

Rebecca Harcourt
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Maroubra, Sydney

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Dear Co-Design Body

Submission to Co-design process

I was born on Kurna country (Adelaide, SA). My family's Celtic and Jewish ancestry is a mix of Scottish, Irish, French, English, Romanian, Polish, Hungarian and Transylvanian. My grandfather and grand-uncle changed our surname from Harkowitz to Harcourt in the early 1900's because of anti-Semitism. Our parents instilled in us the importance of respecting and valuing every person, even if you disagreed with them, and to fight all forms of racism and discrimination.

I completed my education, lived and worked for 21 years overseas (1982-2003) and since returning I continue to learn, walk alongside & collaborate with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Communities across a diverse range of education /community building programs and projects, often by personal invitation in urban, regional & remote settings.

Since Oct 2009, I have also been championing Indigenous Business Education at UNSW working closely with Indigenous communities, education, industry, government, media & not for profit sectors developing significant cross institutional partnerships.

Equally key is the opportunity this has afforded me to learn further from and engage with Indigenous experts across a range of fields, scholarships, professions, practices, collectives +, notwithstanding exceptional Indigenous student & alumni body.

Central to all that I strive to be, do, influence and deliver, is to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at the forefront of all decision making at all levels determining their own lives and future.

As I submitted to Parliament in June 2018, I unreservedly support Uluru Statement from the Heart and all it shares including a Voice to Parliament; a very modest proposition and based on in-depth knowledge research and experience endorsed by every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nation across Australia and proven international operating models such as Sami People in Finland's parliament.

I wholeheartedly believe it is of utmost importance for all of us as Australians to listen and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, nations, Elders, women, men, young and old who have tirelessly fought with dignity and generosity to overcome the many injustices which are continuing to impact detrimentally on the lives of their communities. It's absolutely time we all come together to restore and unite through the Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty and Truth – the unified position of First Nations in all that it leads from the imperative of a Makarrata commission to establishing

a Voice to parliament so its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples who design and share way forward to restore harmony for all-

Below I have shared my thoughts and experience on the healing offered by knowing and tracing our family trees, such as led by a number of Aboriginal Elders I know incredibly well, am proud and honoured to call Aunty*.

I believe the depth and impact in Nation Building across Australia through listening and introducing all the recommendations the Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty and Truth – is both exceptionally profound and urgent necessity for all of us and has huge support across the Country we call Australia.

Family Trees can help shape and draw us, together.

Imbuing a deeper inner knowing connecting us with who has come before us and who will follow.

As we piece and weave our stories together it helps connect us with ourselves. Instil in us our subtleties, nuances and unique characteristics recognised across the generations.

Questions of who makes us, informs us.

In our words, true to our identities and culture(s) our experiences, our humanity, creates determination, strength, resilience, willing us to go on.

We can draw strength from piecing together the puzzles, some fractured, some broken, others shining lights providing links to the whole, propelling us onwards.

Unfinished business is when our make- up has been tampered with by others determining our history, often through lenses which are misleading, misjudged, dismissive and unrecorded.

There is a deep longing to draw on our own stories to lay foundations through our eyes, hearts and souls.

Uncover seeds sown in previous generations to be galvanised as we navigate our own paths.

With energy and love Aunties such as Aunty Ali Golding* and Aunty Olga Collis McNespie* are steering a future for their families and their people, sacred places of belongings, connections rekindled across generations so they can rejoice and prosper. And recover from historic wrong doings ignorance and untruths which have displaced so many imposing irrepressible harm.

Through sharing their family stories so many Aboriginal people especially women: grandmothers, mothers, aunties, daughters, sisters are embedding further the wisdom they have drawn on from the generations before them: strong in their culture and lives.

In honouring our interconnectedness across time place and spirit digging deep with courage, generosity and love for all. #BecauseofHerWeCan

With dignity, knowledge expertise and generosity Professor Megan Davis and Pat Anderson led incredible consensus building through deep rich dialogues. When Professor Megan Davis first spoke the words of Uluru Statement from the Heart televised to us all directly into our living rooms from the most sacred of places: Uluru – where all the Songlines across the many nations intersect- she presented us all with an incredible gift embedding deep generosity and wisdoms drawing on the strengths and diversity across many Nations, Culture(s) & Lore.

A steer we cannot ignore, I believe the depth and impact in Nation Building across Australia through listening and introducing to all the recommendations the Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty and Truth – is both exceptionally profound and an urgent necessity for all of us and has huge support across Australia

It's absolutely critical the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution IS enshrined in the constitution.

It's time for the Referendum!

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Harcourt.