

## Submission of Co-Design of Indigenous Voice to Parliament

I would like to thank the Co-design committees for their work and for this opportunity to communicate directly with the National government on this very important issue.

I support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and I want an Indigenous Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Australian Constitution, comprised of a National Voice, and Local and Regional Voices. I also want the Government to hold a referendum after the next federal election.

In response to the options suggested in the co-design models of the voice to parliament.

- The Voice should have at least 18 members (not 16), requiring at least 2 members for each state, territory and the Torres Strait Islands. It should run as a government funded organization and provide members with resources, staffing and indigenous contacts based on the indigenous population in their area.
- Funding should include paying the 18 members, administration staff, legal advice, research teams and payment for local and remote area indigenous people to have the capacity to collect data and canvas opinions in their areas.
- Membership terms of 4 years (or longer) are essential to make a proper impact and allow adequate time for proper consultation. Terms should be staggered so that only half the members are replaced at one time, allowing the accumulated knowledge to be preserved and transferred to new members.
- In order to enhance the Respectful Long-term Partnerships principle, members should not be limited to 2 terms. Politicians in Australia do not currently have a limit on the number of terms they can stay in power, and neither should the members of the Voice.
- A previous imprisonment should not prevent you from becoming a member, (as demonstrated by Nelson Mandella), especially as the incarceration rates for indigenous people in Australia are so high.
- The National Voice will have a right and responsibility on behalf of indigenous Australians to advise Parliament and the Government with regards to any matters that members deem to be significant.

I am a 62 year old non indigenous Australian who was born in Australia. I own my own home on a suburban city block and have had the privilege of a university education and a good job, which are opportunities that are not readily available to many indigenous First Nations People. I feel angry and saddened by the way the indigenous First Nations People have been treated ever since the invasion of their home land by my ancestors. The massacres, removal from their lands, forced unpaid labour, children stolen from them and the decimation of their lively hood and culture.

It is time for us all to be accountable for this outrageous treatment of the First Nations People and to make amends. We also need to make sure that the ongoing atrocities of racism, high incarceration rates, deaths in custody, police brutality and discrimination at all levels are brought to an end.