

Voice Secretariat
Reply Paid 83380
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Re: *Indigenous Voice*

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Josephine Cashman and I am a proud Australian. I am honoured to be a descendant of the Warrimay Aboriginal people from the mid north coast of New South Wales. According to oral history, Warrimay lands were originally bounded by four rivers, the Hunter River to the south, the Manning River to the north and the Allyn and Patterson Rivers to the west. The Warrimay tribe was comprised of 18 clan groups (ngurras) with their lands fell within the area of the Maiangal ngurra and all Warrimay people spoke the Gathang language. Traditionally my people used Stockton Bight to travel between the northern and southern parts of our land, known as Birubi Point to the north and Stockton to the south. European settlers noted the Warrimay people who inhabited Port Stephens were slightly fairer, taller and more muscular than the Eora people of Port Jackson in Sydney.

I have sustained a continuing connection with my land and I am equally proud of my Colonial ancestors who have been in Australia for more than six generations, living on the mid north coast of NSW. My colonial ancestor, William Henry Ralston McClymont was born in Newcastle on 30 August 1828 and was amongst the first Europeans born in Australia and his family established the first Newcastle Inn. Henry Carmichael was William McClymont's stepson and belonged to the group who founded adult education in Australia. He established the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts in 1833 and the Newcastle School of Arts in 1835. In 1838 he moved with his family to the fertile farmland of the Hunter Valley and planted vineyards on his property at Porphyry Point, near Seaham. These vines were to become the finest on the Williams River and Carmichael's wines soon became well known in the colony. My ancestor Carmichael helped establish and was President of the Hunter River Vineyard Association and a leader in the NSW wine industry.

Professional experience:

I am a former Crown Prosecutor, a lawyer and a businesswoman with more than two decades of experience working on the ground towards economic progress for Aboriginal people. I was an inaugural member of the Prime Ministers Indigenous Advisory Council and served as the Chair of its Safe Communities Committee until 2017 and I sit on the Board of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. In recognition of my commitment, I was selected as a friend of the Commonwealth Treasury in 2016 and in 2018, I was an honoured recipient of

the UTS Faculty of Law Alumni Award for Excellence. I have undertaken numerous consultancy and voluntary roles for a variety of private, public and not for profit organisations.

In 2016, I founded the Big River Impact Foundation (BRIF) which is an Indigenous philanthropic entity committed to community involvement in decision making and economic freedom for Aboriginal people. BRIF aims to transition Indigenous people away from welfare dependency towards economic freedom by encouraging participation in training programs, local business opportunities, community centred employment opportunities and the stimulation of community led economic development. I am committed to addressing perpetual Indigenous disadvantage. I am determined to offer and implement pragmatic solutions.

I am writing to protest against the *Indigenous voice*. I support equality of opportunity and recognise it is the successful cornerstone of our great nation. Aboriginal disadvantage is worsening and in some regions, dysfunction has become normalised which is a sad reflection of our failure to address the real causes of disadvantage.

The *Voice* must not proceed because the following has not been addressed.

Unresolved Corruption

Australians have spent trillions of dollars on attempting to improve Aboriginal disadvantage. The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) task force operated between 2007 and 2014 and visited 145 Indigenous communities, 58 regional towns and held almost 2000 stakeholder meetings. It found widespread abuse of power and connections with organised crime within Aboriginal organisations. It confirmed, '*Individuals in positions of authority have engaged in child abuse, violence and fraud*' (refer to link on the website <http://onevoiceaustralia.com.au> for details).

Self Appointed Aboriginal Leadership

The same Aboriginal people involved in the *Uluru Statement* were involved with ATSIC which had to be dismantled because of corruption. These same people designed the Native Title Act and control the *Voices* of Aboriginal people. They have achieved little and have not improved the quality of life for Aboriginal people. The money they receive does not reach Aboriginal people living in communities.

Aboriginal identity Fraud

Aboriginal identity fraud causes harm and generates anger in Aboriginal communities. It is assumed the government and by association, the Australian people do not care. For instance, many politicians continue to ignore the undeniable evidence proving Bruce Pascoe has no Aboriginal ancestry (see genealogy report here <https://australianhistory972829073.wordpress.com/2019/10/23/bruce-pascoe-howaboriginal-is-he/> website for details). It is inappropriate to expect the Australian people to trust those consulting the government on the implementation of the *Voice* are all of

Aboriginal descent because identity fraud is known to be rampant. It is also challenging for Aboriginal people living in communities to trust the *Voice* process and most do not know about it.

Mandatory Audits

Aboriginal people have not been consulted comprehensively about the *Uluru Statement*. There has been no independent audit of Aboriginal communities and/or appropriate consultations on the *Voice*. No alternative strategy has been offered and/or funded.

The Unknown Risks of the Native Title Act

Native title does not offer the same protection as Crown land. Warren Mundine OAM suggested native title will cover as much as 70 per cent of Australia by 2030 and the Hon Gary Johns said it was more like 80 per cent. Native title land is controlled by Aboriginal organisations which do not offer Aboriginal people shares in their land and/or property ownership rights. It has proven useless to Aboriginal people and it has prevented them from achieving economic independence. The self appointed leadership encourages dependence upon social housing which discourages enterprise. Unlike other countries, share in equity for social housing tenants does not exist. Tom Calma, former ATSIC Social Justice Commissioner and Co-Chair of Minister Wyatt's *Voice* said, '*Native title is at the bottom of the hierarchy of Australian property rights.*'

The Voiceless:

It is vital the voices of Aboriginal people living in communities are heard and honoured. It is not appropriate to consult only those who, for over 50 years have profited from an endless stream of taxpayer dollars. Nor it is appropriate for the same failed leadership to be appointed to design and implement a Voice to Parliament. This same Aboriginal elite leadership has for decades failed to address the growing problems affecting my people living in communities and the money has rarely reached them.

The Voice to Parliament occurs as a convenient way to deflect the real issues impacting my people and the privileged leadership group is now accusing Australians of being racist, which is undermining our nation and dividing our people. As Neville Bonner, the first Aboriginal person to be elected to the Australian Parliament, as a Liberal Senator for Queensland warned, 'Beware there are those among us who will pit coloured against white and white against coloured, Australian against Australian. Bonner claimed agitators were imitating the Black Power movement in the United States, 'they mean to destroy and to inflict conflict on this nation. God grant that 1970 will still see racial harmony through our land.'

I have been visiting Aboriginal communities to discuss these ideas with my people. They were not consulted about 'the voice'. As wisely reminds us, So the last shall be first and the first last: for many be called but few chosen.

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Cashman