

CARDINESS

Summers & Thompson
EST.1948

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Dear Co-Design Body

Co-design process: Submission for John Summers

I grew up as a farmer's son in the lower south-east of South Australia in the late 40s where I still live.

It was, and still is, a relatively remote rural community which as a child I lived in country comprising forests, wetlands, grass plains and sandy tracks where we visited our neighbours through the bush on horseback. Most of our childhood involved strong connection to our land, trees, bush, swamps and grassland where we trapped rabbits, hunted foxes and water bird and fish. The remnants of this bush still remain and the connection with land and all its parts still exist for me and the feelings it stirs within me.

And so, I am fully appreciative of the utmost importance of connection to Country for First Nations people. I studied at Adelaide University and gained a degree that has taken me to many places around the world where I have mixed with some of the important old cultures that exist in places such as the Hindu Kush, Gulf States, South East Asia, Europe and the US. When I return to Padthaway, I am home.

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

It is beautifully framed, expressed and given in a respectful and peaceful message with logic and uncomplicated intent. Its simple truth is compelling. To deny its Ask is to defy fairness and exacerbate injustice and disrespect.

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

Many of the younger members of my community yearn for the knowledge and understanding (if fully revealed) of our Country that the vast expanse of 60,000 or more years of lore and history could offer and tell.

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

The Constitution is an indelible record of what exists and is beyond the mores of politics and today's world. For the recognition and respect of Aboriginal Australia to be written into the Constitution would be above all else.

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

First Nations People know what is best for them and theirs. Within them there exists layers of knowledge and leadership that could work wonders within the realm of their customs and culture. Self-determination is full of hope and aspiration which most all else until now has usurped.

Whilst my ancestry is Anglo-Saxon with a convict male on my Mother's side and three brothers arriving some 30 years later on my Father's side, I grew up never knowing the differences existing between people due to origins, colour of skin, customs and fancy titles.



We all lived together in a small, hardworking, respectful and close community where everyone was of the same standing and equality. I know now looking back reflecting on appearances and names that many of our community members had indigenous ancestry that I was unaware of then and irrelevant to their equality and acceptance. There was no discrimination what-so-ever whether in their contribution to community, job of work (everyone worked together), social setting, celebrations or any other part. Whilst the immediate post WW II did contain remnant prejudice against the races of former foe, I grew up without prejudice against any Australian, only regard for who they were and their welcome contribution to the society of our community.

In many ways, Australia has become less worthy today. To recognise formally and finally all Australians as a complete and whole Nation would be huge step forward to a better future.

Kind regards,
John Summers