

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT
Australia 2600

To the Parliamentary Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity, and Democracy

I wish to make a submission to the Inquiry for the consideration of the committee.

In particular, I wish to strongly voice my support of both the Uluru Statement of the Heart and of Treaties with our land's First Nations people.

Australia has been built on stolen land, with a history of genocide and the repression of Indigenous culture. To better reconcile our nation to this history requires proper acknowledgement and cooperation - we need to interrogate and understand our history, where we have come from, how this country has been built, and both the successes and injustices that have occurred along the path.

We cannot have true social cohesion - true unity - without proper acknowledgement of our past and a shared and equitable approach to our nation's future.

Establishing a First Nations Voice in the constitution, enacting treaties, and properly understanding both the history and the present of Australia can greatly aid our collective understanding of nationhood and national identity, which particularly addresses **points c and f** of this inquiry. Alongside that, the proposal from the Uluru Statement of the Heart has great benefits in improving our democracy, allowing First Nations people to have a more direct influence on laws that directly impact them, rather than the existing approach of Governments imposing laws upon them.

The First Nations people of this land have been so generous in offering this Statement to us, and especially considering all that they have borne the brunt of for the past two centuries, their request is really quite mild and far more than reasonable. We should endeavour to respond in kind and make such a change reality.

I write this as a non-Indigenous Australian who wishes the very best for our country.

Alongside this, I also urge for greater compassion to be shown towards those seeking asylum in Australia. Our current system seems to be focused on cruelty - which is abhorrent at any point, but especially towards those already discriminated against and who have suffered trauma elsewhere. I wish for Australia to be a beacon of compassion - a true land of the fair go - a place where we presume the best of people, and recognise that they do seek to contribute back deeply and positively to our society. This is particularly in regards to **points a, b, e and f**.

And while it's not noted specifically in any of the inquiry's points, the last item of its title deserves attention: our democracy. The current state of our political debate is cause for despair - so antagonistic, so childish. Our leaders seem to be far too comfortable attacking people rather than

interrogating ideas, and it seems we have less and less in the way of consequences for corruption and cronyism. I would suggest our Parliament to please enact serious reform in the shape of a Federal ICAC - much like what the Senate has just agreed to - perhaps by the time the committee reads this submission, it will be law, but that would be a pleasant surprise.

If transparency is the best disinfectant for corruption, then our leaders need to welcome the strongest measures possible to investigate such allegations. Rather than taking a soft approach, our politicians need to encourage investigations into their behaviour, so we can build up a strong level of trust in our democracy and our politicians.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Allan