

KATHY MCPHERSON



To Co-Design Body

Submission for Co-design process

I currently live on Wadjuk Noongar country, specifically Walyalup (Fremantle) I was born on Dharawal land which was cared for by Gwyagal People. This beautiful area contains what is known as the Royal National Park which is filled with Indigenous Artefacts and Artworks (what is left of them anyway). I went to Heathcote High School and knew one Aboriginal girl- a member of the Stolen Generation being raised in a white Christian family. I learnt nothing at all about Indigenous Culture or History. Instead we heard of the glory of First Settlers that arrived close by in Botany Bay. I find this appalling and it has galvanised me ever since to learn and consider the value of all that was taken away through colonisation. We should have done better, we must do better.

*Why do you think the Uluru Statement from the Heart is important?*

Its a collective statement created and agreed upon by large numbers of First Nations People. It provides a direction and a vision for the whole country to truly move towards reconciliation and hopefully, a Treaty.

*How could a Voice to Parliament improve the lives of your community?*

I honestly can't believe we haven't got this already but it is one of the most powerful ways to shift the power imbalance that has existed for 200 years here. Indigenous voices are ignored, silenced or dismissed and this could at least bring some of the Aboriginal Perspectives into the conversation, with some power to influence decisions. Personally I won't rest until we have an Aboriginal Prime Minister and an Aboriginal Peoples' Party...but for that to happen we must have huge change eg a Treaty.

*Why do you think it's important to enshrine the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution, rather than include it only in legislation?*

It should already be in the Constitution but we all know the history of that by now, supposedly Aboriginal people didn't even exist and were not here but were only flora and fauna??? It is residue of racist policies (and Genocide in my opinion) that has left the First Nations People outside of Parliament, outside of power, influence, resources or choice. They must be able to self-determine processes and this won't happen unless we get less white voices and more black ones.

*Why is it important for Indigenous people to have a say in the matters that affect them?*

What a question.... of course it is important. Why would anyone think that things should be decided 'for them' or done 'to them'?? That is supremely disrespectful and is a legacy of the traumatic takeover that occurred in this country with the hite invasion and unfortunately carries on to this day. We must embrace Aboriginal Knowledge and Culture and Wisdom or else this place will remain sick and racist and toxic

I feel hopeful for the first time in a long time that we may be able to heal some of this country's tragic and disgusting past. Change comes slowly, especially when the people who hold the power don't want to let go. But it is SO IMPORTANT. We can't all be right until this is addressed and we must listen to Indigenous Voices, let them lead the way to

where this needs to go and offer support, opportunities and encouragement until they say this is good enough. We know it's not now...look at the Stats. SHAMEFUL! White Australia has caused so much damage. Let Indigenous people feel that they matter, see that they count, experience understanding and remorse and re-dress. If we don't have the courage to do that as a nation, then we cannot claim to be at all 'civilised' or 'first world'. Worse still, we will lose invaluable wisdom that we will never find again and our country will slowly die (as it is already)

Thank you,  
KATHY MCPHERSON

