Women reporting domestic violence face an onerous process – overshadowed by the self-governing of communities. It would not stop the removal of children or turn the water on. It will not stop the removal of children or turn the water back on in remote communities. Constitutional change is symbolic, it is not a cure-all. A treaty is vital to the future of this nation. But again, it is not a cure-all.

A treaty is the first meaningful step in ensuring that there is engagement of all in the success of its outcomes. It will leave governments because it holds them to a set of obligations that they ordinarily would not live up to. A treaty is essential because 227 years after colonisation we remain at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid; because after 227 years children are still being removed arbitrarily from Aboriginal families; because after 227 years we are still subjected to cruel punishments including water being switched off; communities being closed, and being forced into work programs that provide less than the minimum wage and then having to buy groceries in government-run shops that charge $6 for a kilo of flour.

To arbitrarily decide the fate of our people without our consultation and agreement will always be met with resistance. And for those who champion the Recognise campaign and its intent to change the Constitution to recognise Indigenous people, I say: We have the benefit of hindsight and know that constitutional recognition will not change the mortality or incarceration rates of our people. It will not stop the removal of children or turn the water back on in remote communities. Constitutional change is symbolic, it is not a cure-all. A treaty is vital to the future of this nation. But again, it is not a cure-all.

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