

Dear Co-Design Body

I am currently a university student studying at the University of Sydney. I am not Indigenous, but I was born and raised in Sydney, Australia.

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

I believe the Uluru Statement from the Heart is vital for positive co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Australia. Indigenous peoples continue to face many disadvantages today because the problem lies within systemic racism which is built into society via the constitution.

The constitution allows the government to create policies concerning Indigenous people without Indigenous peoples having a say in these laws. The laws and policies which are supposed to protect

Indigenous peoples are often discriminatory and have the opposite effect. The Uluru State offers hope

for reconciliation by putting forward a resolution to right the wrongs of colonisation. It is an important step in the development and advancement of Australia as a nation. Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander peoples are the first sovereign Nations of Australia and it is only right that they are recognised in the constitution.

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

Many laws and policies concerning Indigenous peoples have failed to promote positive outcomes.

This is because Indigenous peoples are not given a say in them. Indigenous people are part of the

solution, so it is important to give them their say in matters that affect them and listen to what they

have to say. Allowing them to contribute to matters concerning them will reduce the gap between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples across many life outcomes, subsequently promoting equality

and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The government has failed

to listen to Indigenous peoples many times throughout history and the detrimental consequences are

evident through the discrimination and disadvantages that many Indigenous communities continue to

face even after historical milestones such as the 1967 referendum and the Mabo decision.

Why do you think it's important to enshrine the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution, rather than

include it only in legislation?

Legislation can be repealed at the whim of the government. Enshrining the Voice to Parliament protects it at a constitutional level. It is a permanent representation that allows Indigenous peoples to

have their voice heard consistently because the government will not be able to remove, silence or

ignore the Voice when it is convenient for them. This is critical for long-lasting change and development because laws and policies concerning Indigenous peoples will not be able to be made or passed without their advice and approval.

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

Current laws and policies concerning Indigenous peoples are made by non-Indigenous peoples who

have never been to Indigenous communities and don't know the people within these communities. It is

no surprise that these laws and policies don't produce the positive outcomes they are intended to

produce because there is a lack of understanding. Indigenous people with the most knowledge regarding the challenges that they face. A Voice to Parliament will allow them to work with the government in creating solutions to these challenges that are actually productive. This will help improve the lives of Indigenous communities by empowering Indigenous members of the community,

promoting better mental and physical health which are associated with better outcomes for Indigenous

peoples across all aspects of life. Giving Indigenous peoples a voice will also result in more efficient

use of government funds, allowing for Indigenous-led services such as community-controlled health

organisations to thrive and reach their potential in closing the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.