

Nicolette Jackson

██████████ Mullumbimby NSW 2482

Dear Co-Design Body

Submission to Co-design process

Hello, My name is Nicolette Jackson. I am a 55 year old woman living in Northern NSW. I have spent the last 20 years of my life working as a humanitarian for the medical aid organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders. I was born in the UK to expatriate Australian parents. My mum and dad are both from the bush in NSW, my mum from Tamworth my Dad from Premer.

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

It is striking to me that when my parents grew up they lived in siloed worlds from their First Nations neighbours. I am amazed that although they lived in the bush they had no awareness at all of the horror/human rights abuses that was unfolding throughout their childhoods on first Nation Australians including: the Stolen Generations; wage theft, herding of communities onto missions, apartheid living etc. Coming up to our modern day the injustices continue: the gross racism displayed by the criminal justice system, the senseless deaths in custody, the horrendous health outcomes for indigenous Australians and disadvantage their communities face in so many ways.

I still can't believe that is possible in Australia and that there's never been a serious reckoning of these gross injustices. All this to say - that there needs to be some very big, very serious healings for our nation - we cannot just accept the status quo. This is why I think the Uluru Statement from the Heart is so important.

I am awe-struck by the graciousness and generosity of spirit of First Nation Australians despite everything they as communities have had and continue to endure. The crafting of the Statement of the Heart is a testament to this generosity of spirit. I am so moved by the beautiful sentiments and the spirit of 'willingness to move forward together' that the Statement articulates.

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

It is important to enshrine the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution so that it is not subject to the changing whims of politicians or shock jocks who sway public opinion. This is a journey that we must commit to taking together, over the long term. We need certainty – and enshrining this in the Constitution will enable this.

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

I look with envy to New Zealand and the way that society; government and important institutions have embraced and honoured their indigenous brothers and sisters. I so wish for us to do this here in Australia. Having the input, perspective and wisdom of First Nations citizens in Australia through a Voice to Parliament would imbue our federal parliament with a perspective that goes above self-serving, political short-term-ism and would inject more wisdom, spirituality, sustainability and ecologically minded thinking into Canberra. Which we desperately, desperately need. We are lucky enough to have members of the oldest, continuing culture in the world sharing their land with us, we must value their perspective.

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

It is essential that indigenous people have a say in matters that affect them. This is obvious. If we are genuinely willing to move on from neo-colonial, white privilege and

institutional racism it goes without saying that First Nations people are given all the necessary tools and means to determine for themselves how they live.

Please listen to us. We need this. For our nation's soul we need to make peace. And we need to honour and start listening to our indigenous fellow citizens. It's time!

Kind regards,
Nicolette Jackson