

24 August, 2024

To the Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

RE: Parliament of Australia's Inquiry into the Truth and Justice Commission Bill 2024.

Please accept this as my submission to the Inquiry into the Truth and Justice Commission Bill.

I fully support the establishment of a national Truth and Justice Commission – it is not only long overdue but essential for addressing (i) harms done and (ii) harms that continue today. Social cohesion in Australia will remain diminished without this Commission.

The Commission should be established as it holds many possibilities, including enabling:

- All Australians to learn the truth of our history
- All Australians to reflect on our own beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours
 - Including positive change in Australian institutional and systemic practices where they are underpinned by ignorance and racist beliefs
- Australia to grow as more accepting and mature society
- Justice to those who have, and continue to, suffer immeasurable trauma, harm, loss, sorrow and disrespect
- Acknowledgement and incorporation of the cultural practices, language, skills, art and connection to country of the different first nations groups are vital before they are completely lost
 - All Australians stand to benefit, develop and grow through learning from the strengths, sustainability and beauty of our first nations people.

The Government has a moral responsibility to honour the commitment to implement the Uluru Statement of the Heart in full.

The Commission must be structured with a majority of members (preferably all members) being first nations people. There are already established leaders who have long supported truth telling and justice such as Prof Megan Davis, Pat Anderson AO, Stan Grant FASSA and Marcia Lynne Langton AO FASSA FTSE to name a few. These individuals would be superb members of the Commission and ensure the Commission's work is upheld and honourable.

Truth telling is a responsibility we must commit to. Without it we will continue to repeat the same harms indefinitely. Without it we will never have the chance to learn and grown as a society. We owe our first nations brothers and sisters the establishment of the proposed Truth and Justice Commission.

I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,
Carole Meade



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