

To Co-Design Body

### Submission to Co-design process

I am Wadjela and I live on Whadjuk land. I grew up in Perth and after living in Scotland for many years I felt the pull to return home. I have studied law, obtaining an LLB (Hons), and I have also studied units in psychology and early childhood education. I currently work as an Administration Support Officer for the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia. I have been inspired by some of my colleagues to educate myself more on Indigenous culture, language and matters. While I have a long way to go, I'm hopeful that I can be an ally to the Indigenous community and do whatever I can to help them have their voices rightfully heard.

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

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is very important because it is an invitation for Australia to work with Indigenous people to attempt to repair the damage we have caused and to show them the reverence and respect they have always deserved. I believe it is special because the people who have signed the statement would be completely entitled to treat us with contempt and anger. Instead, they have reached out with the hope that Australia can unite and repair the damage together and "begin the journey of coming together after a struggle."

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

For all people self-determination is crucial for sense of self and wellbeing. For generations Indigenous people have had this taken away from them with the effects plain to see. To begin to heal from the damage that "White Australia" has caused it is crucial that they no longer have self-determination taken away from them. The cultural diversity of Indigenous Australians also means it is of paramount importance that Indigenous people are the decision makers in matters that affect them. Personally, I would be woefully inadequate at representing the voice of a group of people if I cannot fully understand their traditions, culture and customs.

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

My community would be improved by a Voice to Parliament because it would begin to repair the inequality that Indigenous Australians have faced for centuries. While it is only the first of many steps required it would show our commitment to equality and fairness and would make me feel proud that I live in a community that wants to move in that direction rather than stay in the past denying the realities of our nation.

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

As someone who has studied law, I understand the significance of the Constitution and the important place it holds in our democracy. By being enshrined in the Constitution, the Voice to Parliament would be greater protected than if it were only included in ordinary legislation. While the constitution can only be altered through a referendum, ordinary legislation can be enacted or repealed by any political party that holds power in parliament. Including the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution would give greater protection whilst also showing Indigenous Australians that we as a country are behind them in having those rights protected. The fact that Indigenous people's rights are required to be voted on to be included in the Constitution is an entirely different but equally abhorrent issue.

Thank you,

