

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website: <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**Transcript:** AMA President Dr Tony Bartone, ABC Radio AM, Saturday 2 June 2018

**Subject:** AMA Endorsement of Uluru Statement from the Heart

**ELIZABETH JACKSON:** Within the next couple of years, your local doctor's surgery could be adorned with posters supporting Indigenous Constitutional change. The highly influential Australian Medical Association has thrown its support behind last year's Uluru Statement from the Heart. The peak body says including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the nation's founding document could help make Indigenous patients healthier. The AMA's President Tony Bartone has told our political reporter Dan Conifer the organisation is unequivocal in its support.

**TONY BARTONE:** It was a fairly clear-cut decision for us to make. We recognise the issue regarding the will to want to have the right to self-determination. We recognise the health inequities, the social justice inequities, the wellness inequities that confront our Indigenous population. And this Statement is just another way of trying to ensure that we can continue to work and get all governments, both State, Federal, and Territory, to work towards closing the gap, improving the social determinants of health, and recognising the need and the required improvements that are necessary to address the gap that currently exists.

**DAN CONIFER:** Can you just explain for us how something like the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and the changes that it calls for, would support health outcomes, would improve life expectancy and so on?

**TONY BARTONE:** They're fairly fundamental aspirations that are part of the Uluru Statement, and those aspirations and recognitions really speak to a number of emotional, physical, and broader social, environmental issues that really will address, as we say, the social determinants of health. We can't really seek to close the gap when it comes to health outcomes until we address the fundamental building blocks.

**DAN CONIFER:** Now, one of the key elements of the Uluru Statement is about involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in decision-making processes. In the medical profession, how has involving Indigenous Australians driven improvements?

**TONY BARTONE:** The ACCHOs, or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, are a very important part of the health delivery process. It recognises that the usual relationships, when it comes to health facilities in a different way, it's a different connectivity. Put another way, it recognises the inherent qualities and behavioural patterns of our Indigenous population, and that is different from a traditional Western-type setting which we've become experienced with.

**DAN CONIFER:** And if a referendum were to be held on any of the elements of the Uluru Statement, how would the AMA, individual doctors and specialists around the country, take part or be involved in that campaign?

**TONY BARTONE:** We would use all avenues open to us, both in terms of our advocacy and communication with our members, to ensure that the information and the sharing of that information, in terms of the wider community, patients who come to our surgery, the access

points that we do have, are used to the fullest in terms of ensuring a proper address of the Statement's initiatives.

**DAN CONIFER:** So we could see Vote Yes posters or pamphlets or badges in GP surgeries when this, or if this comes to a vote?

**TONY BARTONE:** What we'd see is the Association taking a front foot in our communication and advocacy on behalf of members. Of course, each individual member is free and would be wanting to participate to perhaps even a fuller extent, which would lead to putting up of posters and sharing that material in a surgery environment. But we would take a front foot more at an Association level to ensure that we communicate with our stakeholders, with our leaders in Parliament, and with the community in general through our media connectivity to communicate that wish and desire.

**ELIZABETH JACKSON:** And that's the Australian Medical Association's President, Tony Bartone, speaking there with our reporter, Dan Conifer.

---

2 June 2018

CONTACT: Maria Hawthorne

02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753