

[REDACTED]

To Co-Design Body

Submission for Co-design process

I am a proud Gaddigal man from Sydney, currently employed as a Deputy Associate [REDACTED]. I grew up in [REDACTED] Western Sydney. I completed a Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Arts majoring in History and Political thought in 2020 at Western Sydney University. I have been involved with [REDACTED], which is a program which aims to support and mentor young indigenous High School students.

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

Indigenous people need to be heard. Not only on issues directly affecting them but more broadly. Indigenous voices must be heard for there to be any actual change in our society. There is no use in non-indigenous people making decisions which have huge ramifications for indigenous people without consulting us. Indigenous people have sought to be included in these decisions for many years. The past has shown that without a change such as that sought by the Uluru statement, there is little hope in our voice being heard.

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

Non-indigenous people, although most of the time meaning well, simply do not understand the issues facing indigenous people, particularly those in rural areas. I have grown up in urban/suburban areas my whole life so I also have little idea of the issues facing other indigenous people in rural areas. They need to not only be heard but listened to. I believe there is also a lack of understanding on the power of language. When laws are passed without consultation with indigenous people, cultural sensitivity surrounding the language used is not considered.

Why do you think a Voice to Parliament is important?

Indigenous people should be heard on all issues, not only issues directly affecting them. Indigenous people are vulnerable given our low percentage of the population and high concentration of our people living in rural/remote areas. We are uniquely affected by the laws passed by the Australian government for a myriad of reasons and as such should be consulted with when laws are being enacted.

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

The Voice needs to be protected. Legislation doesn't provide adequate protection to a Voice as it can simply be repealed. Enshrining the Voice in the Constitution will provide this protection as it may not simply be repealed by an Act of government.

Thank you,
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