

[REDACTED]
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To whom it may concern

Co-design process: Submission for [REDACTED]

I am the CEO and Founder of [REDACTED] and an experienced consultant and professional trainer, with specialist skills in family violence, intersectionality, and diversity and inclusion. I have completed a Bachelor of Science (Psychology); Bachelor of Arts (Criminology); Bachelor of Social Work; Advanced Diploma in Group Facilitation; Certificate IV in Dual Diagnosis; and Certificate IV in Training, Assessment and Education. I am also the current Chair of [REDACTED]. I was born in Lebanon and migrated to Australia when I was 9 years old. I have mostly dedicated my career to supporting individuals and families who are experiencing various hardships, including family violence, refugee experiences, violent offenders and those battling with addiction (substance use and gambling).

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

I loved that First Nations people got together and collaborated on this statement. I find the process very sophisticated and beautiful in its inclusivity of various Aboriginal communities and leaders. I love that the gathering was at Uluru, having visited that sacred site in 2012, I felt its majestic presence and strong spirit. It's also the center of Australia and a perfect location to bring various nations together. I think it's abhorrent that First Nations people are not recognised in the constitution and continue to be mistreated so profoundly by the Australian governments and system. As a more recent migrant to this land, having learned about its violent history towards its indigenous population, I recognise my duty as a citizen here to support and boost the plight of Aboriginal Australians in as many ways as I can.

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

I believe that this nation will only truly thrive once we properly acknowledge and respect its traditional custodians, their ancestors and their elders. As long as we don't have a Voice to Parliament, we are neglecting and disregarding the ancient wisdom of First Nations people, and by doing that, we're all missing out and the land is suffering. I also don't accept the disparity in living standards that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

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

It's important for any individual / community to have a say in matters that affect them, it's absurd to have it any other way. Self-determination is key to healthier and more fulfilling lives. It's necessary that White Australia learns to co-exist with First Nations people in all their diversities, rather than continue to impose Western European ideologies onto them and everyone else that lives here.

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

So that it can't be changed easily and so that it's given the recognition it deserves.

Thank you for including me in this process =)

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]