

Submission to Indigenous Voice Discussion Paper

I am a non-aboriginal woman in the 66 years and over bracket. From all branches of my family, I am a descendent of early South Australian colonists. I live and work on the traditional lands of the Kurna and Nurrunga nations.

First and foremost, I support a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution as set out in the *Uluru Statement of the Heart*.

The *Uluru Statement of the Heart* is a compelling, considered and heartfelt statement of what is needed to allow black and white Australia to walk together. It was achieved after an extraordinary collective effort by of our First Nations. It cannot be ignored.

Implementation of the *Uluru Statement of the Heart* and enshrinement of a Voice to Parliament in our Constitution is, in my view, non-negotiable. Australia is a prosperous and successful nation leading the world in many ways. From this position of strength, it is time that we have the moral courage and generosity of spirit to acknowledge our colonial past and move forward together as a united nation.

The Commonwealth Government must honour its election commitment to hold a referendum to ensure that a First Nations Voice to Parliament is protected by the Constitution. Following a referendum – the outcome of which I believe will support a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution – enabling legislation must be passed immediately.

The Commonwealth Government must listen to the people.

The current proposal for an Indigenous Voice, as set out in the Discussion Paper, is a deflection from the *Uluru Statement of the Heart*. It is not the solution. I am disappointed that this Government has chosen to ignore the compelling joint request of our First Nations.

However, if it is an interim step while the lengthy process of changing the Constitution occurs and it will form the structural basis for a future Constitutional Voice to Parliament, I support the following arrangements for an interim Indigenous Voice:

- National Voice: Model 1 - Structural Membership Link; core membership numbers of 18 members, with 4 year staggered terms, no independent policy body, established as a Commonwealth Body; and
- Establishment of Local and Regional Voices to maximise local indigenous voices being heard and their needs being met.

Again, I reiterate my view that the current proposal for an Indigenous Voice in the Discussion Paper represents (1) a refusal by the current Commonwealth Government to listen to our First Nations who have clearly set out the solution in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and (2) a lack of moral strength to take this essential step for black and white Australia to fully reconcile.

Ann Doolette

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