. The IMF Board supports Constitutional Recognition and the establishment of a Voice.

The IMF supports the principle that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are involved at every level, in matters that affect them, outcomes are better. This is how IMF operates and one of our core values is "we run side by side" [with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples].

We see first-hand how local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and community owned, driven and delivered programs are successful. We believe the Voice will provide opportunities for this approach to effect positive outcomes for First Nations peoples and Australia.

The IMF Board supports the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and accepts the invitation to walk (and run) forward side by side with First Nations peoples. We believe Constitutional Recognition and the Voice is the start of this journey. It is a positive step forward, but it is a marathon, not a sprint. Running a marathon takes courage and self-belief to start; and hard work, commitment, and the encouragement of others to make it to the finish.

We also recognise there are different views and positions on the referendum in our IMF family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, and the broader Australian community. This is a good and positive aspect of our democracy, and we encourage everyone to accept and respect those with different views.

The IMF Board believe this referendum will be one of the most important decisions for Australia in our lifetime and urge everyone to be well informed regarding all sides of the debate, prior to voting.

We also acknowledge that this is a very difficult time for many, especially First Nations peoples and encourage everyone to be considerate, respectful, and supportive.

IMF Board - Robert de Castella AO MBE; Ayesha Razzaq; Stirling Sharpe; Bianca Graham; Eoghan O'Byrne; Peter Gordon; Simonetta Astolfi.