

Shantell Bailey
Gillieston Heights NSW 2321

To Whom It May Concern

Submission for the Co-Design Process

My name is Shantell Bailey and I am a proud Wiradjuri woman and lawyer practising in Newcastle New South Wales. I grew up as a young person in the Blue Mountains and as an adult studied a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Social Science at Macquarie University graduating in 2017.

Since this time, I have worked as a young lawyer for both the federal and New South Wales government in different capacities. I am a member of the Uluru Youth Network and sit on the New South Wales Law Society's Indigenous Issues Committee.

In 2019 I was invited to attend the Uluru Youth Summit in Cairns and join the Youth Network facilitated by the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW. Through this process I became more aware about the importance of the Uluru Statement and what this represents for our people.

The Statement calls for three key components of self-determination. Voice, Treaty and Truth. As a young Aboriginal woman this represents an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to engage, work with and move towards a brighter and unified future with our allies and community.

This is why a voice to parliament is so important. It would allow the self-determination of our communities to be protected under this founding document and for our people to continuously have a voice to Parliament about the matters that impact us and our peoples into the future.

This is significant as we are critically aware that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities are given the tools to be self-determined and make decisions and choices for and to assist their own communities that this is when we see change. When our people are given the opportunity to make these decisions our communities, children and families will flourish and unfortunately I do not see that this opportunity would be possible with a 'legislated' voice as there would be no ongoing legal protection or surety regarding such power.

If a voice is not enshrined in the Constitution, we face the political trap of having progress made if a voice is legislated whilst having this dismantled and taken away when future governments decide it no longer fits within their priorities. We have seen this time and time again.

As noted in the Statement whilst proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet, we are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the

future. These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

As the Statement calls for, we seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

My hope is that with this information the government plainly understands the importance of enshrining a voice to Parliament and its significance in allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to walk together with our non-Indigenous peers to achieve a brighter future.

I thank you for your considerations of this submission and implore the government to move towards constitutional enshrinement of the voice in the immediate future.

Kind regards,

Shantell Bailey
25 March 2021