

To whom it may concern

Submission for Co-design process

I'm an Australian-Indian who is a law graduate working at Gilbert+Tobin. I have previously worked at the ALS and AIATSIS. I was born, raised and currently lived in Sydney.

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

I think the statement is remarkable for how consultative it was across a wide spectrum of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It shows us a clear intention of what is required to properly enact reconciliation.

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

Indigenous people's opinions, experiences and perspectives should be at the forefront of any governmental or institutional response to the many ongoing issues affecting them, particularly the ones which disproportionately affect them or are unique to them given cultural circumstances. It's important as Indigenous people have real insight into what can be done, of which others outside the community simply cannot have as close an understanding.

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

It is critical that the Voice is constitutionally enshrined rather than passed only through legislation. Legislation is vulnerable to be repealed entirely by subsequent governments. Constitutional status has both immense practical impact and also symbolic importance.

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

It would make Australia a fairer place to live, as the Voice would assist in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It would improve the disparity which exists in our community.

Thank you,
Shivika Gupta