
27th April 2021

A Submission: An Indigenous Voice

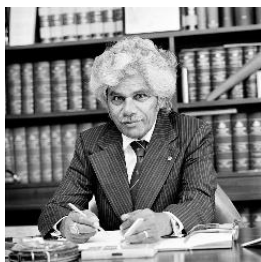
This Submission offers an opinion from an Australian Aborigine, a First Nation person. I am not indigenous, I am Gumbaynggirr.

I attended the 18th March 2021 Community Consultations in Coffs Harbour.

The Sovereign Wealth from Aboriginal Lands are being sold for colonial built assets and offerings of the 'new' trinkets and blankets to the 'Natives'.

When the big end of town have sold and dug it all up and they move on, the 'quiet Australians' may realise their 'big/little salaries, their big/little houses will amount to a future of little/big of nothing.

History Telling



Senator Neville Bonner in 1989 thundered:

"...Why do we have to accept what you say is best for our country...?"

Colonial Australia took ownership of all lands, territories and its waters: and made claim to its natural and environmental resources.

The sovereign risk to the Australian economy is low, due to the abundance of these natural and environmental resources.

The Marketing Strategy of Governments is to sell off Australia's natural, cultural resources and public owned and built assets.

John Howard PM

Howard as PM laid his economic foundations *saying '...I am not interested in human rights, I am only interested in the economy...'*

He mounted a full assault on Aboriginal people's "Black Armband view of History". Keith Windshuttle ably abetted Howard and rewrote the history wars. Howard laid claim that there were no 'stolen generations' and no massacres in Australia's colonial history.

Mark Latham, ALP Leader at the time, gave political support to Howard to 'abolish' ATSIC and effectively mainstream Aboriginal programs.

Howard's Aboriginal Affairs minister, Mal Brough enlisted his staff member, Gregory Andrews to claim pedophile rings were active in remote communities of NT.

The claims were false but the government implemented the 'intervention into the NT'. Labor's Jenny Macklin extended the term a further 10 years.

Note: Greg Andrews, is now Australia's High Commissioner to Ghana.

Current Federal Politics

Now we see the rorts and excesses of Morrison's government with regard to the 'economy'. Mungo MacCallum wrote: "Corruption is rife among Morrison's minions" (29 January 2020).

“...Morrison leads his federal government on a path of pork-barrelling, rorts, the theft of public funds, offering justifications that those who trousered the ill-gotten loot were happy about it. This was seen as good policy.

The Nationals provide special treatment for the rural and now regional voters at the expense of the wider polity.

The government’s Ministerial Code of Conduct, includes loopholes to absolve ministers of even the most egregious breaches which would never be permitted by private employees.

It does not pass the pub test, but it was not meant to. It buys time, divert, distract and then they hope for the best.

The last vestige of integrity left in this morally bankrupt government has spent so much time and effort defending the indefensible showed that corruption has now become an intrinsic part of the regime.

Our Prime Minister (Morrison) knows that most of his ministers are past both knowing and caring. The wider party, by and large, is happy basking in a state of blissful ignorance. The noisy bit of the electorate may carry on, but who cares? As long as the quiet Australians are not roused from their slumber...”

“...As long as the quiet Australians are not roused from their slumber...”

COVID 19 Pandemic

The rorts and excesses of Morrison’s ministers were exposed. The drought, water buy backs, and the bushfires caught the ‘team Morrison’ holidaying in Hawaii.

But a diversion was developing, and Scott Morrison has ‘seized the moment.

With the COVID 19 pandemic, he closed down the economy and took the opportunity to implement his new Federalism.

A new ‘National Government’ with the States and excluded the Opposition. The Public Service was bypassed with funds (taxpayers money) being allocated between ministerial staff members. No accountability or scrutiny. The media (Murdoch) are complicit in this crime. Coalition attacks on the public broadcaster, the ABC were increased.

With that public isolated, their human rights suspended, increased powers for law enforcement, the Media under control, it was the opportunity to implement their ‘Neo-colonialism’ strategy.

Neo-Liberalism: what is it?

Neo-liberalism values free market competition to obtain sustained economic growth as the most-efficient allocation of resources, with minimal state intervention it is sold under the banner of ‘Business is Good’.

The federal government has signalled its willingness to repeal elements of the environmental laws to support economic development. The federal heritage protection laws are inadequate in these new economic times.

Environmental laws and cultural heritage protection legislation is the least of concerns. International Companies drunk on power, money and profits their money brought the best legal firms, political influence and community silence.

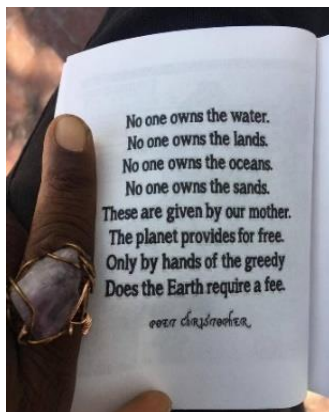
Native Title agreements are fragile against the weight of the Mining companies and their profits. They circumvent these laws and then 'apologise' later. Rio Tinto is an offender.

The Coal Seam Gas industry intent on 'fracking' subsurface layers and subject the cracks to high water pressure, to force the gas out. Coal mining also requires excess water to washing and settle the coal dust.

This fracturing the water table, the damming of rivers, creeks, gullies to manage water for commercial gains, rather than human substance and environmental protection, is ill-conceived and verges on insanity.

I simply say NO to Neo-liberalism.

Morrison's national government, the Media and Mining Companies needed to understand that:



***No one owns the water.
No one owns the lands.
No one owns the oceans.
No one owns the sands.***

***These are given by our Mother.
The Planet provides for free.
Only by hands of the greedy.
Does the Earth require a fee?***

‘Poet Christopher

Only the greedy require a fee.

Aboriginal People: Our Story

The rush to extract the 'life' from the earth is unsettling. The mining of the ores, the coal and the extraction of all sorts of mineral wealth robs a Land of its health. These elements are a part of 'country' and is identified by 'Aboriginal people in stories, art, and languages and special places.

This ancient cultured dry land, Our Mother, provides for all our friends, relatives and totem families. From the past to the present, we sing, dance and celebrate these offering that sustain us and provide our substance.

All matter of beings: plant, animal, fish, birds, mammals, insects/bugs and to Aboriginal people. All matter of beings, inanimate or otherwise, have their place and story in Aboriginal cultural life; stories a millennium old.

Songlines are cultural almanacs connecting us and are links and maps that direct family, community, places and time for ceremony.

Water is life and the great rivers, their catchment are our supermarkets, providing provisions for our cultural, spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing. We live with our rivers: beside them, for them and we share them. We are nurtured and nourished by 'country'.

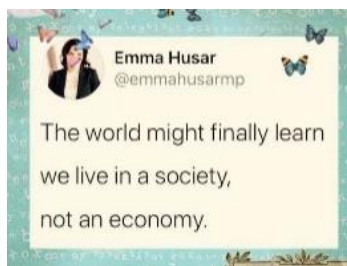
Our blood runs deep, as do the 'waters'. Freshwater lakes, the river valleys and their catchments are a story attached to their own environment. These catchments can run deep, as does the Great Artesian Basin.

Our living earth breaths through its natural vents, fissures and bubbles that gives it life. The Earth's natural gases and waters of the Great Artesian Basin are the 'grease and oil' lubricating this 'Mother Earth'.

Question for the Australian People:

It is time to shake these chains of colonialism and end the domination of our Lands.

With governments dismissive of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, we appeal to the broader public to seek support for sanity to prevail. Maybe Emma Husar's message could now be heard:



- ***Is Australia an Economy or a Community?***

Aboriginal people, are subject to the marketing strategies of: capitalism, globalisation and cultural imperialism. Culminating a Neo-colonialism influence that is now used instead of the previous colonial methods

We acknowledge natural catastrophes and climatic events place an 'economic' burden on states and territories. It is usually an agent for 'change' and is taken advantage of by governments.

However the recent events, changing weather patterns, rising sea levels; droughts, dust storms, heat waves, fires, bush fires, prolong rains, flash floods and flooding provide a pause for thought. We may view these events as a sign or a voice, calling for a reason.

Conclusion:

The Indigenous Voice: Much as been written, there has a lot of talk, much rhetoric, a lot of posturing and political humbug.

Langton and Calma in accepting the Terms of Reference condemned these community consultations to a discussion on only representational structures and reforms.

It missed the point that the Uluru Statement is not being a vague idea of 'being heard' but a deliberate structural reform. Voice — Treaty — Truth, was a mission of the Uluru Statement,

I borrow from Gabrielle Appleby writings that the Uluru Statement from the Heart was to be delivered to the Australian people three steps to achieve structural reform to recognise First Nations Sovereignty and address our current structural powerlessness.

First was to be the establishment of a Constitutionally Enshrined First Nations Voice. This is to be followed by the establishment of a Makarrata Commission to oversee a process of Agreement Making and Truth Telling. Voice. Treaty. Truth.

The Uluru Statement was the culmination of an unprecedented engagement with Australia's First Nations people. It was an essentially a national constitutional convention for a First Nations Voice.

Minister Ken Wyatt's pragmatic approach robs the Australian people of the opportunity to assess the deliberations from Uluru.

The Delegates determined there to be 10 guiding principle for the Statement from the Heart. These 10 Guiding Principles were:

1. It did not diminish Indigenous Sovereignty.
2. Involved substantive, structural reform.
3. Advances self-determination established under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
4. Recognises the Status and Rights of First Nations
5. Truth Telling.
6. Does not foreclose on future advancement.
7. Does not waste the opportunity of reform.
8. Provides a mechanism for First Nations agreement-making.
9. Has the support of First Nations.
10. Does not interfere with positive legal arrangements.

These processes at the National Convention were highly informative and deliberative. The spirit of Uluru was not a vague idea of a "Voice" or "Being Heard". Instead, it is a well-developed and sophisticated call for structural reform in the form of a First Nations Voice.

To this end these Community Consultations was a wasted opportunity, and denies the broader Australian public the opportunity for 'their Voice' to be heard.

I submit my submission in the spirit of the Aboriginal Struggle.

Cliff Foley
27th April
2021