

30.04.2021



Merimbula NSW 2548

To Co-Design Body

Submission to Co-design process

I grew up in Brisbane during the AI Grasby years, influenced by a negative perspective about Aboriginal culture, behaviour and living conditions. I have my eyes wide open now. I had been working as a teachers aide and during my study experienced a significant awakening in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and trauma. The teachers presenting that unit were an absolute blessing. We had so many questions between us, searching for understanding. I am now studying Mental Health at TAFE and am a new member of SPAN (professional group making inroads into suicide prevention and postvention).

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

I so admire the resilience and respectful approach used by your culture to push through your hard won challenges. I can see how things came to be the way they have but don't understand the extent of man's inhumanity to man. Full respect, self determination and equality needs to be restored to your people. I am from a white immigrant family who also suffered some discrimination but nothing like yours. Equality and social justice must be the foundation for our society and for your people, This is why I think the Uluru Statement is so incredibly important.

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

Legislation is changeable, may be a win for a time, but may also be changed back and therefore not a permanent solution.

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

In recent years, in education, in nursing (including mental health), in disability services, it has been ruled a requirement that all stakeholders are supported collaboratively using a client centred focus where the consumer expresses what they need to achieve a better life and make choices that are meaningful to them in achieving the goals they set in that supportive setting. It's such a shift in thinking and begs the question... why wasn't it obvious to do that for indigenous people.

It's absolutely horrendous the way indigenous people have suffered under the power and control of white officials who never fulfilled the duties of their position - to improve indigenous lives, and in truth, did nothing for them.

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

With any new challenge to the status quo of the government there has always been a fear reaction. There must be fear relating to the ramifications of proceeding with this challenge, and possibly future legal concerns about which I have no understanding. I believe a Voice to Parliament would finally allow indigenous peoples to have respectful and acknowledged representation where it really counts in Australian politics and government which has let you down so badly.

I am so hopeful that this submission will be successful and will in turn bring greater dignity, respect and recognition for your people and culture. I am aware that ignorance, stigma and discrimination still exists among some in our society. Hopefully through education and the anti-discrimination process, those people will gradually come to understand that they were mistaken.

Yours sincerely,

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