

## The Voice to Parliament Referendum

The Voice to Parliament is a proposed constitutional amendment that would establish a body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to advise the Australian government on matters affecting them. The Voice is an important opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a greater say in their own lives and to improve their outcomes.

However, we understand that the Voice referendum campaign may also be a difficult and emotional time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is because the campaign may raise memories of past trauma and injustice, and it may also be a time of increased racism and discrimination.

It is important for employers to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees during this time. ACCESS Programs is here to support via EAP counselling and Manager Assistance sessions. Here are some further support recommendations:

- Educate your employees about the Voice referendum. This includes providing information about what the Voice is, how it would work, and why it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. You can do this by hosting educational sessions, distributing information packs, and making resources available online.
- Create a safe and supportive space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to talk about the Voice referendum. This means providing employees with the opportunity to share their views and concerns in a confidential and respectful environment. You can do this by establishing employee support groups, offering individual counselling, and providing access to culturally appropriate mental health services.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in the referendum campaign. This could include providing employees with paid time off to volunteer, donating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led referendum campaigns, or allowing employees to wear Voice to Parliament merchandise at work.

- Demonstrate your organization's support for the Voice referendum. This could involve signing the Uluru Statement from the Heart, releasing a public statement of support, or hosting events to promote the Voice referendum.

In addition to these recommendations, it is also important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of stress and anxiety in your employees. If you are concerned about an employee's well-being, please encourage them to reach out to ACCESS Programs for EAP counselling. If Managers and Leaders are also looking for more direct ways to tackle the impact of the Voice to Parliament for either themselves or their staff, please reach out to ACCESS Programs and request a session of Manager Assistance.

Helpful links for more information:

- The Voice to Parliament website: <https://voice.gov.au/>
- The Uluru Statement from the Heart: <https://ulurustatement.org/>
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Council: <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-mental-health-program>
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation: <https://healingfoundation.org.au/>
- The Australian Psychological Society: <https://psychology.org.au/>
- [First Nations mental health during the Voice campaign – DOM BARRY \(wordpress.com\)](#)

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.