

To Co-Design Body

Co-design process: Submission

This is a collective submission from:

_____ is a Gamilaroi woman living and deeply connected to the Illawarra and Shoalhaven communities.

_____ works with communities in the Illawarra & Shoalhaven and co-convenes stakeholders across sectors to work collectively (collective impact) engaging, supporting and building capacity with communities to resolve the needs and address/work on intergenerational challenges.

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

The creation respectfully developed through 'right way' engagement (not just lip service consultation) with a large number of voices from across communities.

It is a collective, unifying statement of truth that has the ability (if implemented) to unify this land. It's a forward looking plan for the future, to address the wrongs of the past. It is hopeful, honest, unifying (for all Australians), collective, reflective and truthful.

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

Community 'voice' should be at the centre of all co-creation, decision making and action for all communities - holistically. A Voice to Parliament needs to be a 'just' representative channel for communities. A Voice to Parliament would need to be listened to and acted upon to be effective and to improve the lives of community.

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

This question, in so many ways, is insulting. Every person wants and deserves a say in the matters that affect them.

It is essential (not just important) for everyone, of all backgrounds, to have a say in the matters that affect them.

As the traditional owners and custodians of this land it is ESSENTIAL that all Aboriginal people have a say in matters that affect them, our communities and the land.

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

Like a building - do you fix the foundations or do you putty the cracks? That is the difference between constitutional amendment or a piece of legislation.

Legislation can be easily and quickly changed or reversed at the whim of those in power at any time. Constitutional amendment requires the direct decision making of all Australians, together.

As the founding document of the Federation (the foundation) it says a lot about who we are as a nation and where we are headed.

Ongoing Reconciliation and a reconciled future can only truly occur when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, knowledges and values are reflected in the founding document of Australia. In the absence of a treaty and compensation, constitutional recognition is the only way forward towards reconciling Australia for the future.

Prior to The Apology to the Stolen Generations, there was similar debate and resistance to the taking of such action and the potential repercussions of such action (which did not eventuate).

It seems to us that the Uluru Statement is the next logical step, and is being met with similar resistance and unfounded fear and concerns. Many non-Indigenous Australians struggle with their complicity in and shame at Australia's culturally violent past and present, the disruption of Aboriginal cultures and dislocation of Aboriginal peoples.

Constitutional recognition and a voice to Parliament goes towards addressing this in a safe way for all Australians. Recognition of the Aboriginal people of these lands, coupled with a Voice to Parliament in the constitution, should be a basic step of respect for our people who are and always will be the traditional custodians. It is important for all Australians to honour our history of tens of thousands of years, which needs therefore to be recognised in the founding document for the commonwealth of Australia.

Yours sincerely,

