

Senator Lindgren speech to the Senate on the Uluru Bark Petition

Last Thursday on the 13th August, representatives from 46 different Aboriginal groups and clans to present a petition to Members and Senators. It was an honor to receive the Petition. The presentation of the Petition was celebrated with traditional marriage dance, didgeridoo and other cultural appropriate events.

The Uluru Bark Petition, as it is named, urges the Government to maintain the definition of marriage as a union between a man and a women. The Petition states that the sanctity of marriage between man and women continues to be held in honour among all. It also states and I quote "It is an affront to the Aboriginal People of Australia to suggest another definition of marriage." And also sites the spiritual implication of this sacred union. It states further that "Our Fathers and Mothers are also honored and form the foundation of families, clans and systems and pass down our teachings, our culture, our traditions from generation to generation.

This is the first Petition to Parliament that makes it clear that the current definition of 'marriage' is a matter of great importance to Australian Aboriginal People.

The definition of marriage is not just a matter of State or religious significance but of cultural significance.

The Uluru Bark Petition provides a valuable insight for the Australian Parliament. The meaning of marriage is not simply a matter of contemporary definition, which depends on the present views of a number of vocal advocates, the new and different definitions of marriage. It is an enduring meaning that is of great spiritual significance and value to Australia's Aboriginal Peoples, who have lived in Australia for at least 80,000 years.

Madam acting Deputy President there has been some criticism that the significance of the Petition is reduced because many of the signatures are Christians. To disparage the views of Indigenous Petitioners because they are Christian is both ignorant and patronizing. Christianity has placed a significant role in many indigenous settlements and groupings from the early days of white settlement. I urge Senators and Members to read the Petition and to consider the significance of the meaning of marriage to the 46 Aboriginal groups and clans representative by it.

Madam acting Deputy President the Petition reminds us of the university of truth. University of truth of marriage between a man and a women, as it has been for a millennium across many diverse cultures.