

Submission to Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process Support for a VOICE to Parliament, enshrined in the Constitution

Thankyou for your work on the Interim Report to the Australian Government.

Can truly see that the past is making us forget the present. We are living in times of great change... Perhaps some are still shackled to shame and maybe regret for what our forbears "may have done" to live here in the past, colours our insight. I however, cannot bear to read about massacres and retaliations, in the name of survival. Or the post colonial policies that have disadvantaged our aboriginal countrymen, time and time again.

It is time for change. No more commissions when the facts have been stated time and time again. A time to act.

So like others , with reconciliation, am honoured to stand with First Nations people and affirm the Uluru Statement from the Heart, standing in solidarity for them to be heard, by genuine listening with recognition and respect, and true understanding of what is needed towards the unification for all Australia's peoples. Too long we have seen inequality for our First Nations People.

"Its call for truth-telling, for a Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty-making, and for a national voice enshrined in the Constitution, is an invitation which must be acted upon.

1. I request that the Federal government honours it 2019 electoral promise to take a model for a First Nations VOICE to Parliament, to a referendum.
2. I ask for legislation for the First Nations VOICE to be passed after the referendum in the next term of Parliament.
3. The National VOICE member model, must be a model that ensures ALL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island grassroot voices are heard from every level.

This is fair, practical, timely, supported by Australians and is foundational to a unified Australia".

Lynette Scott

Member of Women's Reconciliation Network, Sydney.

MY COMMENTS:

I support the right way forward in acknowledging the continuing contribution of the first people of Australia to allowing us all to live peacefully in this wonderful country. And to learn the wisdom of the land that does not own us. Plus the plea for "mountain monoliths not manmade monuments" – the brave attempts by many to save our country from being blasted.

The Uluru Statement and the Makaratta is only the beginning of true understanding.

Our colonial past is cruel, and a rugged and unyielding one, of people who came here for a better life. Of inequality for those who are the true dwellers in this land.

Many who came here were incarcerated first, others came as free settlers. But mostly to the detriment to those who lived here in harmony, Australia's first people. Lands were taken, people killed in battles or massacres. Yes there were retaliations and mighty warriors like Pemulwy, Jandamarra, rightly fought back. Justice by a judge showing compassion, was sometimes served on white perpetrators, who committed inhumane crimes, an example, being the 1838 Myall Creek Massacre.

I grew up in Toongabbie, leant in kindergarten at Girraween Public, about the basics of aboriginal life then, not the true history. We owe a debt of gratitude for being able to live in this country. And should remember the legacy.

Some truth telling:attempts

- Nowadays, NITV, SBS or ABC programmes, replace Imparja TV which went to the outback. The range of viewing and awareness has expanded and wide coverage brings to light issues. On 17th March, watched the film "Bitter Springs" an old film which like "Jedda" brave in highlighting some of the truth telling from our past. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Significant Dates 2021 include 26 January - Survival Day. ...13 February – National Apology Day. ...
- 19 March – National Close the Gap Day. ...
- 21 March – Harmony Day. ...
- 26 May - National Sorry Day. ...
- 27 May – 3 June - National Reconciliation Week. ...
- 3 June - Mabo Day (part of National Reconciliation Week

I am very aware of the inequalities based on lack of opportunity, unfairness due to government policies and the affect of poverty on the lives of many, including the introduction of the card. Remoteness has its problems.

The judicial system in some parts of Australia appears biased and unfair in its treatment of law breakers who may go to gaol for minor offences or other reasons, and in doing so become despondent, despair, some will commit suicide, others die due to some form of health issue, that is not handled correctly.

Sexual misdemeanours real and unfounded:

What happened to expose young children in checking for sexual misadventure, real and implied, shocked me. My heart cried out that this happened, and my prayers that the little ones were treated with fairness and compassion during tests and that innocence wasn't being taken away.

The judgment of many based on a few would have demoralised the mental outlook of men who were not involved and made them look at their relationships.

Poverty:

The inequality or opportunity of where people are living in remote or other areas with disadvantage, the dispossession or relocation, the cashless card, selected places to shop at, the crowded housing, lack of facilities, job opportunity, water shortage.... can only lead to despair. We in the cities are so lucky.

Incarceration:

There are statistics. But why? We know the facts of aboriginal incarceration. True analysis is needed. Can't the punishment fit the crime. Why do we have deaths?

Does a mother or father have to go to gaol for minor offences such as not paying parking expenses due to an inability to do so? Couldn't there be some form of outside community service or other way to repay.

To know that once again through incarceration of parents, that there is a new "stolen generation" ... and the family break up, by fostering the children to others who are not in the kinship group... who may be white.

The statistics tell only the figures, not the why about incarceration, deaths in custody, the treatment of children by parental loss.

Domestic violence:

Why does it happen? who are the real victims? Hurting people hurt, but alcohol, drugs, poverty, overcrowding, no job, despair, isolated from the family group due to being moved around by government policy, only some of the reasons.

Positivity: Statistics suggest that 60% of aboriginal people are under 23

We do not hear enough about the positive side of aboriginality, of young people who shoulder the mentoring and responsibility for others, often at an early age, or of grandparents who bring up their grandchildren, or elders who are positive role models in their communities or the aunts and grandmothers who teach the young ones how to live a simpler better life. Or of those who perform land husbandry, or clear the ghost nets of the top of Australia. Can go on and on about how wonderful our aboriginal first people are. The creativity, love of land, of culture.

In conclusion, we cannot fully blame colonisation for all the wrongs of Australia, post colonisation government policies up to and including present day ones have influenced the way our aboriginal people live particularly in regional, remote and outback areas of Australia. We owe a debt of gratitude for being able to live in this country because of our wonderful first nation people. But shame too.

The "tribes" scattered throughout Australia cannot be told what to do by one group, and need to be represented by their "own voice" that is why am supporting the Uluru Statement. Change is needed.

I live in suburban Sydney, and know of struggles of city dwelling aboriginal people who are doing it tough, yet have a resilience and wonderful attitude, they live in two worlds, and ensure that their children go to school, and their cultural history is kept alive.

The Voice... must be heard. I cannot stress how much the land is being killed off..... and there is always the pointing the finger at others...

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Lynette Scott, Sydney