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To whom it may concern

Submission to Co-design process

My name is [REDACTED], I am a 19 year old Australian citizen living on stolen land. I am a University of Melbourne student studying Political Science. I have a keen interest in Australian politics. I love this country. I truly appreciate the care and effort our politicians put in to keep us healthy and happy. However, there's a real problem with the way we treat First Peoples, and it won't go away by ignoring it. Indigenous Australians continue to experience some of the most adverse health outcomes, with many treatable diseases and conditions becoming long-term illnesses and disabilities. In fact, Australia has the highest rates of disability in all Indigenous populations within settler-colonial countries. Indigenous children continue to be taken from their homes at unprecedented rates, while Indigenous youth are subjected to inhumane treatment in juvenile detention. It is clear that these government interventions cause more harm than good.

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

The Uluru Statement is important because it centers Indigenous voice in discussion of issues we see within Indigenous communities.

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

A First Nations Voice will improve my community by empowering Indigenous members to engage in leadership roles and feel represented within politics. This will increase social cohesion and help everyone feel hopeful about Australia's future.

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

It's vital to have a First Nations Voice enshrined in the constitution, not just legislated, to protect Indigenous Voice from the revolving door of prime ministers and parties that don't all have the same priorities for Indigenous health and wellbeing.

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

It's important that Indigenous peoples have a say in matters that affect them because they have better knowledge and insight of issues affecting Indigenous communities and how to solve them. It is clear that state interventions do not work. Instead of problematising Indigenous peoples existence, we should be empowering and allocating resources/tools to help everyone have space to comfortably belong.

Please. I am asking for your humanity. Don't make me lose faith in this system. I know we can do better if we try.

Kind regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name.