



Believing In
Children,
Young People,
Families &
Their Future.

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The Northern Specialist Family Violence Service (NSFVS), Berry Street
677 The Boulevard, Eaglemont VIC 3084 | Wurundjeri Country

To Co-Design Body

Co-design process: Submission for The Northern Specialist Family Violence Service (NSFVS), Berry Street

Berry Street acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways across Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present. We acknowledge Elders as holders, protectors and educators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We pay respect to the emerging Elders and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in our care to connect to their cultures, countries and communities. NSFVS Berry Street recognises that sovereignty was never ceded and acknowledges the continuing impact invasion has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to date. We commit to ensuring all staff understanding Australia's true history, as an organisation and as a country, and recognise the importance of acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which we operate.

The Northern Specialist Family Violence Service (NSFVS) is the lead provider for the integrated family violence system in the Northern Metropolitan sub-region of Melbourne operating on the unceded land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. The NSFVS provides support services to victim survivors of family violence and their children inclusive of cis gendered heterosexual women and, their children; and people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Community (LGBTQ+) and their children. NSFVS provides a range of specialist family violence programs. The service acknowledges that family violence disproportionately impacts people who do not benefit from structural power. The service works from a framework that attempts to promote victim survivors' sense of self and encourage their agency (empowerment) while simultaneously working for social change to address the drivers and enablers of family violence. This framework incorporates an understanding of the multi factorial contributors to the experience of family violence by an individual. This includes contextualising a person within their culture. In our work with First Nations people we understand that invasion and the ongoing process of colonisation has resulted in the disruption of kinship networks, i.e. the targeted disruption to secure attachments through institutionalisation of children (The Stolen Generation) which has resulted in transgenerational trauma which is ongoing.

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

The NSFVS is proud to support the intent of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We accept the invitation from the representatives of First Nations explicit in the Uluru Statement to all Australians to support constitutional and structural reform to enable Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander people to take their rightful place in this nation. We support the proposal for a Voice to Parliament enabled by the constitution that honours the right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say on matters that impact their communities. We acknowledge the negative impact and outcomes on Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities when they are denied power to make decisions relating to their communities. As a group the team at NSFVS represent the three parts of Australia as articulated by Noel Pearson indigenous, British and multicultural. We sincerely thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait people for their generous invitation to join with them to support their request for a voice to parliament enshrined in the constitutional and the Makarrata Commission as outlined in the Uluru Statement (2017)

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

The NSFVS supports the call to enshrine the Voice to Parliament in the Australian constitution. This will ensure that the importance of the First Nations voice is central and that the voice has the legitimacy required to carry out its purpose. To enshrine the Voice to Parliament in the Australian Constitution signifies a recognition of where we begin as a nation and creates a coherence in our national identity as a just people.

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

The NSFVS recognises that the call for a Voice to Parliament through the Uluru Statement from the Heart remains just as important as it was in 2017. It is a fair and practical reform that will make a real difference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The NSFVS recognises that Australian government has a history of enacting racist legislation when First Nations peoples are not involved in decisions that impact their communities. Berry Street values and prioritises relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations at a local and state level, and we support constitutional reforms to embed a First Nations Voice to Parliament. We support self-determination and acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples are most equipped to have choice, control, authority and responsibility in determining best outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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

Lilla Watson, Aboriginal Elder and activist challenged Australians with the following "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." The NSFVS recognises that our liberation as a country is bound up with the liberation of First Nations peoples and the Voice to Parliament is a required step for the liberation of all.

Sincerely,
The Northern Specialist Family Violence Service (NSFVS), Berry Street