

SUBMISSION TO INDIGENOUS VOICE CO-DESIGN PROCESS

SUPPORT FOR A VOICE TO PARLIAMENT, ENSHRINED IN THE CONSTITUTION

Thea Butler
Bidjigal Country

Dear Co-Design committee

I am writing to express my support for the creation of a Representative Advisory Voice to Parliament as detailed in the Interim Report on the Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process. Please see my comments on the Interim Report on the design of this National Voice.

I thank the work of the Advisory Team in creating the Interim Report to the Australian Government on the Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process.

I advocate for a Constitutional Amendment that enshrines a National Advisory First Nations Voice that is representative of voices across national, regional and local communities.

Whilst Constitutional enshrinement was outside of the terms of reference of the co-design team, I believe Constitutional enshrinement is needed to ensure the Voice's stability, certainty and flexibility.

I stand with 86% of the Australian general community¹, and in solidarity with 91% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples,² who believe it is important for a representative Indigenous Body to be established to share the views of Indigenous Australians regarding Indigenous affairs and policies.

I support a call for a Referendum, so this can be Constitutionally enshrined.

Constitutional reform is important to me. I believe it is crucial to recognise First Nations people as part of the fabric of this Country and I want my identity as an Australian in the document that represents US ALL to reflect a shared identity that includes and ascribes importance and pride to the oldest living culture, this recognition is a sign of respect and acknowledgement and it is time to make the change.

I request that the Federal government honours its 2019 electoral promise to take a model for a First Nations VOICE to Parliament, to a referendum.

1. The National VOICE *must* be represented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to ensure self-determination. Following calls from the Uluru Statement from

¹ Reconciliation Australia, *2020 Australian Reconciliation Barometer*, p. 14. https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/australian_reconciliation_barometer_2020_full-report_web.pdf

² Ibid.

the Heart, I advocate for a Makaratta Commission to supervise the creation of the advisory First Nations Voice.

2. The National VOICE member model must be a model that ensures ALL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grassroots voices are heard from every level.

95% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 94% of the general community believe it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in matters that affect them.³ The creation of the Voice would therefore reflect the popularity of the motion and the priorities of both the general Australian public and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

This is a crucial step in Australia's national journey of reconciliation, and Constitutional enshrinement of a First Nations Voice to Parliament would enact a cultural change of Australian identity that honours the place of Australia's First Peoples, and would empower them to have influence the decisions that govern their lives.

Supporter,

Thea Butler

25 March 2021

³ Reconciliation Australia, *2020 Australian Reconciliation Barometer*, p. 62. https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/australian_reconciliation_barometer_2020_full-report_web.pdf