

30 October 2023

An Open letter to our Ministries

Dear Members of Staff, Students and Families in all our Ministries

Like many, the Trustees of Kildare Ministries were greatly disappointed and disheartened with the result of the recent referendum on The Voice to approve Constitutional Recognition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise that, especially in the most remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people voted YES, giving the strongest indication that they had not wavered from the intention and invitation of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. Sadly, the majority of the Australian people said no to this invitation. It is not what the Trustees of Kildare Ministries had hoped for.

We are sorry that to this day, our First Nations Peoples endure systemic and daily forms of racism, prejudice and injustice. We feel particularly ashamed that our First Nations Youth have felt the rejection of a whole nation and the humiliation of the defeat of the referendum.

Kildare Ministries values all people and does not accept this result as the final word. Our First Nations Peoples have been on this journey of recognition for hundreds of years and we pledge to listen, reach out and learn what needs to be learned from this year's failed referendum. Especially for the First Nations Peoples in our schools and in our community works, we want to support the quest for a better life through education and civic collaboration; through truth telling and Makarrata – healing the wrongs of the past, so that we might be a stronger nation living in peace.

We are left with many questions. What lessons need to be learned from the referendum? What work needs to be done now to move reconciliation forward? What questions need to be asked for truth telling? How will the First Nations Peoples voices be heard now? We will remain alert to possibilities that present themselves in continuing the journey towards reconciliation.

What we do not want to see happen is that the current state of affairs continues, or worse, that it deteriorates. The job is not done. We wish to assure the people in our communities that we remain true and take seriously our responsibility to rebuild and make more just, our relationships with all people in our communities.

Yours sincerely



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