

I am an Australian, but I am not an Indigenous Australian or a Torres Strait Islander and I wish to make a constructive contribution to the Co-Design Interim Report to the Australian Government: Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process.

As an Australian citizen I wish to stand up for what Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders are patiently asking for once more - a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution - because it is simply the right, moral, ethical and practical thing to do. It is time to enshrine their Voice permanently in our Constitution, as they deserve.

Once the model for the Voice has been settled, we must have the Referendum promised during the last election so that all Australians can have the opportunity to be heard on this matter. Then legislation must follow.

It is not enough, however, to simply legislate for a First Nations Voice, as history has shown the vacillations of political parties, and their ability to dismiss, change or withdraw legislation, even critically important legislation.

Legislation for the Voice and Constitutional enshrinement cannot and must not be separated.

Constitutional recognition of a First Nations Voice is the only way we can ensure its permanence, and will lay a solid ground, foundation, and reference point for all future legislation, actions and decisions made in future by governments, all other bodies and individuals.

A Voice in the Constitution is the right thing to do because until the horrendous past and inequity First Nations people have suffered is brought into the light, their place as the original occupants of this land is acknowledged, they are given their own voice in Parliament, and healing takes place, we cannot move forward as a healthy vibrant nation of diverse peoples into a better future.

Now is the time, we can't afford to let this moment, which started with Prime Minister Rudd's Apology on behalf of us all, pass, for as a nation we will be much the poorer for it.

For the sake all future generations and for the sake of the nation we will become in the future, we need to act instead of just talking. We need to do this thing that has needed to be done for so long, and is being asked for over and over again in such a patient, heart felt and dignified manner.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.