

Thank you for the opportunity to have a say about the future of Australia.

I'm a concerned parent, who is wondering what the future holds for my children.

In such a short space of time, humans have managed to change the landscape of the world, to actually shift the forces of nature.

When you look at the mega data the future seems bleak and opportunities to make a significant global change seem overwhelming impossible, it feels like we have left it too late.

To generalise, it feels like a dominant western white culture that seeks to utilise nature for individual benefit, outweighs indigenous cultures that seek to work with nature for collective benefit. There seems a gap in mindset between survival meaning accumulating personal wealth and survival meaning community continuation.

From my understanding we have all the global wealth we need, yet we are getting close to the tipping point of global community continuation. I feel if we don't take steps to change our collective community mindset in Australia, we are risk of placing ourselves on a path of extinction.

I'm not sure where I got it from, yet I've always had a strong connection to caring for nature and empathy for people. I'm a bit of an anomaly in my family and in the community I grew up in, a blue belt of middle class Sydney. Most people in my social and work circles do not care about the environment or racial or class issues. As long as it does not impact their comfortable lifestyle they don't see the point in expending energy on it, not when there is a Netflix series to binge on or a holiday to be had!

It was not until my early 20's that I met an Aboriginal person. I certainly did not learn much about our Indigenous cultures at school, it was not until University I started to become curious.

Over the years, the little bits I learnt of Indigenous culture it just seemed to make sense and I wondered why that mindset was not part of our common thinking.

Over the years and the more I travelled, I also started to see how big the divide in society was. If you lived in the city and worked in big corporate, like I did to start, you could easily go through life without needing to have a care about Indigenous people besides ticking the token RAP activities off.

In moving to WA, where I've had the opportunity to work alongside, have friends and be a lot closer to Indigenous people my eyes have been opened further.

As I have continued to learn more about the human impact on nature and the human division through economic models, I wonder what the solutions for the

future are. I don't just learn through research, I learn from daily life experiences. It just seems we can't solve the problems with the same thinking that caused them.

In recent years I have formed the belief that many of our current social and economic problems were solved a long time ago.

I believe we have an amazing opportunity in Australia. We have the longest continuous culture in the world, right here! One of the most sophisticated social structures of humankind, purposely designed for survival within our shores. I can't help but think how different our history might have been, if first settlers just asked how to live here and adapted rather than imposed.

I also can't understand why I didn't learn so much more about the cultures of my own country before others at school.

To me, for our survival, it seems now is the time to rectify the situation by asking the questions of First Nation people. How can we live here sustainably? What does a collaborative culture look like? What social changes do we need to make? How can we work with the land and live from native produce? Many of the answers to these questions were solved a long time ago, out of the same necessity. The solutions are there, they just need to be re-discovered and tweaked for the current times.

To me, it is essential for First Nation people to have a voice to Parliament. A formal place where that knowledge and wisdom can be shared so we can start to learn, change and grow. Let's hope it happens in time for us to make the changes we need.

I also feel that for the majority of the population to take notice and for these matters to somehow become infused in their day-to-day, constitutional recognition of First Nation people needs to occur. People won't listen unless they respect. Sometimes that respect is gained through formal recognition, it creates importance. Without that formal recognition, there is no power. No reason for people without empathy to take notice.

Some people close to me say, "you'll just have to wait till I die" when I try to discuss issues with the environment or racism. Let's hope our kids grown up in a society where that formal recognition and respect is enshrined in the constitution; it is just the way things are. Then we have a chance of hope.

So please, for the sake of all our collective future, let's do the 5 key things we can to start changing the course of the future and rectify the mistakes of the past:

1. Have a referendum on the National Voice.
2. Enable the legislation for the voice in the following term of Parliament.
3. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the chance to influence the membership model for the National Voice.

4. Allocate Federal and State funding for ongoing research, documentation and education on our Indigenous archaeology. Much has already been lost. When the truth is compiled then the facts can help people learn, shift and change.
5. Build a more substantial percentage of indigenous content into the school curriculum. Be great if books like Dark Emu were known and understood by all Australians.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely
James Ross