

Dear Co-Design Body

I am not indigenous. I grew up on the land of the Dhudhuroa people in North-East Victoria. I currently live and work on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. I studied for my first degree in agriculture science on Wurundjeri land and then for my PhD on Ngannawal land. I work for a rights-based organisation (ActionAid) that focuses on women's rights internationally and that also recognises and pays respect to the First Nations people of Australia.

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

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is indescribably important and some reasons below

- It was agreed to through the incredible diplomatic and consensus building skills of First Nations people.
- It re-iterates the demands that First Nations people have been making for decades if not centuries
- It graciously welcomes all Australians to join with First Nations
- It is poetic and beautifully written and makes me emotional every time I read it.
- It gives me great hope in these COVID and times of great inequality in Australis and the World

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

Indigenous people own this land and they graciously let all Australians live here. It was never and never will be ceded The Constitution must absolutely recognise this and ensure that their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled no matter who holds legislative power.

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

I believe that people are entitled and must have a say in the matters that affect them. Not only is this their absolute right but they are also best placed to decide collectively what is best for themselves. We apply this in our work in ActionAid and I hold it as a personal principle. There is also plenty of evidence that Indigenous people know what is best for Australian lands and their people and communities (using fire is one clear example) and that models where they do not have a say do and have clearly not worked.

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

Whilst I am non-indigenous, I believe that Indigenous people can provide us with an alternative model of living that will help us better manage our lands and work towards a fairer society. If Indigenous people have a Voice to Parliament, then they will be even more respected as leaders and we can all join them in making Australia fairer and manage our environment including the climate better. I also believe that it will mean that more services can be delivered by and for Indigenous People, that free, prior and informed consent for land is more likely to be legislated and that sacred sites will be respected. Indigenous issues and rights cannot be left at the will of the political party in power but must be consistently respected, protected and fulfilled.