



6 April 2023

**To the Joint Select Committee on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum**

I write to support the proposed change to the Australian Constitution.

I am an Australian who feels strongly about the need for reconciliation. I live in Perth, Western Australia, and have run an economic consulting business for over 30 years.

Australia has over 65,000 years of continuous Indigenous culture, and it's time our now 122 years old constitution was updated to recognise the people that were here first. I understand this as a legally safe way to recognise Indigenous Australians constitutionally.

Indigenous Australians are among the most disadvantaged groups in our society. While a constitutionally recognised voice will not solve these economic and social problems, it is an essential step in the right direction. Indeed, not making this step now would send a terrible message to Indigenous people and the world about our lack of willingness to give First Nations people a voice and to listen.

Australia has established several legal entities to provide a mechanism for meaningful Indigenous self-determination. Indeed, I had many dealings with ATSIC and, although not faultless, I believe this institution provided a democratic and valuable platform for engaging with and supporting the development of First Nations people. I was disappointed to see it abolished in 2005. Rather than find ways to improve this institution, the government of the day chose to terminate it.

Constitutional recognition will create a mechanism that is not subject to the whimsy of new governments. It will provide a Voice to Parliament that will give Indigenous communities a way to help inform policy and legal decisions impacting their lives. Giving people a say will lead to more effective results. This move will recognise the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia's history.

The vast majority of Indigenous Australians support constitutional recognition in the form of a Voice to Parliament. Constitutional recognition through a Voice is a simple proposal whose time has come.

Thank you,



Simon White

Subiaco, Western Australia