

I have been immensely moved by reading the Uluru Statement and felt inspired to have my say in support of the implementation of the key recommendations. This Statement has been offered by First Nations peoples to the Australian people as a way to move forward in unity and is such a precious gift that cannot be underestimated. The Uluru Statement's creators have come to a beautiful consensus and given this country a chance to make genuine inroads into the unfair disparities between First Nations peoples and 'the rest of us'. What an incredible opportunity for this country to finally acknowledge that we don't have the answers to the entrenched problems impacting our First Nations peoples without listening to and valuing the voice of those people.

I wholeheartedly believe that Australia cannot move forward as a cohesive and proud nation without embracing a First Nations Voice to Parliament which is enshrined and protected by our Constitution. Having the Voice enshrined in the Constitution is the only way to ensure the long term entrenched issues faced by First Nations peoples will no longer be at the mercy of political machinations, term cycles and election theatrics.

While I didn't vote for the current federal government, I believe they must honour their pre-election commitment to hold a referendum on this issue as matter of priority in the next term of parliament, and then pass the legislation to make it a reality as soon as possible following a successful referendum. Failure to do so will continue to negatively impact the outcomes for First Nations peoples, and ultimately all Australians.

I am also supportive of the membership model for the National Voice being open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, so we can have the perspectives and contributions of those who have not necessarily been heard before.

I want an Australia that values, appreciates, respects and has pride in our First Nations peoples. I want to feel proud of my country having a deeply respectful relationship with our First Nations peoples. I have despaired in the past of ever seeing this in my lifetime. The Uluru Statement gave me hope that it may be possible. Enshrining a First Nations Voice in the constitution is the way forward, the pathway First Nations peoples have offered to this country.

Please, recommend that the federal government make this happen, so that we can finally walk alongside our First Nations peoples, as Lila Watson and colleagues have said so eloquently "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together". Our liberation as a country is intricately bound with the liberation of our First Nations Peoples. Now is the the time to make it a reality.