

A letter to express support of a Voice to Parliament, enshrined in the Constitution:

We are non-indigenous Australians, a registered nurse with experience in emergency and prison health nursing and an academic geoscientist researcher, lecturer and leader. We live with our 6 year old daughter in Adelaide on Kurna land.

We love the community we live in and the land we live on. We wholeheartedly and unreservedly support the Uluru Statement and the enshrining of a Voice to Parliament that is protected in the Australian Constitution. This latter part is particularly important, to separate the Voice to Parliament from party politics, and to prevent setbacks resulting from political change. This is a way to ensure First Nations peoples are involved in political discussions and are represented in decision making processes, that they have a seat at the table in a meaningful way.

We're appalled at the ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are currently not recognised and given formal opportunity to engage in political influence and decision making. This is reflected in the inequity and disadvantage that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face across so many sectors of our society, such as education, health care, justice, environmental management and protection of culturally significant locations. We fully support First Nations peoples in achieving political recognition, a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, a meaningful step towards achieving a better future.

From Kathryn - I have undertaken field-based studies in places such as on the traditional lands of the Yir Yoront and Koko-bera peoples (the Mitchell River delta) and the Arabana peoples (the Neales River and Peake Creek, to the west of Kati Thanda – Lake Eyre). I am in awe of the vast wealth of knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, into which I have only the smallest of insights as relate to my areas of expertise in geoscience research. We cannot fathom that this is not more widely recognised and revered across all sectors of our society.

We think it important that all people who live here confront the truthful history of Australia. Our daughter is learning at school about the truthful history both of the ancient knowledge and culture of First Nations peoples, and of invasion, resistance and colonisation. She is learning Kurna language. We wish that all children could have this experience and opportunity. We are doing our best to learn, to challenge our understanding of the past and present. We are sure that many people from across Australia will also support the achievement of this essential step towards reconciliation.

Some key points that we wish to emphasise, and are in full support of: Once a model for the Voice to Parliament has been settled, the Government must honour its election commitment to a referendum. Enabling legislation for the Voice to Parliament must be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament. We would like to emphasise the importance of the proposed membership model for the Voice to Parliament. This must truly represent First Nations. People who serve as members will be there to speak on behalf of those Nations. They won't be there to represent only themselves, or to represent a broad and diverse constituency in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a minority (as is the case for Members of Parliament). They will speak on behalf of First Nations. It is also important that these people are not selected only from well known or prominent figures. Previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must have the same chance as being elected as established leaders.

We recognise that the Uluru Statement is the result of a lot of work, by a lot of people over a very long time. It is a gift to us, as non-Indigenous Australians, and one that we are truly grateful for. We do not take this for granted.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Grech and Kathryn Amos .