

Porsha O'Brien

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15th August 2018

The Hon Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister Morrison,

My name is Porsha O'Brien and I'm a Year 12 student currently attending Port Lincoln High School. I am both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal belonging to the Wuthathi tribe in Cape York, Queensland.

As part of my SACE completion I am undertaking a study into the Uluru Statement from the Heart. During my research I have uncovered many sources of information regarding this issue, in particular the upset it has caused many Australian people. As I understand, the terms of the bill were rejected in Parliament, ultimately leaving my future as an Aboriginal woman unknown in respect to my voice being heard. I was affected by the disregard for this revolutionary campaign that would change the course of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's lives forever with the power to have a voice in their affairs.

Constitutional reforms are the only avenue for the empowerment of Indigenous peoples of Australia today. The implementation of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the constitution will increase the social and economic status of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is evident that the policies we have in place at present are not sustainable, therefore leaving the already disadvantaged Indigenous people vulnerable. I believe enforcing a First Nations Voice will ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are appropriately represented in Parliament in relation to Indigenous affairs. In my experience, I have seen the displacement of Aboriginal communities as a result of the last 200 years of oppression. To overcome this, we need to be given the opportunity to have a voice in the Australian government that will warrant political change. The Australian population is ready for this change, why aren't you?

The second appropriation is for a Makarrata Commission to supervise the process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations. This is an important component for Aboriginal

people as the word 'makarrata' comes from the Yolngu tribe meaning 'coming together after a struggle'. This is a fundamental advancement towards bridging the gap between the Australian government and the First Nations people, thus signifying a united nation. Australia is the only country that doesn't have a treaty with their First Nations people, which I feel is a national tragedy.

Finally, the Uluru Statement from the Heart requests the truth telling about our history. This is crucial because the historical mistreatment of Aboriginal people has been the root cause for many of their current circumstances. People within my community do not have the knowledge nor the understanding of the history of Australia and its First People, which I have seen lead to widespread division. The truth telling of our history can only be properly taught if it is known and documented in our historical story as a nation. The next step to education and understanding would be a thorough implementation into the Australian Curriculum so all Australians and broader can gain an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history.

Your consideration on this matter is greatly appreciated as it resonates with me being an Indigenous woman hoping to change the society we live in today.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Porsha O'Brien