

## “YOUTH EMPOWERING YOUTH”

Indigenous Voice Co-Design Committee

Co-designVoice@niaa.gov.au

Dear National Co-Design Committee Members,

Firstly, we acknowledge the committee's commitment to work towards progressing the establishment of a National Indigenous Voice.

We are Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation (DIYDG), a youth led not-for-profit organisation based in Cairns, Far North Queensland. We were founded in 2016 by a collective of young people who have a passion to change the narrative and challenge the stereotypes.

As an organisation we strive to provide safe spaces for young people in our community to belong, feel accepted and build an extended family network that believe in them. We tap into our culture to design youth-led initiatives that we believe will have sustainable impacts in our community. We recognise our responsibility to contribute to change the legacy of disempowerment for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

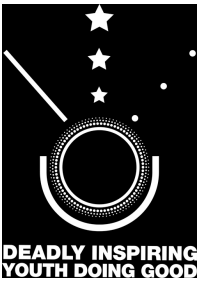
On a daily basis our organisation is confronted with the urgent need for change to legislation and policies that disempower the lives of young people. We are confronted with young people who feel their voices are not valued and that they do not belong anywhere in our society.

Together with Australians from all walks of life, we are playing our small role to address this. We acknowledge the potential in the establishment of a National Indigenous Voice and how it can be a catalyst for change.

On reflection of the National Indigenous Voice Interim Report, we would like to bring to your attention two elements that need to be considered.

### **THE YOUTH VOICE**

The interim report notes the establishment of the permanent youth advisory committee to the National Indigenous Voice. Firstly, we acknowledge the committee's intent in providing a space for youth voices to be heard. As a predominantly youth-led organisation, we know first-hand the power of young people when provided an opportunity to actively contribute to society. Currently, approximately 60% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are aged under 25, however too often we are not consulted nor provided an opportunity to be a part of decision making when it affects the lives of young people.



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In response, we ask that the committee consider an established seat at the national voice for a youth elected position from the permanent youth advisory committee. Such position will ensure that we do not fall into the trap of an adhoc approach to listening to youth voices.

We also make the recommendation that youth voices be considered as a separate principal in the local and regional voices model. Our culture is grounded in teaching our young people our ways of being through yarning, listening, seeing and doing. Without that learning process built into this system, we continue to disconnect our young people from our way of governing.

### **THE PROTECTION OF OUR VOICE**

We acknowledge the committee mandate in the formation of the proposed model for a National Indigenous Voice was not to consider constitutional enshrinement. Nevertheless, as supporters of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we believe that constitutional enshrinement is essential for lasting and impactful change.

We have historically experienced the cycles and whim of governments to establish and abolish legislative bodies that govern Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. We have heard many stories from our elders of such representative bodies that were legislated. The key message from our elders is the need to protect our voice beyond the cycles of government.

To achieve this, we urge the Australian Government to provide the Australian people an opportunity to express their support for an enshrined voice in the constitution. A referendum must occur before legislating an Indigenous Voice.

We cannot be fearful that Australians are not in support of constitutional recognition. Instead, we carry hope in our hearts that we will walk together for a better future.

Thank you for the opportunity to make our submission.

Yours in Solidarity,

Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation