

### Submission in support of Co-Design Proposals for Indigenous Voice

I offer my grateful support to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its proposals for a fairer, wiser and richer Australia in which the rights and voices of First Nations people are included in legislation to give Australia unity and dignity, long overdue. This is, in my view, urgently needed to give integrity to our nation, where indigenous people have been marginalized and excluded for too long – not just to their loss, but also, powerfully, to an impoverishment of our status and integrity as a nation.

It will give our country a soul.

As a descendant of early settlers who has inherited privilege from their dispossession of the indigenous people, I feel uncomfortable and unsettled about the ongoing suffering caused to them and their descendants by the way this nation was founded. I am grateful for the generosity, patience and grace shown by First Nations people in proposing the Voice, Treaty and Truth-telling (Makaratta) as a way forward that will enlarge us as individuals and as a nation.

I support all three items in the submission –

- That the Federal Government must honour its election commitment to a referendum once the model for the Voice has been settled.
- That the enabling legislation for the Voice must be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament.
- That the membership model for the National Voice must ensure previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same chance of being selected as established leadership figures.

It is essential that the Voice is enshrined in the Constitution and believe that when Australians understand that it will make our country stronger - similar to other settler societies who have enacted treaties and other kinds of 'Makaratta' to unite their countries - they will endorse it, as they did, overwhelmingly with the 1967 referendum.

I thank all those involved with the Uluru Statement and the Co-design Process, and look forward with great hope to the day when the Voice becomes a profound and unifying addition to our polity.

Margaret McHarg

14 March 2021

I agree to my submission being published if it would be helpful.