

Dr Jenny Ng
Address:
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Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Uluru Dialogue Submission

I write this submission in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a Voice to Parliament. This submission is written in my personal capacity. I think the Government's co-design process should take the Uluru Statement from the Heart into account when deciding on what a Voice to Parliament should look like.

Once a model to the Voice is made, the Government should allow for a referendum. The referendum was an election commitment that the Government has made. Hence, there is a reasonable expectation from the people that the Government honours its election commitments. Further, to ensure that the outcome of the referendum has legal effect, enabling legislation for the Voice must be passed after the referendum.

Additionally, previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander people should have a chance to be given lead roles in the membership model of the National Voice. This is imperative given that it concerns the affairs of the Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander people, and they would be the people who know best about what their needs are and what issues there are. Speaking as a minority and a former migrant who is now Australian, I think some rules and policies are simply the wrong fit for minorities,¹ and exemplifies how laws and policies may become unfair to some when they are made without knowing the issues and needs of certain groups of people. Rules that are ill-fitted for the minorities show a glaring lack of consideration for certain groups of people when such rules were made.

Democratically elected Governments make laws that are made for the people. Laws are made for the people and by the people. The law-making process needs to be more inclusive of the needs and issues of minorities as they are the people too. Hence, it is important for previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander people to have a chance to be given lead roles in the membership model of the National Voice.

Thank you.

Kind Regards

Dr Jenny Ng

¹ I have written to the Australian Law Reform Commission on this point several years ago. While I do not see the need to reiterate it in detail here as it was in relation to migrants (and this submission uses it as an analogy), I would be glad to furnish details upon request.