

Submission – Indigenous Interim Voice Co-Design

I am writing a submission to request that the government, who represents us the people, respect our demands and honour its own commitments it has made in previous elections.

I call on the government to honour its promise to a referendum once a model for the Indigenous Voice to Parliament has been created. A National Voice for Indigenous Australians must be enshrined in the Constitution to enable real change that is desperately needed for our communities, and not just rely on the promise of politicians that are made year after year, only to be forgotten about or changed when a new government is elected. A Constitutional change, made possible by a referendum, will ensure Indigenous voices are always heard and must be listened to.

The second aspect I am calling for is that the government enable legislation for the Voice to be passed *after* a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament. It is vital that a referendum is held first so that, like I have stressed, the changes that are made are Constitutional and binding.

Finally, I insist that the membership model for the National Voice must ensure that all Indigenous voices are heard, regardless of their locality or tribe. In fact, it must be prioritised that rural and regional, including Indigenous people living in extremely isolated locations and Torres Strait Islanders, are listened to and included in a future membership model. This will ensure that previously unheard Indigenous Australians have the same chance as being selected as well-known and established leadership figures in the community.

I also want to add that it is important there is a two-stage process to establishing a Voice to Parliament. The constitutional, legislative and executive options to enacting the Voice should be a structural and separate process that results in the Australian public having the time to properly understand the details of the Voice before a referendum is held. The second step will of course be the drafting of the constitutional amendment that will allow the Voice to exist and be put forward in a referendum, and then finally a pathway to a referendum in the next term of Parliament being created.

Thank you for listening to our voice and I hope you will listen to this submission. We are crying for change.