

# **Voices from a first nation**

***A journal of writings by jim everett from the  
Clan Plangermairreener of the Palawa.***

*A limited edition of 50 journals*

## INTRODUCTION

My development as a writer spans almost 50 years, starting with poetry. Later I expanded my writing interest to short stories, plays, film-script and political papers. I am not a clever writer, nor a competent academic writer, I simply write yarns that will interest a chosen readership.

My most recent political paper, *Beyond the Colonial Construct*, is aimed mainly at the Government's ATSIC blacks and those leaders of Aboriginal community based leaders who are complacently rolling along with ATSIC and the corporate processes of government. Because it is difficult to publish writings that challenge the corporate interests of government, ATSIC and those Aboriginal people who are blindly following, I am forced to publish in any way possible to influence further discussion on the issues I raise. The views expressed in my writings are not necessarily correct or beyond question, but are really an attempt to influence open discussions between Aboriginal people, nationally, so as to define our status in Australia, understand our Aboriginality, and determine our future accordingly.

I believe that knowledge is the tool of empowerment. Moreover, I believe that to reach a point in Aboriginal and white-Australian history where our differences are resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, a discussion about Aboriginality must occur. A *National Aboriginal Talk* on the issues mentioned above, should be undertaken across all Aboriginal communities of Australia, carried out on a self-determined schedule, and should be adequately resourced by government. Of course it's not in the interests of white-Australia for such a discussions to be undertaken, nor to the interests of the black pied-pipers of ATSIC, the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council or the Aboriginal community based leaders who follow government agendas without challenge.

As will be seen by readers of this journal, my earlier papers hold absolutely no concept of academic ethics such as referencing. My later papers eventually conformed to academic ethics due to some training at the University of Tasmania in 1994-95. My paper *Beyond the Colonial Construct* discusses some major issues that should be included in any *National Aboriginal Talk* agenda. Aboriginal writers such as Kevin Gilbert, Oodgeroo Noonucal, Charles Perkins and Gary Foley have much to offer a *National Aboriginal Talk*.

In addition to my political papers I have appended a variety of my writings to demonstrate the diversity of things that indigenous writers tend to cover. From my early rough papers

written to challenge white-Australia during the adrenalin blood-pumping days of the 1970's and 1980's, to my more recent writings aimed at Aboriginal readers in particular. Therefore, this journal profiles The Struggle from a blackfulla's point of view and includes some poetry, short stories and a short play.

I pride myself in that I am not an Australian, to me there can be no such thing as post-colonialism and I cannot bring myself to embrace the identity of our oppressors. I belong to the Clan Plangermairreener (north-east Tasmania) of our First Nation now more commonly known as the Palawa. I am an Aboriginal patriot still at war with the illegal occupiers of our First Nation societies and territories.

*Voices from a First Nation*, is a limited edition of 50 journals and they are all numbered and signed. Perhaps there will be enough discussion here to titillate even the toughest black economic-rationalist, or public servant, or self-interested individuals and groups who firmly believe that "white is right". Perhaps there will be a time when the government's black pied-pipers are brought into line, and made to be truly accountable to the people of our First Nations, but it wont happen if those of us in Aboriginal communities sit back and cop it on the chin, and simply turn the other cheek.

*Voices from a First Nation* is a group of photo-copied papers and writings put together as a journal. I have done my best to see that they are wholly readable, and trust that their value will be seen in the ideas and concepts that are discussed.

Yahtawatja,

*Jim Everett*

Journal number: 50.

## Aboriginal Nations & the Australian Constitution Conference

Friday 23 and Saturday 24 May 1997

### *Beyond the Colonial Construct*

by Pura-lia Meenamatta (jim everett)

Plangermairreener of the Pallawah

October 1996

Quote from this paper at will

#### **Preamble**

In October 1996 Island magazine in Hobart commissioned me to write a review of Professor Henry Reynolds' recent book : *Aboriginal Sovereignty : Three Nations, One Australia*. After some period of time I was informally advised that Island was not going to publish the review. I then approached the Koori Mail newspaper in Lismore on 14 April 1997 to consider it for publishing. A month later, and after two phone messages left with Koori Mail staff and two faxes, all directed to the editor, the response has been a deafening silence.

On being offered the opportunity to speak at the Aboriginal Nations & the Australian Constitution Conference, I decided to adjust the review and present it at this conference. It is my view that this paper is very relevant to this conference, and should contribute most admirably to issues we must all address if Australia is to be liberated from its imperialist construct.

#### **Introduction**

As a personal introduction to this paper, I mention an old friend and teacher to me, Kevin Gilbert of the Wiradjuri nation, Aboriginal writer and advocate, deceased 1993. Kevin has I believe, even after his passing, guided me in finding a more wholesome understanding of Aboriginality in terms of spiritual-cultural concepts. He gave me an inner 'feeling' of what Aboriginality means, and how to go beyond the ceiling of the imperialist thinking of white Australia. As an Aboriginal writer and activist, he was a strong advocate for Aboriginal

nation-state status. In relation to the concepts of Aboriginality in this paper, and the way these concepts relate to what Professor Henry Reynolds draws out in his recent book *Aboriginal Sovereignty: Three Nations, One Australia*, Kevin catches it all in his poem:

*Epitaph.*

*Weep not for me for Death is  
but the vehicle that unites my soul  
with the Creative Essence, God.  
My Spiritual being, my love, is  
still with you, wherever you are  
until forever.  
You will find me in quiet moments  
in the trees, amidst the rocks,  
the cloud and beams of sunshine  
indeed, everywhere for I, too, am  
a part of the total essence of  
creation that radiates everywhere  
about you, eternally.  
Life after all, is just a  
passing phase.<sup>1</sup>*

What Kevin Gilbert and his writings mean to me, and I hope to many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, is that the creative diversity of Australia's indigenous past offers 'walking-tracks' to *healing* the wounds that have continued to develop from the Australian colonial experience. Reynolds' research is commendable in that his work reaches out to almost enter that deeper understanding of Aboriginality. He plays at the outer fringes of Aboriginality by exploring the inner-sanctum of Australia's colonial history. He is of course forced to stop short of digging deeper into Aboriginality concepts, because it is this deeper side that we Aboriginal people must explore ourselves. Until we explore our traditional identity of Aboriginality and achieve a full understanding of what it

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Gilbert, *Black from the Edge*, (Hyland House Publishing Pty Ltd, 1994), pp. 94.

means and where it takes us, we will remain indigenous reactionaries within and against the dominant one-Australian nation.

### Landscape of Issues

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within the boundaries of the nation state now called Australia, would agree that Professor Henry Reynolds is without doubt the most progressive thinking and credible legal historian in the line-up of historians the Euro-Australian nation has seen in its history. His 1996 publication, *Aboriginal Sovereignty : Three Nations, One Australia* demonstrates his capacity to locate and interpret the hidden story of colonial Australia, to expose the litany of untruths in Australia's self-recorded history, past and present.

This recent addition to his list of challenging essays on Australia's history, as it relate to European Australians, Australian Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, is by far his most formidable research thus far. These are the three nations within Australia. Professor Reynolds not only addresses history in this account, but concludes with plausible views relating to Australia's present and future, however they might be considered limited by the more patriotic Aboriginal nationals. He talks of indigenous nationhood and a view that Australian Aboriginal people may not want to be absorbed in the Australian nation. Moreover, from a history perspective, he makes direct reference to a fact that remains clear in the minds of most Aboriginal people: "We have never been one nation, popular rhetoric notwithstanding. We may never become one, at least not in the foreseeable future. We share a country, a continent and a state, but not a nation."<sup>2</sup> In noting the three nations referred to by Professor Reynolds, that is the Australian nation, the Aboriginal nation(s) and, the Torres Strait Islander nation(s); all references to Aboriginal people in this paper include Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Reynolds, *Aboriginal Sovereignty : Three nations, One Australia*, (Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996), pp. 178

Reynolds demonstrates a special judiciousness in the way he structures relevant statements of history to develop historical outlines leading into contemporary politics concerning Indigenous sovereignty. The arguments of colonialists are exposed as dictums of self interest for empires which desired, and continue to desire, either a freedom of imperialist expansion, or continued enjoyment of stolen territory. From before Australia was colonised, through international arguments on Native Title, to the emergence of broader United Nations discussions on Indigenous self determination and sovereignty: *Aboriginal Sovereignty* is an example of historical research that will gladden many Indigenous people of Australia. *Aboriginal Sovereignty* provides a glimmer of hope for Australia's Indigenous nations as we continue the struggle for recognition of sovereignty and self determination.

*Aboriginal Sovereignty* is at best the writings of a well informed and social justice minded historian who articulates literary evidence of Australian history beyond the limitations of British/Australian history constructs. This allows the interests of Indigenous peoples to be better represented within and beyond those constructs.

However, Professor Reynolds has not discussed the more crucial features of Aboriginality in relation to sovereignty. Nor should he, for it is the fundamental principles of Aboriginality/Indigenality that distinguishes the Indigenous nations of Australia from the dominant Euro-cultural nationhood of white Australia. The core questions that arise from Aboriginality and its relationships to nationalism and sovereignty must be determined by Aboriginal people. However, Reynolds' essays do play around the fringes of these Indigenous cultural concepts that must be discussed if Aboriginality is to have some hope of survival with its core principles in place.

A crucial question for the Indigenous nations of Australia to consider is whether Indigenous peoples want formal

acknowledgement as Australian citizens or not. From the answer to this question will flow the many other questions we Indigenous peoples of Australia must consider to determine our future.

Many people may ask why Indigenous acceptance of Australian citizenship is so important in the discussion. Aren't the Indigenous peoples of Australia already Australian citizens? Didn't the 1967 Referendum formally establish that fact? These are questions that must be resolved of course. But a country wide discussion on what Aboriginality means, and what direction it dictates, must be undertaken across the Indigenous nations of this land, however these nations are presently defined. We, the Aboriginal people of Australia, must explore our sovereignty to define *nation* and *state* so as to achieve indigenous definitions that emanate from traditional indigenous societal structures. This exploration should be based on indigenous thinking and, indigenous knowledge and intellectualism.

The alternative is to simply accept Australian identity and join in the nationalism of an historically white Australia, a nationalism which came from Britain only 200 years ago. Along this path Indigenous peoples would embrace an increased assimilation of the already endangered and critically fractured Indigenous nationalism of this land, into what is at this time an ideologically opposite human society.

There exist two principle philosophies of traditional British/Australian society, indeed of all the white colonial empires of the modern world, that are absolutely not compatible with traditional Indigenous spiritual and cultural society. They are *capitalism* and *Christianity*. These are the dangers to Aboriginality if Aboriginal people choose assimilation, or alternatively, if we fail to halt its sinister progress. And this is the danger of assimilation. As Reynolds postulates in his discussion on the arguments that domestic agreements would better enable Australian Indigenes to exist

as nations within a nation. i.e. Australian Indigenous nations within the Australian federation: "

"Under the new dispensation Indigenous communities may well come to see that the Australian state is the irreplaceable protector of their inescapably fragile nationhood and be able to join the rest of Australia on the common ground of civic identity and commitment to the institutional superstructure." <sup>3</sup>

Reynolds postulates that by joining in with the rest of Australia, Australian Indigenous peoples could have better relations with non-Indigenous Australians, and that our Indigenous society could comfortably co-exist with white Australian society. Yet many Australian Indigenous people see white Australia as being diametrically different in its spiritual, social, political and sovereign ideologies. Therefore, from the crucial question of Australian citizenship flow many questions that need attention by Australian Indigenous peoples.

Professor Reynolds addresses far more than could ever be discussed directly in the confines of this one paper. He covers every major angle concerning nationalism, and important among these arguments are his references to Indigenous nationalism. For example : "The distinguished Canadian jurist Thomas Berger insisted that the Indian nations were 'political communities, founded on tradition and culture, not on race'. A stronger argument came from Menno Boldt. "Scholars, he observed,

who legitimate a 'racism' analysis of injustice to Indians, by juxtaposing 'Indian' and 'White,' are not serving the interests of Indian peoples. A 'racism' paradigm robs Indians of the most significant elements of Indian identity - their history, nationhood, cultures, and languages - and thereby undermines their historical and moral claims to self-determination. In an enlightened world,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 180.

peoples who are defined primarily in racial terms are not regarded as having a legitimate claim to nationhood." <sup>5</sup>

It is the deeper Indigenous concepts that emerge from discussions on the above latter subject which Professor Reynolds has not discussed. It is likely that he chose not to. He would know that the crucial questions, arising from any debate on Indigenous nationalism have not been formally discussed within Australia's Indigenous communities to specifically address nationalism in these modern times. And until we have there is no constituted *contemporary* Indigenous nationalism for our Indigenous communities to aspire to, because colonialism has already seriously eroded *traditional* Indigenous nationalism.

Moreover, until Indigenous communities determine all aspects of this crucial question there is no guide by which they can develop spiritual-cultural and socio-political base structures which must underpin the core of Australia's future Indigenous nations, be they sovereign or not. Failure to address this sensitive question will undoubtably see Aboriginality assimilated into a nationalism that totally rejects the rightful status Aboriginal nations should be accorded on our own land.

There are of course emerging concepts that Professor Reynolds discusses in his various essays in *Aboriginal Sovereignty* that should be sifted to expose underlying questions. These questions raise issues concerning how we Indigenous people develop societal foundations for our future using seriously threatened fundamental principles of Aboriginality. For if Professor Reynolds' contribution to Indigenous rights is to achieve much at all, before it's too late, then discussions such as his leading to fundamental questions that Indigenous nations should address, must be encouraged to ensure that Indigenous peoples make well informed and educated decisions as to what part they play in where and how Australia goes into the future.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Professor Henry Reynolds' once only use of the term *post colonialism*<sup>6</sup> demonstrates a subtle yet pointed warning to white Australia that by maintaining " ...the legacy of *terra nullius* it will remain shackled to its colonial past."<sup>7</sup> Most Aboriginal people of Australia would agree, rejecting altogether the notion of *post* colonialism. And his once only use of the term *ethnic cleansing*<sup>8</sup> appears to be a subtle use of literary English to show how imperialist nation-states will change common language terms to 'soften' their practices of genocide.

As a whole, Professor Reynolds provides arguments defending all angles of the discussion which are based on firm research and logical assembly. The self-interest laws of colonisers are discussed early in his dissertation, and on through Indigenous nationalism to the arguments that oppose or defend British occupation of Australia. The arguments raised within coloniser nations, especially Britain, concerning definitions of law as they relate to the rights and recognition of Indigenous laws, are laid out for rational perusal. Professor Reynolds lays it all out for our questing minds to grapple with. Sovereignty, customary laws, international rules of colonising and right up to contemporary statements of sovereignty by Australian Indigenous speakers.

A field of history is amply displayed beyond the outer limits of Australia's colonial history construct, which in turn leads us to a discussion that will deal with Aboriginality beyond that that Professor Reynolds has touched on so well.

### **Capitalism**

Looked at in simplistic profile, capitalism is a growth-profit system. Industry must grow to continue to profit. The exploitation of natural resources began in a small way, causing human populations to expand with progress. White societies developed an elitist system which enables them to control the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, pp 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp 175.

masses. Once an industry has exhausted all available natural resources such as timber, minerals or marine life, and workers, all in discreet regions, that industry can no longer continue to expand and profit. The industry then explores new regions for natural and human resources to exploit. The rich in the capitalist system are the elite. They make profits from exploiting the working people who 'harvest' the natural resources that are used to manufacture materialist products to feed the elitist money-power system. In this system a small elite of people are rich and the majority are poor. Nation states are prospering whilst a majority of their citizens remain poverty stricken and destitute. That is not what Aboriginality is about.

We can see Aboriginality as a philosophical set of rules that are manifested in customary cultural practices, set in a belief of the Great Spirit which comprises our Spiritual All. Aboriginality is recognition by the people that they are citizens of the worldly universe as we know it. The Earth is what nurtures us all, flora, fauna, rocks, waters and the air - and humans. The Earth is our Earth Mother and we are all citizens of our Earth Mother. That is a core within the full meaning of Aboriginality.

Reynolds provides some discussion on this point:

"It is clear that the individual Australian [Aboriginal] is under the authority of well-understood customs or laws throughout his life, by which his relations with his fellows and with his physical environment are effectively controlled." <sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the rules of Aboriginality are the rules of our Spiritual All, a spiritual-cultural code requiring mutual respect between all citizens. The idea of Australian Aboriginal people tearing at their Mother's heart, by mining for instance, for no other purpose than joining the capitalist competition for profit

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp, 34.

and materialist status brings forth questions as to why they would ignore the rules of Aboriginality.

Aboriginality is a way of life, respecting all citizens, sharing equally a lifestyle economy and accepting gratefully without waste a shared sustenance between Brothers and Sisters of the Spiritual All. However, if Aboriginal people are to be a part of capitalism we will have to ignore these principles. The differences between a capitalist philosophy and an Aboriginal spiritual eco-lifestyle philosophy are obvious. The question is, which philosophy will Australian Aboriginal people follow, that of capitalism, or that of Aboriginality?

### Christianity

In simplistic profile, Christianity is a patriarchal religion. Its core is a belief that man is superior to the natural world. It is enmeshed in the capitalist system, each supporting the other. Genesis, chapter 1. 26 states :- *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."* In fact Genesis chapter 1 affirms that God gave Christians dominion over every part of the earth, herbs, trees and the earth itself. When put into action the Christian belief presumes that man has a 'God-given' right to exploit the natural resources for personal wealth, power and materialism. That belief alone is in direct opposition to the core principles of Aboriginality.

Another difference between Christianity and Aboriginality is the relationship between God, humans and the natural world. As outlined earlier, Aboriginality is *a philosophical set of rules that are manifested in customary cultural practices, set in a belief of the Great Spirit which comprises our Spiritual All.* Christianity, on the other hand, holds that man is manifested in the image of God. This is a serious difference in that Aboriginality believes that the God, or the Spiritual All, is in the

image of all things, and that humans are not superior to the natural world. Whereas Christianity is a religious belief that man is superior to the natural world and that man in God's image represents male/human superiority over all things. The Christian philosophy coupled with the capitalist system is white anglo male dominated, and has little or any desire to accommodate Aboriginal nations, especially those nations that insist on maintaining principles of Aboriginality.

## Conclusion

Professor Henry Reynolds has provided for those scholars of Aboriginal affairs an historical and contemporary record of the continuing march of colonial society. He discusses new concepts that derive from little used accounts of what happened during the period prior to British invasion of Australia. The differences of opinion concerning Britain's colonisation of Australia are looked at in today's social justice terms. He concludes by playing at the fringes of recent Australian Aboriginal arguments on nationalism and sovereignty, with suggestions of where it all might lead to in the future.

*Aboriginal Sovereignty: Three Nations, One Australia* clarifies much more of colonial history than any other work written by a non-Indigenous historian/writer than is currently available within the current white Australian history record. It will incite greater interest to explore Aboriginality in the minds of the spiritual-cultural thinkers of Indigenous nations all around the world. This account of history, the way it is presented and the conclusions drawn, raises major questions. An important issue mentioned by Reynolds relates to the various debates that separate *nation* from *state* based on European definitions, and is likely to be crucial in any treaties reached between Australia's Aboriginal peoples and the Australian Government.

Within the international context of Professor Reynolds' research there are other serious questions for Indigenous peoples. For example, do we aspire to exercise an Indigenous definition of *nation-state*, or seek to comply with European definitions? Or

perhaps pursue a lesser status of being an autonomous nation within Australia's nation-state? Whatever, crucial questions remain as to how we will define Aboriginality as we adapt to a changing political environment. One thing is certain, if these questions are not properly addressed, Aboriginality will become a confusion of spiritual-cultural fragments being easily discredited by the political power shields of the imperialist nation-states.

Wherever all this leads us, Professor Henry Reynolds must be commended for yet again another important account of history. White Australian people who will read it, and stretch their minds beyond their ordered society will find this account of their history most challenging. It is an account of history that impacts very much on how we Aboriginal people address the questions that emerge from discussions concerning national identity, British-colonial constructs, and Aboriginal nationhood and sovereignty. For unless our Aboriginal nations determine our respective and collective agreements on questions relating to Aboriginality and nationalism, very soon, the true essence of the traditional laws of this land will be forever lost in the Australian imperial model.

If the current socio-political scenario is any indication at all, Australian Aboriginal people will be committed by the so-called black leaders in the Government's corporate process to go with a white Australia. White Australia has no qualms at all about this, it is not offering any choices to Australian Aboriginal peoples. Successive Australian Governments have been clearly decided on these issues, especially since Bob Menzies and Bob Hawke held office. The Australian political parties of all persuasions are hell-bent to complete the creation of a One-Australian nation based on its European nationalism. For example, the Howard Government strongly implies that Native Title, and especially the recent High Court Wik decision, is a threat to the national interest of a white Australia. Moreover, at the centenary of Federation in 2001 the Aboriginal Reconciliation process is designed to seal a one-

nation agreement with Aboriginal peoples. It will for all time formalise an agreement that Aboriginal people are Australian citizens, an act that will absorb traditional Aboriginality into the white-Australian nationalism, and lose it forever. Any talk of a treaty has been suppressed by all political parties of government. Even the ATSIC pied pipers and Aboriginal Reconciliation elite who chase white status by adhering to white agendas have lost sight of The Peoples will. If they want to come back and be embraced their people, then these blacks must open up discussions in Aboriginal communities on these crucial issues, and act according to our spiritual-cultural aspirations.

Whether Aboriginal people choose to join in with white Australia or seek Aboriginal nationalism and sovereignty, a hard road into the future is assured. Unless our Aboriginal communities are able to establish open discussions on the crucial questions and principles of Aboriginality right across Australia, in a schedule that provides adequate time to determine well informed and educated decisions based on Aboriginal themes: then the road into the future as determined by white-Australia will be maintained, and Aboriginality in this country will simply be turned into another colonial-Australian construct.

If nothing else, we Aboriginal patriots of Australia must take stronger action against the governments' black pied pipers and remove their powers that are taking us deeper into the white-man's Australia. We must achieve an end to the reconciliation *hoodwink* being perpetrated against us, and see to it that white Australia reconciles what it has done to us, and continues to do to us. We must develop a serious discussion on where our principles of Aboriginality can lead us. And most important, we must achieve our freedom, our self-determination and, our nationalism.

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# ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND COLONIALISM: OUR EARTHLINKS UNDER THREAT

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## **Traditional Aboriginal Education Themes :**

Traditional Indigenous education, in a generalised sense, is the practice of multi-interaction arrangements between the human environment and the natural environment. It embodies the lifestyles of indigenous entities of both human and non-human lifestyles, roles and responsibilities. The cores of indigenous education are the traditional knowledge's which explain the ecological food-chains and protocols of respect that have existed between the human and non-human entities of the Earths eco-systems since the Beginning. They go back and beyond the living memories and recorded histories of non-indigenous societies. Nevertheless, these cores have been carried throughout the ages by indigenous people through stories, myths and legends: providing understandings of how practices of historically traditional indigenous lifestyles logically protect and sustain a continuum of mutual respect between human and non-human entities.

For example:

"Among the interrelated principles emphasised in African indigenous knowledge systems are:

1. Indigenous knowledge is accumulated knowledge based on observing and experiencing the social and natural worlds. There is no marketplace of ideas. Knowledge is not bought and sold in the euro centric sense.
2. Every knowledge is socially and collectively created through the interactive processes between individuals, groups, and the natural world.
3. The basic tenet is that humans are part of the natural world. We do not stand apart and neither are we above the natural world." (Sefa Dei, G. F., 1995, *Empowerment Towards Sustainable Development*, Led, London, 151.)

Aboriginality is about understanding that humans are not superior to the non-human world.

We can see Aboriginality as a philosophical set of rules that are manifested in customary cultural practices, set in a belief of the Great Spirit which comprises our Spiritual All. Aboriginality is recognition by the people that they are citizens of the worldly universe as we know it. The Earth is what nurtures us all, flora, fauna, rocks, waters and the air - and humans. The Earth is our Earth Mother and we are All citizens of our Earth Mother. That is a core within the full meaning of Aboriginality. These principles of Aboriginality are central to traditional Aboriginal education, as it was before the British arrived, and is still practiced in isolated regions of Australia. It is a social education which nurtures spiritual-cultural beliefs and principles involving Aboriginal people as responsible citizens of our Earth Mother. This system of educating simply works on the structure of extended family networks, all providing sustenance and protection for each other on a daily basis of interaction between Brother and Sister citizens of the human and natural world. This enables appropriate education to be taught to each member of the extended family as progress is made through levels of spiritual-cultural knowledge's that underpin the customs of daily and seasonal life.

Education within Aboriginal society has for thousands of years been based on each individual being guided by customs relating to sound ecological practices. "It is clear that the individual Australian [Aboriginal] is under the authority of well-understood customs and laws throughout his life, by which his relations with his fellows and with his physical environment are effectively controlled." (Reynolds, H., 1996, *Aboriginal Sovereignty: Three Nations, One Australia*, Allen & Unwin, 34.) Indigenous education is a communal process in which people learn to respect the natural life in their physical environment as equal citizens. A Native American view is that: "Tribal education was a natural outcome of living in close communion with each other and the natural environment." (Cajete, Gregory A., 1994, *Look to the Mountain*, Kivaki Press, Durango, 33.) Similarly the non-human, or Spirit world, is understood by indigenous people as being an ensemble of spiritual manifestations of all entities of the natural world. The Great Spirit comprises our Spiritual All, including humans, every citizen of the Earth Mother is included. This Spiritual philosophy simply implies that no

individual entity of the natural world is superior to the other, and that each supports and nurtures the other in a sound eco-system structure.

Therefore, indigenous education is about living. It is about showing respect for all entities of our natural world as equal citizens of our Earth Mother, and as equal manifestations in the Spirit World. It is an education of *doing*. Indigenous education is not simply about human needs and self interests, but wholly about sharing life giving sustenance between people and other entities of the natural world. The *doing* is about living together in respect, about demonstrating respect through protecting each other's interests. If, for example, we pollute our water citizen, then we have failed to respect and protect, thus the water will be impure and cause illness to the water and to other citizens who need it.

Although indigenous education may be taught in class rooms, it is not wholesome if one is taught a way of living without being able to live in that way.. Indigenous education is a way of living, it is a process by which each individual learns from practicing the principles of Aboriginality. How we indigenous peoples continue to live in such a way in this modern world driven by economics is a challenge which all peoples on this planet should address. Any measures of success will develop greater interest in progressing indigenous education, and thus enable further movement towards a revitalised practice of the principles of Aboriginality. The benefits from achieving this would include development of indigenous lifestyles across cultural boundaries, black and white. However, there is a cost. Colonialists would need to decolonise and acknowledge indigenous sovereignty, nationhood and statehood. This is not likely to happen given current circumstances. However, progress in an Aboriginal direction, may well produce a worthwhile quality of life that will continue to develop during the human experience on this planet.

### **The Landscape:**

In recent history colonising has severely fragmented indigenous spiritual-cultural lifestyles across the Earth, destroying the historical traditional practices of indigenous societies that were integral to the environmental balance between the human and natural world. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that for contemporary indigenous societies to recover this fast disappearing balance, land must be returned to indigenous peoples to

enable redevelopment of historically traditional lifestyles. Land Rights is crucial to indigenous peoples because to enable indigenous education to develop, the people must be able to *live it*. Therefore, the colonial nations must decolonise either in whole or in part their illegally gained lands.

And although decolonisation processes have begun, the nation-states have been careful to decolonise only those territories that " ... applied almost exclusively to overseas possessions rather than parts of the so-called metropolitan territories of UN member states." (Barsh, R. L., 1988, *International Law And Aboriginal Human Rights*, Law Book Co., North Ryde, 72.) Indigenous political movements have at least achieved some progress in the UN, leaving fewer overseas colonies to be released before the so-called *metropolitan* colonised territories are all that are left for the UN member states to consider.

The UN member states are confronted with an additional indigenous issue that has emerged in post-World War II years, that is self-determination for indigenous peoples. The issue is mainly on what self-determination means, and how it applies to indigenous nations that are within the territorial boundaries of UN member nation-states.

"The right to self-determination appears in the first article of the United Nations Charter, and in the first articles of both International Covenants on Human Rights, where it is defined to include not only a people's right to its own cultural, economic, social and political institutions, but also its right to land." (Ibid, 70.)

However, the USA has applied a legislative definition under the 1975 *Indian Self-Determination Act* which simply devolves administrative responsibilities to Native Americans, resulting in tribal bureaucracies that tend to assimilate Native American cultural socio-political philosophies more tightly into that of Euro-America. (Ibid, 103.) It may be that Australia will try to do the same thing if pressure increases through the UN. The unfortunate reality at this time in history is that Australia, both its federation of governments and its dominant non-Aboriginal Australian society would not agree to Aboriginal self-determination without some form of coercive pressure being brought to bear.

Coercion to create such radical change as decolonisation must come from the people. Australia has about a 97% non-Aboriginal population. There would only be a small minority of Australians that would support

decolonisation. If Aboriginal education represents a desirable lifestyle, a common-sense, rational and logical way for humans to enjoy living, then the non-Aboriginal populations world-wide must acknowledge the sense in protecting those who know the way. Non-Aboriginal environmentalists, the Green Movement as a whole, should come to understand that Aboriginal society holds the key to world security. They should make a commitment to seek decolonisation, and as a parallel they should be seeking dialogue with indigenous peoples to discuss meaningful ways to cooperate in political activities that will achieve progress in decolonisation. Future discussions between blacks and whites could address education-lifestyle programs to develop broader acceptance across other cultural societies of principles of Aboriginality, and what being responsible citizens really means.

Indigenous self-determination is an issue which has not been resolved to the point of recognising the full essence of its meaning. The Australian colonial state continues to prevent Aboriginal people from exercising their sovereignty, thus hindering them from developing as dictated by their cultural aspirations. Given that this is correct, the result leaves little scope for Aboriginal leaders to guide the continuing struggle of their communities. There is little to guide Aboriginal communities towards a future that carries with it a true maintenance of cultural principles through self-determined education processes that are based on traditional themes.

Indeed, the Australian colonisers have, since the 1967 Referendum, developed all sorts of strategies to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are directed towards accepting Australian citizenship. White Australia is constructing an outcome which ensures that Aboriginal people will be entitled to no more than that of white Australian citizens, and in the process take away their rights of self-determination. Government strategies have eventually evolved into a system of elitism within Aboriginal communities, creating a white value system that effectively destroys Aboriginal cultural values. The Hawke Government changed the national Aboriginal community network structures which made up the Aboriginal Movement of the 1960's -70's and 80's. He established a quasi-Aboriginal Government called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), with selected heads, regionally elected members and an administration 'top-heavy' with white bureaucrats. The Australian Government further coerces Aboriginals to assimilate via its anti-

Aboriginal laws which insist that only those Aboriginal people who are on the national electoral register may participate in ATSIC elections. The members of ATSIC perform only within the limitations of the Australian Government, reacting to the Government's agenda rather than to Aboriginal community self-determined objectives. "When a government chooses who to negotiate with and finances the negotiation process, the results will tend to reflect the views of the government and not the peoples attempting to assert their right of self-determination." (Ibid, 71.)

Native Title did at least celebrate important changes in Australia's Common Law, providing a limited security to indigenous title to land. Equally important is that Native Title has changed the Aboriginal Land Rights Movement from seeking a political resolution to a political problem. Aboriginal Land Rights (and therefore Aboriginal customs and laws) have seemingly been accepted by ATSIC leaders as being subordinate to Australian law, changing the political issue into a legal issue to be resolved under Australian law. Moreover, Native Title is really a limited security, with both the High Court ruling and the Commonwealth Native Title legislation demonstrating expectations that Native Title will eventually be extinguished, and that there exists a process in both to actually achieve extinguishment. Therefore, it is clearly implied that the recognition of particular Native Title rights is limited to the right for an Australian government to extinguish any one of them at its whim. The recent High Court ruling on the Wik peoples' Native Title claim, and the reaction by Australian governments is a point in case.

The intention clearly is to entrench Australian Aboriginal peoples in a mould of Australian citizenship, and to achieve Aboriginal-Australian clones. It clearly demonstrates that Australia intends to manufacture a culturally homogenous Australian society based on inherited British principles. For example, the Aboriginal Council of Reconciliation has been designed to breakdown Aboriginal resistance to assimilation and achieve Aboriginal acceptance of Australian citizenship. The Council was established by Bob Hawke without firstly asking Aboriginal people whether reconciliation was wanted, whether conciliation might be more appropriate, or what the purpose and objectives should be. The Aboriginal Council of Reconciliation Act established terms of reference which are vague and limit the process to achieving a document of reconciliation. Any talk of a treaty, for instance, has been rejected by Australian governments and high profile

white-Australians. It has been imposed on Australian Aboriginal peoples for the purpose of finalising Australia's 'Aboriginal problem', under the arrogant premise that all has been healed between Aboriginal peoples and white Australia. It is about white Australia fully subsuming Aboriginal people into a one-Australian nation at the first centenary of Australian Federation on 1st January 2001. It is about assimilating Aboriginal people into the white Australian society, its philosophies and systems.

### **Current Circumstances :**

The Hawke Government left legacies which were designed to breakdown Aboriginality, to actually rid white Australia of a truly free Aboriginal society in its midst. Assimilation programs are achieving the objective and Aboriginal people are being influenced by false rewards to join Australia as Euro-minded citizens. ATSIC, the Aboriginal Council of Reconciliation, Native Title proponents and managers of government funded Aboriginal community based organisations; they are all being influenced by government grant-funding conditions and rewards of high public profiles, high white-Australian status and money, to lead Aboriginal people into accepting the white-Australian way of life.

ATSIC is the Australian Government's buffer between the Aboriginal community based spiritual, cultural and political struggle toward freedom of self-determination (what's left of it as the '90's draw to a close), and Government programs seeking to achieve a One-Australia based on European values. The Government selectively appoints the ATSIC chairperson: the other Commissioners and Regional Councillors are elected by Aboriginal people. As mentioned earlier in this paper, only Aboriginal people who are on the Australian electoral register are entitled to participate in ATSIC elections, thus forcing Aboriginal people to either accept Australian citizenship or reject it and put up with the self interest lot that get voted into the Government's power grid. This is a slow but patient assimilation. These Commissioners, Regional Councillors, Aboriginal members on the Reconciliation Council and self-interest individuals in Aboriginal community based organisations are 'propped-up' by the Government in front of Australia's public via the media as THE Aboriginal leaders. They are publicly stroked by politicians and media, and heralded by Australia's 'do-gooder' sect as examples of Aboriginal-Australians playing a crucial part in the development of a one-Australia.

The real Aboriginal community-based leaders, or spokes-people, are disregarded and ignored by white Australia. Public political argument between blacks and whites has been focused on ATSIC budget worries, program cuts and racism. The focus on Aboriginal education, for example, is to maintain an interest in increasing Aboriginal achievements in white education. The political issues that emerged during the 1970's and 1980's have been relegated to the recesses of a forgotten struggle. Aboriginal community political structures have all but disappeared, subsumed into ATSIC's more immediate concerns for community development, which unfortunately has its main roads all leading to assimilation. It is this period in colonial history with all of its circumstances, oppressively working away at achieving assimilation of Aboriginal peoples that is succeeding in eroding the themes of traditional Aboriginal education.

### **What should be done:**

Those Aboriginal people who believe in the principles of Aboriginality, either in terms of the definition by the author herein, or by determined principles that arise from Aboriginal community discussions as to what those principles might be, will lead the way. Whichever, it must be understood that the traditional Aboriginal way of life was based on living in respect with the natural world. That after many thousands of years Aboriginal lifestyles maintained a continuing adherence to a set of principles where people behaved responsibly in their day to day interaction with the natural environment.

Non-Aboriginal environmentalists and educators should acknowledge Aboriginality as a rational and feasible system which embodies mutually satisfying interactions between humans and the natural world. They should reject the euro-Australian establishment of exploitation and plunder of the natural world, and indigenous peoples. They should reject the interests of Christianity and capitalism which justify a system of elitism, of a rich and a poor, of exploitation for greed and materialism; they should reject notions of white patriarchal religious imperialism over women, children, indigenous peoples and the natural world. Progressive and creative people of the non-Aboriginal Australian nation who aspire as environmentalists and educators should be addressing indigenous issues to white Australia's governments, and UN: member states, demanding a

decolonisation of Australian Aboriginal people and their respective territories.

Instead of reacting to the white Australia agenda, either from governments or the non-Aboriginal populations, Aboriginal communities should focus more on their traditional spiritual-cultural customs. Aboriginal community leaders should be assessing their community's spiritual and cultural needs, and use Aboriginal community self-determination as a mutual learning process. In this way an appropriate education process can be redeveloped, influencing lifestyles that provide the infrastructures by which indigenous education can develop, progress and be maintained. Acknowledging that such indigenous systems must develop, or redevelop, in a capitalist-Christian environment, an environment that is oppressive and suppressive to alien philosophies, Aboriginal people must stop wasting their energies reacting; and 'kick-start Aboriginal community discussions towards developing their local and regional communities' spiritual-cultural aspirations.

Australian Aboriginal peoples should be addressing self-determination issues. They should be focusing within Aboriginal communities, redeveloping traditional knowledge's and beliefs. Such a process should develop education processes which are based on traditional spiritual-cultural learning's and themes. Aboriginal spiritual-cultural leaders, political leaders and community activists should all be seeking to promote wide Aboriginal community discussion on these matters. Discussions need to address Aboriginality, define it, what it means in terms of spiritual-cultural determinations and visions. These discussions should be Australia-wide, involve Aboriginal people only, and seek to establish appropriate community infrastructures to overcome the problems of being represented by government selected appointees. A major objective for these Aboriginal community discussions should be an intention to determine whether Aboriginal people prefer to develop as a part of white Australia or, whether to seek formal sovereign status in the international world. Alternatively, Aboriginal people might consider some agreeable mixture which acknowledges First Nation status under some form of domestic treaty.

Whichever, as the 21st Century draws near, Aboriginal communities must come to realise that the fundamental principles of Aboriginality are being

lost, and unless they do something to 'bring them back' very soon, then there will be no-one left with the knowledge to resource any real maintenance of these principles. The result may well be a new people, Aboriginal Australians who recognise themselves as citizens of a white nation, and as Australians they will endorse the white Australian view that the principles of Aboriginality are worthless. The loss of Aboriginality in Australia, in its true essence, will leave future generations with an empty land, a terra nullius.

## **Conclusion :**

Indigenous education is a spiritual-cultural practice of lifestyle and responsibility which involves interaction between human societies and the natural world. Colonial nations have dismantled much of the indigenous education, lifestyle and practice, continuing to affirm imperialist notions of 'white is right'. Recent changes in colonial nations regarding indigenous peoples have been limited, self-serving and ruthless. The Australian colonial nation has maintained its mindless pattern of assimilation, albeit through calculated strategy changes which progressively and covertly creep towards achieving an end to traditional Aboriginality, and a cementing of Aboriginal-Australian citizenship as a means to maintaining European values and principles as the core of Australian nationalism.

ATSIC, the Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation, Native Title proponents, government funding conditions and selected Aboriginal "pied pipers", all are white Australian constructs. They have been put in place to ensure that the white Australian way is the only way acceptable in this country. The beliefs and structures of Christianity and capitalism maintain imperialist dominion over Australian society, especially where Aboriginality is concerned. Moreover, Aboriginal community aspirations under self-determination are effectively curtailed by government structures designed to control and mould Aboriginal people into being acceptable Australian citizens.

Aboriginality comprises principles regarding citizenship of the natural world, and beliefs of mutual respect between human and non-human entities. Aboriginality is about being accountable to our Brother and Sister citizens of the natural world, of which Aboriginal people see themselves as equal citizens of this natural society. Indigenous education is based on

these principles which are networked across all of the eco-communities of natural society. Aboriginality is being eroded by colonial concepts and imperialism, causing a breakdown in indigenous education, a whittling process which satisfies colonial desires to rid itself of Aboriginality as a recognisable entity within Australian nationalism.

In relation to the conference theme: *Environment Education: Connecting Humans with the Earth*, Aboriginal education offers a viable alternative to future visions of environment education that can deal with both the human environment and the natural environment. To achieve any progress towards environment education that is sound in its fundamental base, indigenous cultural boundaries and sovereignty must be formally acknowledged by the UN, and especially the white Australian nation. From such acknowledgment should flow a process of negotiation between Aboriginal people and white Australia's Government, on an equal basis, as to what lands white Australia is to be allocated. Overarching any such agreements should include joint commitments of management of the Australian environment based on principles of Aboriginality. Australian Aboriginal society will need to address its aspirations, either as one Aboriginal nation or as smaller local nations with their respective cultural boundaries.

Of course many will say it is a utopian idea, but is it unlike the desire to prevent further erosion of the ozone layer, or of farmed lands, or of security for animals? Is it any more unrealistic to desire alternative industry that will leave old growth forests to live naturally, or develop a plastic free society or the wish to see a poverty free world? These are considered utopian ideas by many people.

There can be only one way of looking at the question of change to the way the world presently is, that is to aspire for change that will produce the ideal. If not, then let us not fool ourselves, including those of us who are environmentalists or believers in the traditional principles of Aboriginality; let us all agree that ideals, or utopias, are unachievable and downright ridiculous and get on with destroying indigenous and natural societies. Let us all agree to limited destruction of forests, sea-life, wetlands and water-ways, let us all agree to limited poverty and unlimited elitism. Because if ideals which hold fundamental principles of better relationships between the human and natural world of this planet are considered unachievable

and utopian, and that lesser positions be taken from these fundamental principles because they are easier and considered achievable, then there is no integrity in the stated objectives of environmentalism as we know it today.

We can roll along believing in governments, or that others can do it, or should do it, we can believe that the interests of industry truly desire to achieve sound environmental practices and outcomes, but we cannot hide from the truth of our individual convictions. White Australia has never ever demonstrated that Aboriginality, in terms of its spiritual-cultural nationalism, has any place in the aspirations of a white Australia.

Aboriginal people are expected to be Aboriginal Australians, that is to say Australians, albeit Aboriginal. The idea is that Aboriginal people will lose their 'uncivilised' natures and become citizens of a 'civilised Australia'. But: if white Australia's environmental record were to be fairly compared with the thousands of years of Aboriginal interaction with the Natural World, then it would be clear that the principles of Aboriginality can stand alone as a success. The Aboriginal record demonstrates an ideal education process which addresses the environmental needs of people and the natural environment that sustains us all. It is an education-lifestyle that we can all aspire to if we want. However, getting there has a cost which dictates that Aboriginal people must embrace their spiritual-cultural integrity, and that white-Australia must decolonise Aboriginal cultural territories that are defined by Australian Aboriginal peoples.

If this conference: Environment Education - Connecting People with the Earth, is to truly seek movement towards connecting people with the Earth, then the points I have raised must not only be taken seriously, but the conference must make a commitment to take appropriate actions to enlist Australia's broad Green Movement in seeking a decolonisation of Aboriginal peoples and their territories.

If Australian Aboriginal peoples truly desire a free Aboriginal future based on the principles of Aboriginality, discussions on questions I have raised, and others determined by Aboriginal communities, must be begin yesterday, tomorrow may be too late.

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## AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS

### A ROLE TO PLAY IN A CHANGING

### INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENT

A paper to the Council of Australian Museums Association Conference entitled  
"Common Threads Diverse Patterns." Held in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 1 - 3  
December 1993.

By Jim Everett

State President

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

***"Chief Justice Marshall clearly expressed the common sense view  
in Worcester v State of Georgia :***

***"It is difficult to comprehend the proposition that  
inhabitants of either quarter of the globe have rightful  
original claims of dominion over the inhabitants of the other,  
or over the lands they occupied; or that the discovery of either  
by the other should give the discoverer rights in the country  
discovered which annulled the pre-existing rights of its  
ancient possessors" " (1)***

Within the continuing colonial experience that Australian Indigines experience, the continuing oppression and control of our very lives and sovereign freedom, the above statement reflects the very reality of what contemporary Australian Indigines face each day. That statement relates to the overall political perspective that we live in our own land, beggars and outsiders.

Transfer the context of the above opening statement to the issue of cultural and intellectual property rights and you should see that their relationship is as one.

(1) Heather Sculthorpe, "Aboriginal Land Rights Under Australian Law 1981,  
Law in Society Project."

Tasmanian Aborigines do not accept white ownership of our cultural and intellectual property. Tasmanian Aborigines are not chattels, not in any sense, nor is our culture or heritage in any way. Not even when it is claimed by thieves in the night, not even then do white Australians own or relate to any of our cultural heritage.

Tasmanian Aborigines love this land, the very heart of this land, every smell of the sea and the grass, every sound of the bird and the rustle of leaves in the trees. There is no Aboriginal person authorised to give any of this away. We do not own it in the way of white people, we belong to the land as it belongs to us. We each, the land, the animals and plants, the insects and the waters, everything natural to our world, we all have responsibilities to each other. White people never seem to understand this.

There is no-one who has the right to barter our culture or our heritage. Any of our cultural and intellectual property that has been stolen, taken under false pretences or bartered unfairly is property taken and possessed without our permission. I do not include recently created art objects by Aboriginal people for economic sustenance. Nevertheless, contemporary Aboriginal art works have increased in quantity across the country because our people have been forced to exploit the only remaining possession and knowledge they have left after white society has reaped all it can get. Even then, Aboriginal art is treated as some sort of novelty under white values in art and culture. This in turn breaks down the true meaning of Aboriginal cultural art, allowing an assimilationist attitude into the way our cultural arts are defined and interpreted.

Why do white people in Australia so desire to 'own' and control our culture? Is it simply because they believe that they are better equipped to do so? Is it because their imperialism is so entrenched that they believe that their culture and heritage is superior to ours? Whatever the answer is there can be no doubt that Aboriginal interests are of no consequence to what is decided when the crucial questions arise.

What are the crucial questions? Firstly there is the matter of whether our Lands have been legally acquired by the British. (Now called Australian). Two hundred years down the track the question remains unanswered other than a stated self justification by white Australia. Aboriginal cultural development is now condoned by whites, encouraged by them to be maintained.

But only in the face of covert assimilation programs and subordination of our culture. It gives no conviction to the often stated goodwill by whites in support of maintaining Aboriginal culture and heritage.

The modern day learning curve by white people in dealing with Aboriginal culture is what appears to be a more sophisticated approach that has evolved. What is being sought at all times by white Australia is assimilation. There is an obsession of conformity within the overall attitude of white society. Multiculturalism, for example, is a sly promotion of assimilation, even if it recognises ethnic diversity, it excludes Aboriginal identity from discreet entity status. White Australia cleverly promotes an image of a people who respect Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal identity. Yet the statistics show that Aborigines are treated to circumstances equal to third world countries. Underneath it all, white Australia continues to subtly push along with assimilation influences on the Aboriginal people. This approach is not new at all, it only appears to be new and more sophisticated. Most white history books show that the approach is much the same, it just has a different face.

It seems that it is okay for Aborigines to take their cultural symbols with them into the future, as Australians, but with the expectation that the cultural symbols are for all Australians. Thus the covert intention is slowly but surely being satisfied, that is that the future moves further and further towards seeing Aborigines as full Australians, culture and all.

How dare white Australia be so presumptuous. It is not what Aborigines want, even if the pressure on our people is starting to wear them down. To be Australian means to legitimise the dispossession of our lands, to legitimise white ownership of our culture and heritage. It would mean that we agree to legitimise British/Australian law over our society of more than 50,000 years of cohesion with the land. It would mean that we Aborigines agree to legitimise the assimilation of our whole identity.

There are those of us who know that Aborigines who accept Australian identity are treated by whites as being "good little blackfellas." But mostly it brings confusion, an ambivalence, deculturalised Aborigines who are seen as not quite Aboriginal yet certainly not white. It reminds me of the times I have heard the saying, "They are alright, but I wouldn't let my daughter marry one."

When I was on Cape Barren Island in 1991 with the then Minister Assisting the Premier on Aboriginal Affairs, selling the Aboriginal Lands Bill 1991, a white land owner made his views known to the Minister and his Private Secretary. He said to them, "Look, when it all boils down, who would want an Aborigine for a landlord?"

White people actually 'farm' Aboriginal culture in the north of Australia, moulding it into a static stereo-typed image of what is accepted by white Australians as 'being Aboriginal.' Anything that doesn't fit the white criteria is rejected on the presumption that it is not wholly Aboriginal. Aborigines who are of mixed racial origin are marginalised, and have their identity questioned daily. There is nowhere else in the world where people are so dehumanised as Aborigines are in Australia. Especially in Tasmania.

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Final Report brought forth many of the cruel circumstances that Tasmanian Aborigines suffer, and stated the obvious, and I quote :

*Tasmania, by long denying Aboriginal identity to any of its citizens, created painful problems of identity for those of Aboriginal descent who had survived the extinction on which Tasmania perversely prided itself." (2)*

The fact that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have been, and continue to be, treated as outcasts from white society yet denied recognition of their true identity is because white people constructed the lie of genocide. The ultimate arrogance is to be told by a white person who is not natural to this land. Who is of mixed racial origin and has assumed a new name for the land and white people. That because we Aborigines are of mixed racial origin, yet have grown up with the knowledge of our Aboriginality, that we are not accepted by whites as being Aboriginal.

After the rape of our women during the white invasion, after the land grants to whites and the classification of surviving Aboriginal people as 'half-castes' and 'quarter castes', they insist that we are now Australians. Our poor circumstances and disempowerment are blamed on us for '*not keeping up.*'

By forcing us to assimilate, to be Australian citizens, removing our unique entity and culture maintains white Australia's status quo. That is to say that, as far as whites are concerned, Aborigines had no rights when whites arrived, no rights to land, no rights to culture, both intellectual and physical, and no recognition of Aboriginal self government systems and ecological technologies.

White Australians continue to believe that their technologies, their land management skills and governing systems are superior to Aboriginal society. One only has to look at the mess whites have made of our Land to see that as land managers they are abject failures. We need look no further than the local townships, the cities and industrial developments to see that white people have developed into a backward inferior society. People suffer from these unnecessary monstrosities of white culture. The land suffers, the animals and water life suffer. Did indigenous people do all that? No! Of course not, our cultural way is to respect the universe of living ecology that we share with the native flora and fauna, the insects and all of the elements of our Mother, The Land.

Robert Bropho, a respected Elder of his people in Western Australia, spoke recently at a public forum in Launceston on the 9th September 1993, with Michael Mansell and Gough Whitlam. He made the following statement.

*"One only has to look at what Mabo's trying to offer us. The Aboriginal people are going to be destroyed. Mabo is going to bring us nothing. We're going to get nothing out of it. A selected few might get something out of it. But the religion and culture is never talked about. One only has to study the attitude of the governments in the past and governments of today, that where religion is concerned, it's seldom spoken about. It's always the white government. He wants to govern the country. He wants to govern it in his own way. He wants to outline what he thinks and says is fit for the Aboriginal people and the way that they should live. And he fails to remember that if our wants for our religion, our culture, our sense of belonging in our sacred sites is destroyed then who are we to become, the Aboriginal people. Where are we to go? Do we go to the Catholic doors of the church or the Church of England and start praying the Jesus Christ. This what the question mark in our mind is today. Our concern is our children of tomorrow, the adult men and women of tomorrow.*

*Where will their children go to worship. Your towns, your capital cities, you have your playgrounds, you have your racecourses, you have your football grounds, you have your basketball areas, you have your churches."*

## MUSEUMS :

What has all this to do with how museums relate to Aboriginal people? Well firstly one must consider what the role of museums are. My view is that museums are places to protect and maintain cultural material, and to display it as an educational resource. They are places for academics to study culture, to delve into cultural knowledge and develop themes of cultural representations. Museums are, to my way of thinking, cultural hearts, they carry the cultural outlook of the people. They reflect the attitude of the people to alien cultures, and in turn influence the people's attitudes to alien cultures.

Museums are a clear example of white society's imperialism, a strong statement of superiority. Wherever colonisation has occurred white people have assumed a position of the superior race. They maintain the indoctrination of their superiority in institutions like museums, schools, universities, commerce, government systems and public communications. Australian museums create images of cultures. They present white perspectives of other cultures. They generally represent the other cultures as inferior.

The "other" cultures are mainly indigenous cultures. The cultures that whites have for centuries invaded, exploited and cruelly extinguished. White people have made their own rules to facilitate colonising indigenous lands. They have justified almost every murderous deed against indigenous people through self made laws and authorities.

Australian museums are part and parcel of this illegal and immoral invasion of our privacy. They are part of the white empire's system to control us, to conform us, assimilate and destroy us as a people.

I have on many occasion been involved in retrieving Aboriginal cultural property from museums in Australia and overseas. I have witnessed the deceipts and forked tongues that whites have used to get rid of us. I have seen the power of Australian museums maintaining 'ownership' of our cultural heritage.

I continue to be abhorred by the way that Australian museums continue to exhibit stereotyped images of us in their institutions. The Noble Savage, the nomads, a stone age people, primitives. They are the sorts of things that Aborigines continue to confront in these institutions'

The talk of prehistory in the academic world of museums is another form of superiority. Aboriginal history is made subordinate by that very premise. It is no longer acceptable to Aboriginal people that museums continue to represent falsehoods of our history. Aboriginal history is not *prehistory* or some sort of *by the way thank you very much*. If white history is so important, then why is it so young compared to our 50,000, 60,000 or more years of history?

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has within its halls of cultural property a large section of rock with culturally valuable Aboriginal carvings on it. Our culture is living, and it doesn't belong there, it must be returned to us to protect with respect and understanding.

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has many objects and items of our intellectual ,and cultural property enshrined within. And as I have said, it is no longer an acceptable behaviour for white people to continue to possess our culture.

The Council of Australian Museums Association has created this forum. It has brought together many academics that will want to discredit what I have said here. Some will agree with me, but remain either powerless under the suppressive museum and government bureaucracies, or simply remain apathetic enough to not want to try. There are those who will want to justify the actions of modern day Australia. But Aboriginal resistance may make it a difficult thing to achieve.

We Aboriginal people hear only too often from white people that they are not today responsible for the actions of their ancestors. Most Aborigines would accept that notion, unconditionally.

But white Australians are guilty if they continue to maintain dishonest systems that justify the actions of their forebears. White Australia maintains ownership of our Land, even though history clearly records that it was stolen on the basis of a lie. The Australian High Court in June 1992 threw the doctrine of terra nullius out of the historical concept that has been used for over 200 years to justify the invasion of this land now called Australia.

Aboriginal people have, since 1788, been marginalised from economy, cultural freedom, heritage rights and self determination, all on the basis of a lie. And the lie continues because white people assert that the past has no impact on today.

*We are a people!* The Australian governments recognise that we are a people. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, Land Rights Legislation, the Aboriginal Education Policy in every state and territory, and other examples plainly show that we are recognised as a race of people. As a people we have distinct rights to our 'property', both intellectual and physical.

White Australia wants to forget all about it, or more to the point they want us to forget all about it. Australians live on their past and it's all okay. They ram the world wars down our throats every year. ANZAC day is the cry of people like Bruce Ruxton, they want to maintain a white Australia. Patriotic Australians join in the ANZAC marches and other activities and remember the victories, the killings and the good things that have been gleaned from the spoils of death.

Our ancestors fought on their own soil, they were murdered and plundered but they are not remembered by white Australians. Our men and women died overseas too, fighting for this country, alongside white Australians, to save it from further holocaust, and after the victory they were banished once again to the fringes of white society. My uncles and relations fought in both world wars. Some didn't make it back.

Nevertheless, the real history of this country is well known, but not remembered by white society. The murders and rapes of Aboriginal men and women are on record. The atrocities committed against Aborigines cannot be said in a nice way. We Aboriginal people cannot paint pretty pictures of past and present life since 1788 in this land. The worst of it all is that we cannot paint the faintest hint of any change for the better. White people continue to own the land, they own the education systems, they own the political structures and access to such structures are through the 'old school tie' as far as blacks are concerned. Anyway, Aborigines who get to be politicians must 'play the game' or else lose endorsement and get the boot.

When white Australia decided to do something for their warriors, they set up 'soldier resettlement schemes.' There was one developed on Flinders Island off the north east coast of Tasmania, where I was born.

The Australian Government spent millions upon millions of dollars clearing the land and building farms for returned servicemen. This was an island where many Tasmanian Aboriginal people lived, where the Aboriginal men and women came from in good number to go to war and help protect this land.

They were never offered one farm! Not one of those brave Aboriginal men or women were offered a thing other than being '*put in their place*' as blacks, as half-castes or quarter castes. And the memories of oppression and hate from the people they stood beside in a war.

Racist attitudes against Tasmanian Aborigines are still alive and well in the education system of Tasmania. Our young are still being told by uncaring and dominant white teachers that they are not Aboriginal because our community is composed of people of mixed racial origin. We hear no mention of the fact that all Australians are of mixed racial origin, and maintain an identity which is not their identity of racial origin. My own daughter only last year was subjected to abuse from a school librarian who told her that the Tasmanian Aboriginal community was selfish for re-occupying Rocky Cape on the north west coast of Tasmania. She was told this in front of her class friends after she told them what a wonderful time she had at the Rocky Cape Festival.

There is no understanding in white Australia that indicates that white people want to integrate with Aboriginal culture. There is only the continuing pressure to seek assimilation. to force Aborigines to be like white people. We saw during the last Australian rules football season that racism is torrid in the game. The president of the Collingwood Football Club stated it clearly when he said that Aborigines would be treated better if they acted more like white people.

We see before us now the Mabo Native Title issue being flogged and changed as white Australian interest groups and individuals seek to change the law. They want to ensure that if any Australian law is interpreted as being in the better interests of Aborigines, then it should be changed to protect the interests of whites. We see Australian governments, politicians and others pushing for money deals with Aborigines. Social justice packages and any sort of deal to try and squirm a way to ensure that Aborigines receive as little as possible recognition of rights to land under Australian common law.

You might be saying to yourself by now, *"What has all this got to do with museums, and in particular, what has all this got to do with the Council of Australian Museums Association."* It is history after all. It is the present after all! Aboriginal people die in higher numbers compared to whites, make up higher numbers per capita in the ranks of unemployed, illiteracy and poverty. Aboriginal people make up huge numbers compared to whites, per capita, in the statistics relating to the criminal justice system of this country. And still the victims are blamed for what is happening to them.

In Tasmania, Aboriginal heritage is treated with open contempt. Government agencies play archaeological games of 'environmental impact surveys' (EIS) to give token gesture of concern to our heritage. It didn't stop the King River Dam. Not one EIS has stopped any real land development by whites, not here or anywhere else in Australia. Oodgeroo Nunuccal tried to prevent the bull dozers gouging up an Aboriginal Burial Ground on Stradbroke Island back in the mid 1980's, but the Queensland and Australian Governments ignored indigenous rights and let it go ahead. Oodgeroo told me of the local shop owners going out and collecting the skulls of Aboriginal ancestors scattered around the ground by the dozers. These whites exhibited the skulls in the windows of their shops until Oodgeroo took possession of them and found a secure place for them to be held. It was a museum where she finally placed them. So even when Aborigines are able to take a position as protectors of cultural property, they must, even under protest, resort to white museums. The very places that exploit Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal Keeping Places or Cultural Centres are what Aboriginal people desire to protect certain aspects of their culture, not white museums.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community has so far had to take stressful political action to force Australian museums to return our ancestors human remains to us. We have had to do likewise overseas. We have been successful in retrieving our ancestor's human remains from six museums or similar institutions over the past ten years. Why is this so necessary, why is it that our intellectual and cultural property is treated as if it is of no consequence in the morals of white Australia.

All this has a most important relationship to Australian museums. It articulates the cultural holocaust over Aboriginal people by white Australia. It demonstrates the attitudes of white people to anything we have *rights* to, it shows to what lengths whites will go to force our culture out of living society.

Australian museums are not singularly responsible for the oppression and continuing imperialism by white Australia over Aboriginal culture. They are not solely responsible to see that changes really happen. They are not the only obstacle to our freedom and cultural sovereignty in this country.

But Australian museums do have a responsibility to redress the wrongs of their guilty past and present. Museums should, in the views of Aborigines, accept a moral obligation to reflect positive attitudes of self determination for Aboriginal people. They should accept that they have no right to represent our culture, both in the past and present, nor have any right to possess our culture in any form without our freely given approval.

It was museums that traded in our ancestors remains, it is a well known history. Most museums still have the records of Aboriginal human remains they have held, or continue to hold,, stashed away in their secret little hide aways. Museums are knowledge resources for whites to gain education qualifications to acknowledge them as experts of our culture. They provide arenas for scientific theories about us, and enable these so called experts to stand before their peers and strut their stuff. Whilst we remain mere microscope fodder for white students.

Museums provide white anthropologists the opportunities to work like mercenaries for white interests. Many anthropologists have been the tools of colonisation, developing the criteria, for instance, that Aboriginal people are forced to satisfy if their land claims are to be successful. Where is the criteria set for whites to satisfy to justify their right to our lands. Academics of the museum circuit use their positions to quantify our identity, and they use it to qualify our rights. They are powerful people, white people who hold influential power over our culture both in museums and in the natural environment.

When we look at the Aboriginal cultural property held by museums it is not hard to conclude that, based on historical evidence much of that property, if not all of it, has been acquired dishonestly. Argue they might, these Australian museums, but written records show that truth has survived the lies that float as shifting cloaks over fact in an attempt to hide the evils of white invasion.

Museums have, until only very recently, represented Aboriginal culture mostly as a stereotyped image of Aboriginality.

Even now the white imperialism of superiority is ever clear by the way in which Aborigines are represented in museums. Museums have, and continue to have a power over our cultural property and the way it is to be used. Hardly any of it is returned as an act of good will. We Aborigines have to fight for it, our property and culture, we must fight for it or otherwise it remains in the hands of white people who use it to exploit us.

### CONCLUSION :

The recent conference held north of Mossman, on the edge of the Daintree Rainforest to address the theme "*Defining Intellectual and Cultural Property*" determined the following statement :

- \* *Recognising that the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics Rainforest Area have exercised their inherent right to self determination in regard to the care, protection and use-control of the forest since time immemorial, and*
- \* *Acknowledging that in the exercise of that right of self determination the indigenous Nations and Peoples continue to foster and develop a unique relationship with their total environment, and*
- \* *Affirming that the values, processes, Law and Lore which the Indigenous Nations and Peoples have developed throughout that relationship are expressed in their intellectual property rights,*

*Delegates gathered at the Jul'ayinbul Conference, on the north-eastern coast region of the Australian continent hereby affirm:*

- (1) *That the intellectual property rights of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of their territories in the Wet Tropics Rainforest area have traditionally included the recognition of a cultural heritage inherent in the interdependent relationship of the natural environment, and that such cultural heritage remains an integral part of the Indigenous Peoples perception of their inherent rights in relation to their territories in the Wet Tropics region,*

- (2) *That inherent in the exercise of self determination is the prerogative of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics region to freely exercise the right to hunt and gather within the forests according to such rules and regulations as they deem appropriate,*
- (3) *That in the exercise of their self determination the Indigenous Nations and Peoples have had and continue to have the inherent rights to restore and maintain their spiritual and ceremonial practices in relation to the forests,*
- (4) *The right of self determination is predicated upon the right of development by which Indigenous Nations and Peoples may make such adaptations and changes to their traditional methods of harvest as they deem appropriate,*
- (5) *That the intellectual property of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics region includes and had always included the ability to discover and make what they deem appropriate use of new knowledge derived from their total environment: such as the discovery of new genotypes and the right to control subsequent use of and access to the genetic make-up within the flora and fauna of the forests,*
- (6) *That in the exercise of their self determination Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics region are prepared to negotiate joint management arrangements with appropriate non-indigenous agencies for the care, protection and controlled use of the Wet Tropics region,*
- (7) *That in the exercise of self determination by the Indigenous Nations and Peoples no presumption should be inferred that such people acknowledge the prerogative of any non-indigenous government or agency to presume to extinguish or otherwise delimit the Indigenous Nations and Peoples inherent right, title and authority in relation to their territories.*

The above mentioned conference was held on 25 - 27 November 1993. It indicates the reclaiming of indigenous rights. The above Wet Tropics statement is, in reality, a statement that encompasses the whole of Indigenous Nations in Australia and overseas. In time it will be used to develop a firm indigenous agenda that will assist in creating a better society in this land.

It is but one light for us all to follow, white people and Aboriginal people. The mindless headlong rush to nowhere that white Australia is pursuing must be seen for what it is. A road to nowhere. Museums can influence integrity back into white society, they can create the images of society in harmony with treaties that guide better directions. Aboriginal people can provide knowledge and experience in land management and social development that can decrease the problems white society has blighted itself (and Aborigines) with for centuries. We Aborigines can educate white people to respect and understand the ecological universe we live with. It won't be easy, but the alternative might be the end of life as we know it. If white society does not acknowledge the problems it has, the problems it causes other peoples and the cultural and ecological poverty it carries with it because its cultural and spiritual being is lost, then all may be lost.

Museums are central to the academic world that studies Aboriginal society. Although these academics have learned little to solve the problems they have, they may be able to provide some leadership to Australia in terms of indigenous cultural rights. They should be able to lead the way with the research knowledge they have about our philosophy. Of course this is unlikely, but if not spoken (or written) then the proposal is not considered.

This is the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, it is a year that has seen every possible tokenism aimed at Aboriginal people. Yet no project during this year, by white people, has been based on the recognition of Aboriginal rights to Land, culture or heritage.

The challenge is here now, Australian museums can act to lead the way to justice and moral redress of the suffering we Aboriginal people have endured for over two hundred years. They should act now to return *all* of our intellectual and cultural property. Act now to offer an act of good will by granting no less than half of their existing museum space to enable Aboriginal people to develop worthwhile projects to counter the deculturalisation of our people.

Australian museums have no role in relation to Aboriginal people, in my view, if they reject the opportunity proposed above, and maintain a negative influence in Australian society as it goes into the future. Such influence will maintain Australia's image as being destroyers of the oldest living human culture on this planet. It would be of no benefit to any of the peoples on this land to maintain a negative influence about Aborigines in the museums.

Museums should take the lead by promoting a cultural development that stands for freedom and respect. A progressive direction to enable an historic people to live peacefully in pursuit of their freedom as dictated by their own cultural aspirations.

Australian people should think hard, put themselves in our shoes and come to understand what it is like. If this is possible then they might be able to come to terms with the wrong they do us, and seek to make change that will salve their spirit and cleanse them of the past. In some small way I believe that the following concluding statement provides a pointed profile of what Aboriginal people face every day of their lives. And might, perhaps, influence white people to understand the real issues between Aborigines and Australians.

Commissioner The Honourable JH Wootten AC, QC wrote in the foreword to Regional Report of Inquiry in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, the following :

*"What does become clear is that most Aboriginals have a continuing identity as Aboriginals which sets them apart culturally and historically as a separate community of people, encapsulated within a larger community. Relations between those two communities are built on inequality arising from a longstanding, unresolved injustice, and tensions which result from it affect the lives of individuals and communities in all kinds of ways. The dominant white community has over two centuries mostly tried to deal with the issue by destroying the Aboriginal identity - either by physical extermination or by genetic or cultural absorption.*

*Even today many of those who accept that a major effort must be made to overcome Aboriginal disadvantage in matters such as health, education, employment and so on, accept this only on the basis that there must be only one people recognised in Australia, and that any assistance to Aboriginals is not to enable their separate flowering as a people within the country, but to help them 'catch up' and 'be like us'. Those who find Aboriginal refusal to accept this unreasonable, irrational, disloyal or unrealistic, might ask themselves this question. If Japan had successfully captured Australia and colonised it after World War 11, swamping the former population with Japanese immigrants, how many Australians would have been prepared to see themselves as thereafter Japanese, to merge their identity into a greater Japanese society?"*

Jim Everett - December 1993

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# TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE INC.

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YOUR REF.

OUR REF.

A PAPER BY JIM EVERETT

STATE SECRETARY

TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE

PRESENTED TO THE

WORLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONGRESS INTER-CONGRESS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

ADDRESSING

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ETHICS AND THE TREATMENT OF THE DEAD

AUGUST 1989

Quote from this paper at will

THE COLONISING PROCESS  
AS OPPOSED TO  
ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FREEDOM

BLACK EPITAPH

What is your crime you ask, what have you done,  
We see your imposition, your being we shun.  
You have come and claimed, your law it beholds,  
This which restrains us, as your plague unfolds.  
Your measure is closed, ours pushed aside,  
Don't change your ways, you can't know our pride.  
We are strong to remain, lost be your power,  
Only we know ourselves, you cannot devour.  
There is no compromise, forgiveness unknown,  
The Earth is us, with it we've grown.  
You have the shame, your taint won't cleanse,  
Leave us our rights, not your demands.  
The end is ahead, it is our justice,  
The shame that is on you, will be our peace.  
Our Black is inside us, nurtured defended,  
When Black is all, the struggle is ended.

by Jim Everett

1983

THE COLONISING PROCESS  
AS OPPOSED TO  
ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION

The history of colonising Australia is well known, albeit a history written by whites, and coldly calculated to perpetuate a lie leading to some holy belief that Australia was an empty country at the time of 'peaceful' settlement. The truth of colonising Australia is not merely a past shame, something which occurred in the 1800's and now we are all one happy family. The conflicts between blacks and whites have, since the first fleet, been the result of arrogance and lack of respect by whites for Aboriginal society, a lack of respect for Aboriginal laws and customs.

After Federation was achieved by the colonies in Australia in 1901, it would seem to outsiders that Australia had reached a period of civilized maturity. It could be said that 'Australians' had passed over the hard years of handling the "black problem". This belief would be ill founded as can be seen from more recent research, and we see now from honest historians and researchers the published works which expose the massacres of Aborigines from the time of the first landing and on to well past 1901.

In some cases Aborigines were murdered to 'teach them a lesson' and then had their bodies rendered down to provide skeletal material for the scientific world. Large amounts of skeletal material was sent overseas and today can be found in academic

institutions of most countries, including Europe, United Kingdom and the United States of America. Nevertheless, much Aboriginal human remains can be found today in Australian academic institutions, and other collections are believed to be held privately.

Another practice was to rob the graves of Aboriginal people. Even Aborigines who had been buried by Christians were grave-robbled, and often by the people who had buried them.

In Tasmania a major collection of Aboriginal skeletal material was originally stolen from graves at Oyster Cove, south of Hobart, by a William Crowther.

Crowther had buried the remnants of tribal people who had died at Oyster Cove only to later rob the graves in the name of science. He went so far as to rob the body of Bill Lanney, the last tribal male. He operated only hours after Lanney died to steal his skull and other items of his anatomy. William Crowther later became Premier of Tasmania, and was Knighted Sir William some time later. Considering the attitudes of whites towards Aborigines from the time of invasion the Knighthood can be seen as a reflection of the trend in the thinking of a developing white nation.

#### THE COLONISING PROCESS

After the first 100 years of colonisation of Australia, 100 years of lawlessness in terms of British justice for Aborigines, the new nation of Australia merely ignored Aborigines and got on with the job of land acquisition.

Massacres were to continue, but the perpetrators had developed a code of secrecy in 'dealing with the blacks'. Hence, the record of numbers of Aborigines murdered is either unknown or reliant on the recorded memories of survivors and observers.

In the early 1900's the start of the modern era, when many indigenous nations had fallen to colonisation, Australians continued to punish Aboriginal opposition to acts of dispossession. In times when world communications was a new technology, automotive and airborne travel a reality, the massacres continued.

In 1926, for example, Miss Helen Wills from the U.S.A. won the Wimbledon Womens Singles title. In the same year Australians committed the Forest River Massacre in the north of Western Australia. Bruce Elder writes in his book "Blood on the Wattle":-

"It was cold and calculated slaughter. The posse arrived in the area and moved systematically from camp to camp, killing as they went".

The massacre was in retaliation for the death of a white boundary rider who was killed by an Aboriginal man after the white had attacked him first. The only action taken against the posse of thirteen, lead by police, was that:-

"...two police officers were arrested for murder. They were tried and acquitted. The Government promoted them

out of the area",

In 1928 an Australian police officer, Mounted Constable William George Murray, said in evidence to Darwin Court:-

"What use is a wounded black feller a hundred miles from civilization?".

That was his explanation for leading a posse responsible for up to 70 murders of Aborigines north-west of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.

Worse still was the thinking of Australians at the time. In "Blood on the Wattle", Bruce Elder records; "In early 1929 the Adelaide Register-News Pictorial would echo the sentiments of Alice Springs when it wrote of Murray:

"He is the hero of Central Australia. He is the policeman of fiction. He rides alone and always gets his man".

Elder also records the following:-

"During the massacres in the Bathurst region in the 1820's the police caught a group of Aborigines in a swamp, surrounded them and wiped them out. The estimated death toll was somewhere between forty and fifty.

In his book "Australian Reminiscences and Papers", the English missionary L. E. Thelkeld recalled the gruesome aftermath of the massacre.

"Forty-five heads were collected and boiled down for the

sake of the skulls. My informant, a Magistrate, saw the skulls packed for exportation in a case at Bathurst ready for shipment to accompany the commanding officer in his voyage shortly afterwards taken to England".

We can say it was all in the past, that things have changed, we can say it but it's not true. Australian thinking has not changed, their attitude of disregard for Aborigines is still with us.

From an interview, recorded by Bruce Elder, used in Mick Miller's movie, "Couldn't Be Fairer, "ABC-TV, we have the following":-

"...One Aborigine recorded his experience with the local police:

They threw me on the ground.....had me by the neck and threw me on the ground....and while they had me on the ground they kicked me right there.....that's when they busted my tongue. No whitefellers get locked up here .....it's all blackfellers. We can be sitting around here sober or a bit pissed or something and they'll still lock us up. But the whitefellers can be drunk and even driving a car. Chook Henry he got a flogging from the coppers too. They gave him a hiding and when he was knocked on the ground they pissed on him. They were pissing on him.....I'm not the first bloke to get a flogging from the coppers here".

And so the process of colonisation is not lost, the attitudes are

there if you are Aboriginal and they are not nice.

A significant event in recent history shows, in part, the harshness to be overcome if Aborigines are to achieve cultural freedom. In 1983 the Tasmanian Aboriginal people began a campaign to force the Tasmanian Government to return the so-called Crowther Collection to the Aboriginal community. Crowther had, as mentioned earlier in my paper, robbed Aboriginal graves at Oyster Cove. The skeletal remains were dubbed the "Crowther Collection" and eventually placed in the Tasmanian Museum.

It became a public campaign drenched with emotion, bringing out all of the arguments for and against. The objective for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community was to break some of the hold that whites had over Aboriginal cultural freedom and self-determination. Some archaeologists and anthropologists sided with Aborigines, others insisted that Aboriginal human remains were the property of the general Australian community. Some went so far as to insist that indigenous human remains were the property of the world's scientific community.

Aborigines won the campaign, the "Crowther Collection" and all other Aboriginal skeletal remains in the 2 Tasmanian Museums were returned to the Aboriginal community in 1984. A traditional cremation ceremony at Oyster Cove on the 4th day of May, 1985 released our ancestors' spirits from desecration forever; the "Crowther Collection" was no more.

Since that time the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, acting on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, has achieved the return of Aboriginal human remains from a total of five museums in Australia. It was not easy, dedication necessary to carry out political actions to win was extreme. Senior people in the museums do not want Aborigines to get their ancestors remains from museum possession.

The fact that the Tasmanian Aboriginal community has been successful indicates that cultural freedom is an achievable objective. It indicates also that we cannot trust Australians, cannot expect goodwill or a simple resolution to our problems. Our problems are outside of the Australian concept, we refuse to conform and they retaliate. Aborigines reject the notion of being Australian and Australians rage with imperialism. Even though many Aborigines are of mixed racial origin Australians fail to accept that few Aborigines will embrace the identity of the people who have murdered and taken away the rights of Aborigines.

#### ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FREEDOM

Archaeological ethics in dealing with the dead, as it relates to indigenous people, should not be a question.

It is a view expressed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that no-one, no-body or any other people have the right to determine the ethics of dealing with our dead "other than the indigenous people". It is also our view that any alien power imposed on indigenous people is an act of invasion, unmitigated

theft and cultural genocide.

Aboriginal cultural freedom is in itself a major obstacle to Australia, the failure of Australians to assimilate blacks means that a living guilt remains, a 'thing' unwanted, a problem to reject and kick away.

Today has Australia trying to go through the motions of looking good while the country's administration fails to address Australia's racist social system.

Aboriginal deaths in police and prison custody is a carry on in that system going back all the way to the massacre of Aborigines by whites, lead by police. The imprisonment rates for Aborigines in Australia is such that for every 10,000 population, 60 Aborigines go to gaol; for the same population only 6 whites go to gaol. In Western Australia, for every 10,000 population, 130 Aborigines go to gaol.

Australians believe that they own Aboriginal culture, that they can do with it what they wish. Aborigines are still powerless to stop the bulldozers ripping through our heritage, status of land is determined by Australians and cultural property treated as chattels of academic enterprise.

The picture is clear, only that which is regarded as sacred to Australians will be treated with respect by their people. If it happens to be of sacred significant status to Aborigines, it will still only receive a status determined by Australians.

The education system is an assimilation tool being used by

Australians, teaching a history full of inaccuracies and indoctrinates the young with lies and innuendoes about the reality of Aboriginality.

Aboriginal cultural freedom is an objective to free us from the oppression forced on us, to be free means that we Aborigines must achieve sovereignty. Must be recognised as a State under international law, be rid of the necessity to ask whites for permission.

All of the things happening to Aborigines, negative things, today in Australia, by Australians must ultimately change if a peaceful resolution is to be achieved. Aborigines just will not continue to seek peaceful resolutions to the situation while Australia continues to ignore it's moral obligations to facilitate resolutions. A treaty must be achieved, recognised under international law and truly free the Aboriginal people for self-determination.

The question raised from debate on archaeological ethics in dealing with the dead cannot be restricted to that one area, it is not a sole ethical issue. It really is an issue of whether indigenous people are free to decide the ethics concerning their culture. Archaeologists and associated academics belong to the colonisers; the colonisers work to their own code of ethics, and we can see how those ethics have developed over the past 200 years.

The real question would be better put as "How do whites justify

their right to do as they please with Aboriginal culture?". Indeed, why don't academics look at that question more closely and take a commitment to use their academic status to work towards cultural freedom for indigenous people, then seek ways of co-operation in participating in indigenous cultural activities.

If, for instance, you the reader happen to be a non-indigenous archaeologist, and you feel affronted; you think what it would be like if Aborigines had such power that you could not stop us from digging up your great grand-parents skeletal remains, could ram our bulldozers through your churches, teach your children that your technology is inferior, or that your identity is tainted because of racial origin. I believe you might feel a bit the way we do about our situation right now.

Indigenous people cannot afford to lose sight of freedom or self-determination, the question is, at what cost to our Mother, the land, will the toll be while indigenous culture is rejected and the plastic world holds the power to destroy?

### SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination is Our Way  
the way we want to teach Our young  
in Our classroom under the Maker  
and have the right to protect  
Our Heritage.

To have land as Our identity and culture  
and decide not to exploit it but protect  
for Our spiritual needs of the past  
now and forever.

And hold Our political unity  
to overcome oppression  
so that we remain in the future  
with Our aspirations for all  
Our Kind.

And make Our mistakes without  
fear of ridicule to learn from  
not only mistakes but the outcomes  
from our endeavours.

But free from criteria set by  
gubs. (whites)

To be free to decide  
totally as a people.  
With Our own respect.

by Jim Everett

THE SPEARHEAD OF MODERN COLONIZERS:  
ANTHROPOLOGISTS, CHURCHES AND ACADEMICS

Written and presented by

Jim Everett

to the

55th Congress of ANZAAS

Festival of Science

at Monash University

Monday 26th August, 1985.

An Aboriginal Perspective from Tasmania

## THE EXPERTS

They come to our people and ask,  
investigate pry and lie.  
Taking it all taking everything,  
the thieves, mercenaries and cheats.  
Get PHD's and white status,  
education and right of word.  
We gotta go to them and ask for what,  
for credibility and right.  
Not much chance gettin' heard much,  
less gettin' land or protection rights.  
of heritage and spirit,  
they got the institutes the academy  
for investigation and hiding  
the code of white history  
and propaganda used against us  
to hide the colonial holocaust and  
macabre desecration of our dead  
yet teach morals alien to indigenes  
to us but not them  
like christians with two laws  
they are made by theirs to  
speak for us with learning  
the learned and experts  
these mercenaries and thieves  
anthropologists  
not Aborigines

JIM EVERETT

## THE SPEARHEAD OF MODER COLONIZERS

### INTRODUCTION:

Despite almost 200 years of white society in Australia colonization is not complete in terms of assimilating the indigines of this land. Today's colonizers are ever conscious of Aboriginal society and how it has not been manipulated into completely rejecting or laying aside its social entity.

Aboriginal social entity continues to be dictated by cultural heritage values, and rather than aspire to become a part of the Australian mosaic continues to seek to relate to Australian society without losing identity, land and those rights inherent in the Aboriginal status.

Australia comprises a large number of various race groups from other countries, and as a matter of colonial necessity assimilation is required for national identity. Migrants come to Australia out of choice, and can go back to their respective country at will, so that conforming to identity expectations to a self-accepted degree has little hardship, and any way it is convenient.

Not so for Aborigines, the colonized people, every meaning of life, land, culture and society is here, but now out of reach, out of control.

Colonization is exploitation of land, and in some cases people, e.g. cheap labour for white in South Africa.

Australian Aborigines have suffered mainly from dispossession of land, and the modern assimilation/colonization is spearheaded by mercenary anthropologists, other academics and paternalistic churches.

Cultural erosion is necessary for whites to remove moral obstacles to land exploitation, and the 'spearhead' initially commence to deform Aboriginal religion, misrepresent Aboriginal cultural society and present negatives of the colonized, individually and collectively.

The order of modern colonization is not fixed, but rather parallel in terms of psychological and institutional approaches.

### ANTHROPOLOGISTS:

Not to exclude archaeologists, the activities of anthropologists under a doctrine of world human heritage places indigenous people at the lowest level of socio-political power.

Archaeologists dig up the past so to speak, but it is the anthropologists who reign under academic credibility and so purports to be the learned about Aboriginal heritage.

Anthropologists go to the Aboriginal people, the indigenous experts, and bleed them as a leach will only to take away the ill gained knowledge for purposes of personal status and mercenary allegiance.

On the other hand, if Aboriginal society was the rich money broker of this land and employed all the archaeologists and anthropologists we would see then what academic case they would give in the issue of Land Rights.

The fact is that Aboriginal cultural aspirations can not be separated from Aboriginal land, and the whole issue for Aborigines cannot be segmented, the only real issue is Land Rights. Ros Langford made it clear to the 1982 Annual Meeting and to Conference of the Australian Archaeological Association in her speech "Our Heritage - Your Playground" - quote

"He (Professor Mulvaney) cites the acknowledgement which Aboriginal academic leaders have given the the contribution made by archaeology to land rights. Such a view ignores that Aborigines have been forced to rely on white sciences to support land claims and have not done so by choice. Land claims are judged not on any objective universal criteria in this country, but upon a criteria handed down by the representatives of your race. You people invaded my country. You people have decided what we must satisfy to regain our land. And now we have to rely on you people to support our claims that we have satisfied that criteria. Thus the Government, the Land Councils and the Mining companies hire their archaeologists and anthropologists and do battle in the courts. Science not ownership determines which land we shall get back".

Many white Australians support Aboriginal Land Rights, within "reason", unfortunately it is not Aboriginal reasoning which prevails.

What then does Aboriginal Australia see as possible in terms of white "reasoning", as land returned in reality.

It varies!

Some Aboriginal groups and individuals will not accept anything but the return of all land which was under Aboriginal right of land prior to white colonization. Some will accept inalienated crown lands and compensation, others want specific lands identified in relation to clans and/or tribes etc.

Tasmanian Aborigines seek sacred sites, cultural heritage sites including Aboriginal rock art sites. Tasmanian Aborigines have not made known any negotiation point on remaining lands, the priority is cultural land for cultural survival.

Anthropologists may well study and record Aboriginal society, past or present and make learned conclusions, but all the study and recording in the world can not refute Aborigines statements of total prior right of Aboriginal land.

Denial of Aboriginal Land Rights is farcical and the modern tools supporting dispossession are the tools of thieves and cultural murderers.

Xavier Herbert said in his novel "Poor Fellow My Country"

"I repeat that no deal can be made with the blackman over his country. No honest deal, that is. Seeing himself finally overwhelmed, he will take whatever is offered him, and spend it on becoming a Bloody Nothing. We Whites will have shown ourselves incapable of understanding anything we can't turn to our material advantage, anyone with spirituality not as barren as our own. The Black Australian as a member of the human race will perish from the earth with little more dignity than any other creature against which the hazards of survival were too savage - and the Black Pox, in the form of the byeblooms we have begotten on these unlucky people in brutal lust, will blaze like a fireship amongst us, and we will know the terror of Black Power in this land as no one elsewhere ever knew it, because blacks elsewhere had hope to sustain them, whereas here there will be nothing but hatred".

Anthropologists can believe in their doctrine of "world human heritage" but Aborigines can see the truth and will remind the world that Australia is built on the power of its academic spearhead, including anthropologists.

#### CHURCHES:

\*1

Red Jacket's hostility toward Christianity erupted on every occasion. Referring to the unwise missionary Cram, he once said: "The White people were not content with the wrongs they had done his people, but wanted to cram their doctrines down their throats" When asked by a gentleman in 1824, why he was so opposed to missionaries, he replied:

\*1 Touch the Earth by T.C. McLuhan

Abacas publication

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"THEY DO US NO GOOD. IF THEY ARE NOT USEFUL TO THE WHITE people and do them no good, why do they send them among the Indians? If they are useful to the white people and do them good, why do they not keep them at home? They (the white men) are surely bad enough to need the labor of everyone who can make them better. These men (the missionaries) know we do not understand their religion. We cannot read their book - they tell us different stories about what it contains, and we believe they make the book talk to suit themselves. If we had no money, no land no country to be cheated out of these black coats would not trouble themselves about our good hereafter. The Great Spirit will not punish us for what we do not know. He will do justice to his red children. These black coats talk to the Great Spirit, and ask for light that we may see as they do, when they are blind themselves and quarrel about the light that guides them. These things we do not understand, and the light which they give us makes the straight and plain path trod by our fathers, dark and dreary. The black coats tell us to work and raise corn; they do nothing themselves and would starve to death if someone did not feed them. All they do is to pray to the Great Spirit; but that will not make corn and potatoes grow; if it will why do they beg from the white people. The red men knew nothing of trouble until it came from the white men; as soon as they crossed the great waters they wanted our country, and in return have always been ready to teach us to quarrel about their religion. Red Jacket can never be the friend of such men. If they (the Indians) were raised among white people, and learned to work and read as they do, it would only make their situation worse .. We are few and weak, but may for a long time be happy if we hold fast to our country, and the religion of our fathers."

So it is with churches in the midst of Aborigines, the two rules of white religions, of white churches and their missionaries.

Do not be fooled into thinking that all this is yesteryear, it is now, churches are tools of colonization and in moral terms the most hypocritical group in the spearhead. For example the Uniting Church has a policy that land held by the Church will be returned to Aborigines, not all of it nor specific areas, but some of it.

The reality of all this is that for Tasmanian Aborigines none has been returned, and any likelihood is left to respective parish groups to decide. It is fair to state that most of the Uniting Church parishes in Tasmania do not even recognize the existence of Tasmanian Aborigines let alone support the return of land. In fairness to the Uniting Church it must be said that in 1982 the Kingston Parish (Tas) sold a property previously owned by Fanny Cochrane-Smith and on being so advised paid over the purchase price to the Aboriginal community.

The point is that the structure of churches allows for differing opinions of christinaity in relation to Aborigines and appears to breakdown its credibility because of its conditional philosophy of christian faith to indigenous people. If the Uniting Church is to have integrity at all then it should either return land to Aborigines or at least revoke its policy until such time as the whole church, parishes whatever, agree to act on such a policy.

Various churches have been instrumental in eroding Aboriginal culture, for enshrined in tribal culture is Aboriginal religion. They are inter-related and crucial to cultural identity.

Church people were prominent in the Mapoon saga, where Aborigines were dispossessed of land by mining grants and governments, 1974-75. Mapoon was a drawn out issue highlighted by Aboriginal resistance to being forced off the land, it all began in 1606, when the Mapoon people defeated the first European landing in Australia. \*2 In the 1950's and 1960's the battle was heavily weighted in favour of the white invaders of the 1800's.

Although the Church Mission at Mapoon appears to have acted honourably preceeding the years leading to the Mission's closure, it would be argued by Aborigines that the Mission was not necessary in the first place.

Aborigines had been getting on quite well thank you for thousands of years before christians came to prop up a considered fallen society. But it was the Brisbane Mission Authority \*2 which opposed the continuation of Mapoon Mission, and its eventual closure forced Aborigines off their land. The eventual outcome, happily is that now Aborigines have returned and built a new Mapoon having won a battle concession, nothing more.

Church missions have a well recorded history of carrying out government policies, installing Aborigines to community offices of authority and removing them for poor performances of containing community unrest. Of missionaries raping Aboriginal girls to locking up young Aboriginal "hotheads".

\*2 The Mapoon Story according to The Invaders,  
book two 1975.

The Bible has been rewritten in tribal and semi-tribal dialects to assist in ridding Aborigines of their religion, and to embrace a religion of the very oppressors of Aboriginal society.

Bob Hawke, Jo Bjelke-Peterson, Robin Gray and other leaders of White Australia are of some religious order which has its presence in Aboriginal communities. Even the mining giants and pastoralists embrace religious faiths. But the whole hypocrisy of it all is that not one of the abovementioned groups, not the nation of whites can claim to have made good the continuing oppression of Aboriginal people. Yet churches expect Aborigines to see their faith as good for humankind.

It is difficult to understand how churches of religion can expect Aborigines to believe in their best intentions when Aborigines can see what whites, who grow up with their churches and religions, do to each other much less Aborigines.

Church missions at places like Le Grange, Lombandina and Beagle Bay in Western Australia still administer the mission, food, beer, transport and money. Bamaga in Queensland and Yirrikala in the Northern Territory, paternalized oppression by do-gooders protecting Aborigines from the mob who pays the mission to do just that.

Self determination is made a farce by churches because they indoctrinate Aborigines into believing in the church, if one should ask the indoctrinated to decide whether the church should go or stay, the answer is obvious.

The saddest part of it all is that the churches have made Aborigines in tribal and semi-tribal areas so dependent on them that if they go now, the Aboriginal community would be like flotsam.

The answer really is for churches and missions to get out stay out and let Aborigines who know how to handle white systems to go in and assist the cultural recovery and social development of the Aboriginal groups.

Aborigines who know, believe that churches, missions and white religions are for whites and the kind of crooked society it continues to provide with ordained forgiveness.

Aboriginal religion is for all things put here for Aborigines to use with respect and understanding, in modern principles it stands for all the things whites continue to desecrate. Sacred places continue to be ruined and churches are still built on stolen land.

Aboriginal gravesites are still being desecrated like North Stradbroke Island only this year, yet white cemeteries are protected by churches and white legislation.

Churches have no credibility with Aborigines other than what they can indoctrinate into Aboriginal people.

That is assimilation, a process of colonization.

The conclusion is then, that churches are part of the spearhead of modern colonizers.

### ACADEMICS

There would be very few white academics with the honesty and real understanding of Aboriginal people as that of the late Xavier Herbert, a sad statistic for white Australia.

White historians, social writers, educators, researchers, you name them they all fit the bill as academic know-alls. They are arrogantly presumptuous to the point of boring even thier own race. Nevertheless, their own race continues to use them to ensure that good old colonial Australia is not compromising the new nation.

Academics classify Aborigines as one would do with horses or dogs. Genetic arguments are heaped on Aboriginal identity, tribal stereo-types are presented as the "real Aborigines".

White smarties learn Aboriginal language and pursue a course of language denoting credibility of Aboriginality.

Academics learn about skin groups, clan relationships and the Dreaming groups only to justify the final objective of colonization, besides wanting the status of knowing it all.

It has all been said before, it has all been ignored by whites.

When academics and their institutions talk about Aboriginal education they mean teaching Aborigines white education.

In Tasmania, when Aborigines sought to establish an Aboriginal community cultural education course in 1984, it was dashed by white academics and the two-tone blacks who advise them.

An Aboriginal studies in-service course for teachers was revoked by academics in 1981 because Tasmanian Aborigines re-wrote the course outline to be more appropriate to contemporary Tasmanian Aborigines. Rewrote the course outline on invitation by the academics who finally insisted that teachers need to know more about tribal people than contemporary people.

In 1983 a young Aboriginal girl was denied her matriculation in Hobart because the teacher would not accept her thesis on living Tasmanian Aborigines, claiming that Tasmanian Aborigines were extinct.

Ian Plomley, noted historian of Tasmania and supposed expert on Tasmanian Aborigines denies Aboriginal existence in Tasmania.

The story could go on and on but the aim is generally the same, get rid of Aboriginal resistance so that colonialism can be completed and whites can be free of shame in future generations.

Aborigines are sick of reading and hearing it all being expressed by the so called experts, especially when the only expertise they have is what has been gleaned through false premises and forked tongues.

Aborigines are the experts about Aborigines, knowing what is best for Aborigines, knowing the real history of the land and knowing what is the real cultural entity of the Aboriginal groups.

Whites hear but do not listen, they have been told since the first fleet of invading colonialists but twist it all to suit.

Again if Australia wants integrity and propriety it will need to educate its academics, only Aborigines have that expertise, but once offered and manipulated Aborigines know the effort has failed again.

## CONCLUSION

The spearhead of modern colonizers is made up of more than just the anthropologists, churches and academics, it is made up of a nation now lost to any real cause for human rights. Australia can sit with South Africa and France and the United States and South America, oppressors of indigenous peoples.

We see the Bicentennial emerging under the lie of "we are all one happy nation" but the birthday party will receive mixed expressions from Aborigines.

The indoctrinated to the duped, the foolish to the Uncle Toms, all will be seen as insignificant in the wake of the real Aboriginal Australians and their expressed disgust at a birthday party for cultural genocide.

Aboriginal resistance is just beginning, Aboriginal Australia is no longer prepared to tolerate the anthropologists, churches and academics, and other tools of oppression and colonization.

Aborigines have nowhere else to go in these modern times and any hope there was is quickly disappearing, there are few courses left to travel.

As Xavier Herbert said, "... blacks elsewhere had hope to sustain them, whereas here there will be nothing but hatred".

Jim Everett,  
TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL.

Hosted by: Multicultural Artworkers Committee in  
association with C.A.N. (S.A.), C.C.D.U. Australia Council  
and O.M.A.

# ARTS POLICY FOR A MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

## TOWARDS CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
**18, 19, 20 MARCH**

AT THE ADELAIDE COLLEGE  
OF TAFE, 20 LIGHT SQUARE  
**A D E L A I D E**

### S P O N S O R E D B Y

- Office of Multicultural Affairs,  
Department of Prime Minister and  
Cabinet
- Community Cultural Development  
Unit of the Australia Council
- South Australian Department for the  
Arts

The Visual Arts/Crafts Board, the Performing Arts Board and the  
Literary Arts Board of the Australia Council  
The Western Australian Ministry for the Arts  
The Director of Cultural Activities, Queensland Premier's  
Department  
The Victorian Ministry for the Arts  
The Office of the Minister for the Arts N.S.W.  
Australian Airlines  
Commonwealth Bank of Australia  
Petkos Wines

A PAPER BY JIM EVERETT

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

ARTS POLICY FOR A MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

"TOWARDS CULTURAL DEMOCRACY"

title: ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FREEDOM VERSUS AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

their one of us

one of us they say, one of us!  
if you want to be recognised as, australian  
you have to be one of us.  
we've been here for, oh, five generations  
and now we are australian so  
you can't say it's your land you  
can't be different because we have  
made this country what it is.  
you don't need a flag  
there can be only one flag.  
oh! the ethnic flags well  
yeah we accept'm under our conditions  
but you're different.  
Oh!  
NO YOU'RE NOT!

by jim everett: 1986.

Quote from this paper  
at will.

I'm sorry it's short, but that  
it makes it easier to read.

## ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FREEDOM VERSUS AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

It is this year, 1988, Australia's bicentennial year, that we see no respite from what is essentially an imperialist image of national identity.

The promoted image of multi-cultural society in this country tends towards blending cultures foreign to the indigenous culture, but denying the indigenous people any freedom to develop culturally without foreign manipulation.

The bicentennial year highlights Australia's true direction to overlook, even deny, Aborigines as having a culture with it's own integrity, a culture which is recognised by Aborigines from the unique position of Aboriginality.

Even the 'Australian' language and literature manipulates Aboriginal integrity, imposing white values to a cultural society of which whites have little if any understanding.

For example, Australian's refer to Aboriginal tradition with underlying meaning that 'tradition' is a statement of stereo-typed culture, tribal customs.

Albert Wendt said in his paper entitled "REBORN TO BELONG: CULTURE AND COLONIAL -ISM IN THE PACIFIC" to the regional seminar "Preserving Indigenous Cultures" at Adelaide, 10-15 September 1978, as follows:

"is there such a creature as traditional culture? If there is, what period in the growth of a culture is to be called 'traditional'?

If 'traditional cultures' do exist in Oceania, to what extent are they colonial creations?

Colonial Australia is alive and well thankyou, still striving to find autonomy from English culture but too afraid to break the fundamental cord of where this 'new nation' really came from. In it's headlong fall to develop cuturally Australia pumped itself full of 'culture' from somewhere else, unprepared to accept the living culture of the land, Australia has never been able to stop the fall.

Because of the evolving failure to develop culturally, Australia blindly opts out of any notion to allow Aborigines to control their social development, and insists that Aborigines conform to the trends of parochial meanings.

What is "Cultural Democracy" anyway?

Well it depends where one goes to find definitions to the question, for me to go to an English dictionary merely restates white supremacy to define Aboriginal understanding, and anyway I believe that it is a matter of perspective as to the definition of anything. The problem is clearly who has the right, or power to determine that 'anything,' especially if it isn't of the people who do the determining.

The situation for Aborigines is that all the classifications, definitions, images and expressions of what is Aboriginal is that for 200 hunded years the foreigners have dictated who we are and what our society is.

The racist concept of Aboriginal identity denies recognition of Aboriginality in a format equal to Australian identity, once our people have developed mixed racial origins, especially with 'Australians'; Australian cultural democracy seizes onto that identity and denies it from an imperial perspective.

So it is with almost every aspect of Aboriginal society that we experience white interference, an interference which dictates the order of what is to be.

How do we Aboriginal people feel about this?

A poem I wrote back in 1985 may enlighten to some degree:-

### BLOOD LUST

Australians you now call yourselves,  
 You mongrel mob invaders.  
 You deny your blood mixed past,  
 Yet think your blood has made's.  
 Come on fools and say your piece,  
 Your argument we know so well.  
 Ancestral lines for you are farce,  
 On genetics you do dwell.  
 For you have a mixture beyond compare,  
 Of indigenous lines you fail.  
 And you come from countries over there,  
 With a heritage fairytale.

One can ask why Aborigines are so angry, what raises such expressions of disgust and dis-satisfaction of even what Australians believe to be good things they do for Aborigines. It is my view that this happens, and will continue to happen, because Australians refuse to allow Aborigines to have autonomous control of Aboriginal lands culture and heritage. Simply that.

If the question is how do Australians cater for such a thing to happen, the answer is clearly to recognise Aboriginal nationhood, to get off the imperial gravy-train and accept that the resolution to THE problem is to negotiate it through, nation to nation.

So far in my paper I have put the problems as I see them, in very brief script, not as an academic, because I'm not that anyway, but as a person who has lived in real-life the survival struggle that almost each and every Aborigine knows in reality to be the contemporary truth.

This National Conference seeks, in it's title, "ARTS POLICY FOR A MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA," to move along the track in developing policies for ONE group, ONE society; where-as to Aborigines it can only mean more conformity and blending in to cultures which are too dramatic for us to cope with.

Sure! There is meaning to provide mutual adaption and sharing of cultures in what people expect to come from this conference, but to expect it to occur for Aborigines after total disruption to culture, and to occur in such a way that Aboriginal cultural aspirations are ensured from a total Aboriginal perspective will require a fortitude of positive motive never before seen in the history of the Australian people.

This conference has the opportunity to take the progressive step towards a policy which could, at the least, give an example to thinking Australians to "let go the reins" of Aboriginal cultural society.

All we are asking is that the 98% of this country's population recognise that Aborigines are swamped, and nevertheless will hand over to us to organise our own future, as a nation of people with a cultural heritage that has changed. Otherwise say it openly that Australia is imperial, and refuses to allow any moving away from what it determines for Aborigines, culturally and socially.

Underlying necessities must call for returning of land, compensation, economic viabilities, flexibilities and assurances, from both sides, but it wont happen unless the powerful accept real intent to actually work towards such an outcome.

The Australian governments would need to commence a national education program to remove the ingrained ignorances from the wider community, they should begin to finance Aborigines to develop their own Government(s), provide uncontrolled resources for Aboriginal social development, and the lands for this to occur. What's so damned hard about giving a part of something back to people who have survived a 200 year history of calculated attempts of de-culturalisation?

IF THIS COUNTRY IS TO EVER SEE "CULTURAL DEMOCRACY" IT WILL HAVE TO GIVE BACK THE FREEDOM TO THE LIVING CULTURE OF THE LAND.

IF NOT THEN MULTICULTURALISM CAN ONLY MEAN THE EVENTUAL COMPLETE GENOCIDE OF ABORIGINAL SOCIETY AS WE KNOW IT IN IT'S CONTEMPORARY DIVERSITY: AND ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION OF ANY CHANCE OF INTEGRITY FOR AUSTRALIANS.

jim everett



State Liaison Officer  
Aboriginal Affairs



Mr. Murray Mould  
Hobart, Tas 7000  
c/o P.O. Box 1256, Hobart 7001  
Telephone 508011  
Telegraphic Address  
Mould, Hobart

Social Policy Planning Unit  
Please Quote 3/1/6C  
K.J. Everett/HLA  
Ext: 6498  
Date:

1981.

Dear Sir/Madam,

The attached document is a copy of a letter sent to me for information purposes.

The statement is self-explanatory and Mrs. Herr advised me that the media, including radio and television received a copy of it.

Unfortunately the statement was not released to the general public by the media.

A National seminar such as this would normally receive some interest, but it appears that such a startling statement concerning Aboriginal Land Rights, coming from a seminar on children's literature, has completely thrown the media mechanisms out of tilt.

Never-the-less, the seminar, which moved in a progressive way towards Aboriginal interests, arrived at the documented decision.

I believe that this is indeed a progressive step in attitudes of non-Aboriginals.

I therefore make the statement available to you in the hope that you will publish it with a view towards encouraging other whites to actively support Aboriginal rights, whatever they may be.

Yours faithfully,

*K.J. Everett*  
Jim Everett.

STATE ABORIGINAL LIAISON OFFICER.

PUBLIC STATEMENT

On September 25 - 27 a national seminar was held at the University of Tasmania Senior Common Room entitled "The Aboriginal Motif in Children's Literature". The objective of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for those interested in children's literature to consider the treatment of Aborigines and their culture in children's literature. The seminar was organised by the Library Association of Australia, Tasmanian Branch, with the assistance of the Tasmanian Branch of the Children's Book Council and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee.

Ninety people participated in the conference which was addressed by Margaret Dunkle, Children's Literature Consultant; Jim Everett, State Aboriginal Liaison Officer; John Honey, Director, Tasmanian Film Corporation; Rosalind Langford, State Secretary, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre; Walter McVitty, critic and lecturer in children's literature; and Bill Scott, author. A number of major themes were discussed during the seminar: that much literature published for children has portrayed the Aborigine and the Aboriginal culture in a negative way; that authors have a responsibility to be sensitive to the aboriginal experience, urban as well as tribal, when writing about Aborigines; that there are practical devices which can be employed to eliminate racism in children's books; that the pejorative treatment of Aborigines in children's literature has undesirable developmental and social affects on both Aboriginal and white children; and that more Aboriginal authors should be encouraged to write of their experiences for children.

The seminar was requested to endorse a resolution and this was agreed. The statement reads as follows:

It was the views of this seminar that any piece of literature written about Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, if it is to genuinely reflect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's situation, must recognize their traditional and innate relationship with their land.

The recognition of this relationship in literature necessarily entails a practical recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders land rights as a means of re-establishing this relationship in reality.

Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander political and economic rights is seen as an essential component in promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the literary traditions of contemporary Australia,

WHY ABORIGINES SHOULD BE WRITING FOR CHILDREN

Jim Everett

Written for presentation at:

A NATIONAL SEMINAR:

"THE ABORIGINAL MOTIF IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE"

University of Tasmania, 25 - 27 September, 1981

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A DREAMTIME

Schools teach from text of things not true, of Tasmanian Aborigines.  
Teach lies about the blackman's life, the present day originals.  
We're here! we cry to no avail, the whites won't recognize us.  
You're only mixed bloods, is the reply, don't make any fuss.

But pen from paper, books from sight, exemption from the rule.  
We're looked on as inferior, and called abo's out of school.  
They'll call us Blacks and treat us slight, deny our rights forever.  
To hide the fact that we're still here, is all they do endeavour.

Time will tell, the futures ours, we'll see a day of justice.  
Non-Aboriginals taught the truth, a part of our solice.  
A dream of times we'll never see, whites just won't allow it.  
So fight it is 'til time does end, for us, it is writ.

Jim Everett.

## CREDIBILITY OF WRITERS

It is common knowledge that literature concerning Aborigines is mainly a product of non-Aboriginal writers. Almost all written work, to be recognised work, must conform to acceptable standards inherent in English literature. Therefore, it is disturbing to note that written material on Aborigines gains its recognition through non-Aboriginal norms in literature.

It is even more disturbing to realise that Aboriginal writers lack credibility simply because Whites have little understanding of what the true Aboriginal concept is, in literature written by Aborigines about themselves.

For example, if an Aboriginal was to write about the Aboriginal right to land he would most certainly express the Aboriginal view of complete autonomy of ownership, of self-government and complete power of decisions concerning Aboriginal land.

He could go on to explain that this Aboriginal land will be used for traditional hunting and food foraging activities.

Most Whites would immediately consider this in their value system thus:

1. Aborigines must be mad to believe they are entitled to have a separate, autonomous government in our country.
2. What good can come from giving blacks land if they are not going to use it for any viable purpose, and anyway there are few tribal blacks to go hunting and foraging.

"Hence the land belongs to Whites and not blacks and anyway all the part-Aboriginal, non-tribal and detribalized blacks lost their Aboriginal ways years ago, so the Aborigines views are not valid."

## THERE GOES THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ABORIGINAL WRITER!

The trend of writing is governed by a standard of White values which, like Australian law, provides little scope for Aboriginal values to be recognised. The White value system is most evident in the education system where accredited writing material is mainly used. Literature concerning Aborigines is therefore recognised as being valid because it was written by White people who have the necessary qualifications from that education system to validate it.

Anthropologists are, in my view, the most damaging group of academics relating to Aboriginality in this country because of this validated right of authority which is recognised in literature about Aboriginals. Anthropologists pointedly exclude present day Aboriginals from any recognition of identity as pertaining to the findings in their written work.

Indeed, almost all recognised academic literature about Tasmanian Aborigines ends with Trugganinni.

To my knowledge all recognised academic reference about present day Aborigines in Tasmania is racist in terms of classification of skin colour, blood purity and general features, not excluding the many other references the White value system imposes on contemporary Aboriginals Australia wide.

It is for these reasons that I say it is imperative for Aborigines to write; write for children, sure, but more importantly to write for a credible Aboriginal existence through, and in, literature.

Aboriginal writers must, of course, use English when writing, they must also use English procedures when writing.

Unfortunately there are few Aboriginals who have survived the White education system and gained a standard of education without being indoctrinated. By this, I mean that to be able to learn in a system which is alien to Aboriginality in its present form, an Aboriginal is, through the necessity to understand what is being taught, under pressure to recognise the validity of literature currently being used in the education system.

Therefore, Aboriginals who do survive, or de-program, should assert their Aboriginality in literature to such an extent that future White Australian society will be able to come to terms with Aboriginality through the "Aboriginal Story". This should be done with a view towards gaining Aboriginal literary expression a just recognition of validity in the White education system.

THIS CANNOT BE DONE IF ABORIGINAL WRITERS CONFORM TO THE  
WHITE MAN'S STANDARDS OF ACCEPTABILITY.

## THE ABORIGINAL STORY

What is the Aboriginal Story?

If a Tasmanian Aboriginal was to write his Aboriginal story in the 1980's it would not be accepted because the White value system denies his Aboriginal identity through the literature it validates.

It is an Aboriginal Story! And I deny White people the right to make any such judgement until they can truly accept Aboriginality for what it is.

The Aboriginal Story is to be told by Aborigines in a way which only they can express the very concept of Aboriginality, past, present and future. Not how Whites believe it to be, but how it is known to Aborigines.

The Aboriginal Dreamtime is not just a collection of stories for kids, it's a historical tradition of education about "What is", and the Aboriginal understanding of the land, the sky and the living.

That is "What is".

Present day Aboriginals have not lost the Dreamtime, indeed, it is their strength and unity of understanding their own Aboriginality which is the present Dreamtime.

Almost everything Tasmanian Aborigines are expressing about their Aboriginality today has been ridiculed and treated as not being significant in the White values of Aboriginality.

Yet the very active presence of Aboriginality is being lived today, here, in Tasmania.

To support this statement I draw attention to the fact that it is as recent as 1951 that the Aboriginal Reserves Act was repealed in Tasmania. The Cape Barren Island Aboriginal reserve was ended and the "Cape Barren Islanders" were denied their Aboriginal identity by the State Government of the day. In startling contrast to this the State Government used Commonwealth funds for Aboriginal Affairs to move the Aboriginals off the island and assimilate them in the community on the Tasmanian mainland.

Although these people were spread out in the mainland community they have held together through their kinship and natural Aboriginality as one people.

There are seven Aboriginal organisations currently operating in Tasmania to cope with the needs of 3,000 Aboriginals as evidenced in the 1976 census, it is believed the recent census figure will be nearer 5,000.

There are Aboriginals working in specific Aboriginal positions in the Commonwealth and State Public Service in Tasmania.

Two Aboriginal students attending this University and 360 Aboriginal students received secondary grants for the year 1980-81.

There can be no doubt that Aboriginality is a reality in Tasmania, and on this point there can be no doubt that Aboriginality is a reality in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and any other place Aboriginals may be.

There is conflict in literature about Aboriginals if, for instance, a group of Aboriginals have driven a car to go hunting wildlife or foraging for shellfish, and are written about by Whites.

It would be emphasised that these people drove a car and hunted wallaby like many White people do, therefore they cannot be "Real Aboriginals".

An Aboriginal would correctly write that the Aboriginal people hunted wallaby as a normal activity inherent to their people long before Whitemen came, and they travelled by car simply because they could.

There then, is the conflict in literature because the different beliefs of a situation are not equal.

It is obvious that the Aboriginal Story can only be told by Aborigines. It is also obvious that the Aboriginal Story is not easily accepted by Whites.

Aboriginals are coming to understand the White man's way of thinking, they are also reaching a conclusion that White people are not able to come to terms with what Aboriginality really is, and in fact Aborigines have not made a stand on the issue because of it.

#### The Aboriginal Story in Education

Aborigines are not treating education lightly, European styled education is recognised for its worth by Aboriginals, yet Aboriginal education has gained little recognition from Whites.

Aboriginals want "Two-way" education, European education on one hand and Aboriginal education on the other.

The Aboriginal Story can be an educating tool, it does not have to be of tribal Aborigines to be "Truly Aboriginal". It only needs to be Aboriginal to have that distinction.

What I mean here, for example, is that the literary work about Aboriginal culture in an urban situation, written by an Aboriginal living in a Sydney slum area, should not present any more conflict of recognition than a sculpture of the Virgin Mary by an Italian living in a remote Aboriginal community.

The education system is all important in the responsibility towards creating an honest awareness of Aboriginality. I can only accept that by the teaching of tribal Aboriginality exclusively, there can be no acceptance by Whites of our present day Aboriginality, our people and their inherent rights.

The Aboriginal Story, as written by Aboriginals, would give children a much clearer image of Aboriginality today than all the stereo-type literature currently being used, and condoned, in education.

The inherent right to teach children is part of all cultural aspirations. The right to teach Aboriginality is ours alone, it is separate and should not be subjected to different values being heaped on it by people who don't belong to it.

If we are to teach our children about their Aboriginality through Aboriginal writers, teachers and other Aboriginal experts, then the reason for Aborigines to write for children is there.

If Aboriginals would teach their children using Aboriginal literature, it stands to reason that White people would have access to the most authentic material ever available about Aborigines.

#### ABORIGINAL IDENTITY

To understand the conflict in Aboriginal identity we must again look at what is already written about Aborigines.

"ALL POINTS NORTH" is my motto for how non-Aboriginal writers clarify Aboriginal identity. There is a never ending stream of academic literature about Aborigines in the Northern Territory, Northern Queensland, Northern Western Australia and Central Australia which has a major tendency towards

tribal Aboriginal identity.

With reference to living Aboriginals it appears that these highly qualified academics and their followers (e.g. Social writers) are not capable of writing a credible account of Aboriginal identity outside of distinctive tribal areas.

These qualified quacks honestly believe they have the right to classify, clarify and identify people they don't even understand e.g. Tasmanian Aborigines.

We can say that because it's true that the greatest amount of anthropologists work about Aborigines in Tasmania, as mentioned earlier, ends with Trugginnini.

I personally have no knowledge of any literary work that has attempted an honest expression of present day Aborigines in Tasmania.

It's about time White Australians got off the academic horse when it comes to Aboriginal identity. The fact is that there is only one horse in this area and it is apparent that Aboriginals are the only ones who can ride it.

WE ARE ABORIGINALS BECAUSE WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABORIGINALS

Aboriginal identity is being Aboriginal, thinking Aboriginal and spiritual Aboriginal, only an Aboriginal can know that.

Tasmanian Aboriginals are the most suppressed and deprived people in Australia.

The very fact that Tasmanian Aboriginals, as a whole race, are still denied their rightful identity, are discriminated against in the most ambivalent terms e.g. you're not Whites, but you're not Aboriginals, given the most blatant lip service by governments and "Educated" out of existence by that system.

Educated out of existence through the Education System which expounds the only recognised literature as a valid account of genocide.

Our identity is denied to the extent that it is almost totally impossible for White people, who sincerely try to come to terms with Tasmanian Aboriginal identity, to overcome the odds of them doing so.

Our people have been in this identity situation for over one hundred years. To survive is one thing, but the identity problems caused through an ever rising denial of identity is something few White people would ever have a clear understanding of.

Aboriginal writers must gain recognition as qualified writers to set the record straight, otherwise White people are teaching the children a pack of lies and causing no end to problems with our kids.

### WRITING FOR CHILDREN

Every writer writes for other people to read, it is accepted that writers of fact write in an attempt to influence other peoples knowledge and thinking. Naturally the influence is directed towards what the writer believes to be true and correct. This does not necessarily mean that what is written is in fact true and correct.

What I have said throughout this paper is that Whites do not write the Aboriginal Story as seen by Aborigines, therefore it is not true and correct. Children are objects of literary influence because their initiation towards gaining an academic grading of one kind or another is through the written word.

Writing for children is really an exercise of telling children of adult beliefs and legends in a way they will be able to understand and relate it to the adult equivalent.

A childs general philosophies and concepts are reliant on what he is taught and how it is imparted.

### WHY ABORIGINES SHOULD BE WRITING FOR CHILDREN

Aborigines should be writing for all age groups but it is important to know your audience level to be able to write to it.

Writing for children is merely a 'Tip of the Iceberg' thing towards total acceptance of the work of a truly Aboriginal nature. I have already stated that Aboriginal writers attain little recognition for their work if it does not conform to the value system of White people.

If White people believe that 'Aboriginal Dreamtime' stories are merely fairy tales, and therefore, are acceptable for their children to read for that reason only, then it is my view that the Aboriginal concept is considered as some kind of fantasy, with no "Reality" in the White concept.

How then are we to write for children, will we write the true story of oppression? Will it be accepted?

People who believe that Aborigines <sup>should</sup> only paint a glowing picture of Blacks in this White society are totally incapable of accepting the work of Aboriginal writers.

Of course Aborigines should be writing for children, but how can we do this with Aboriginal clarity if we must compete with academics for credibility within the suppressive restrictions of acceptable literature of an alien society?

That question is not easily answered, my paper has been mainly directed at the negative side because it outweighs the positive. Never-the-less, Aboriginal literature will become part of our Aboriginal culture, and I see it as only a matter of time before it will be accepted by white Australians.

In most cases in considering future literature by Aborigines, it will be a necessity for Aborigines to be qualified in the dominant Education system to be recognised as valid writers, but let there be no doubt that there is a need for "Aboriginal education" (like White education) to validate Aboriginal writers of the "Aboriginal Story".

Maybe everybody will not agree it should be so, but there it is.

Aborigines want to participate in the future development of this country at all levels, in an artistic way, a cultural way and an Aboriginal way.

We want children to have the right of reading for their education, their pleasure, and their integrity.

Aborigines should be writing for children, tomorrow's Australians. So they may understand us and our separatism in this society, so they may accept us for what we are, and how we see ourselves.

Aboriginal stories for children can hold a child's attention from the fantasy to the realistic. They are the major reasons, in my belief, for Aborigines to write for children.

ABORIGINALS SHOULD BE WRITING FOR CHILDREN

AUSTRALIA SHOULD ENSURE CHILDREN THE RIGHT OF TRUTH

SAD CHANGES

With a heavy heart I live this life,  
 In a world that has no end to strife,  
 That we suffer for white man's shame,  
 Denied our rights and passed the blame.  
 T'is not a sadness because we're down,  
 Our struggles I know will bring us 'round.  
 More a sadness of the White advance,  
 As they ruin cultures to suit their stance.

And whilst they ruin our culture old,  
 Themselves have little tradition to hold.  
 Lost of culture they settled our land,  
 Cultureless Whites in the timeless sand.  
 Through 200 years the inevitable change,  
 Our culture challenged must re-arrange.  
 Traditional life must change with this tide,  
 The days of the past are for us now denied.

Our Sons and Daughters must never let go,  
 We of the old time must teach all we know.  
 T'is a white man's world they are to live,  
 Let us ensure they have something to give.  
 Our culture and dreaming, our very being,  
 Must go to the future forever appearing.  
 Our pride of our past, today and ahead,  
 Aboriginal culture must never be dead.

So let us record our past with delight,  
 For future generations to keep in their sight.  
 That cultural changes we know must evolve,  
 Will change with our children and never dissolve.  
 We have a strong traditional creed,  
 Recognising changes as something decreed.  
 And regardless of man as time passes by,  
 Our Aboriginal culture we must never let die.

Jim Everett

MAWBANA PLEREGANANNA

## INTRODUCTION

Jim Everett, born on Flinders Island off the north-east coast of Tasmania, is a Tasmanian Aboriginal from the Ben Lomond Tribe, the Plangermairreenner People, midway down the east coast of Tasmania.

Jim was influenced by his friend Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) to take an Aboriginal name similar to hers. His name of Pura-Lia Meenamatta means 'paperbark from the Ben Lomond area'.

Jim has written for as long as he can remember, and writes poetry, short stories and theatre pieces.

He has had a long involvement in Aboriginal politics and served two terms as the elected State Secretary of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, a community based political organisation.

Jim has served a 4 year term on the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council, and is a current member on the National Aboriginal and Islander Arts Committee.

He has participated in many of the literary and performing arts forums around the country as they have occurred.

He was the first producer to ABC's Aboriginal TV Unit in Sydney, 1988, and produced a film about the Aboriginal anti-bicentennial March in Sydney, titled 'One People Sing Freedom.'

Jim has written these stories based on knowledge in the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, his personal research and understanding of the Aboriginal stories that represent their past.

Jim says, "These stories represent the contemporary legends of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and although they are not stories from our tribal people they have the status of being our stories, and that is their integrity."

He goes on to say, "It is necessary to understand that Aborigines are only at the beginning of literary expression. I am pleased to be able to express my people's stories by using what creative skills I have to bring it all together and tell the stories."

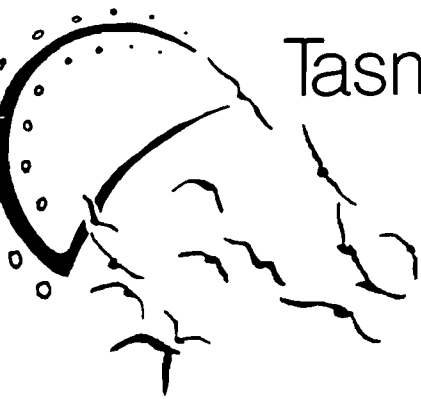
In these stories you, the reader will get to know the Aboriginal community in Tasmania as it is now, the Tasmanian Aboriginal people in their own reality, with a history that becomes real in the legends as Jim tells them.

end

NOTE : The spelling of the word "jungin's" is correct in spelling, first sentence of "A STORY OF KUTI KINA".

It represents the english-slang of Tasmanian Aborigines on the Islands, especially Cape Barren Island, 2nd largest island of the Furneaux Group.

"Jungin's" .....meaning youngens, is significant of that slang.



# Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council

PO BOX 569F  
HOBART  
TAS 7001  
Ph 002 347765

Ms Helen Williams  
Bowpress  
208 Victoria Road  
DRUMMOYNE  
NSW 2047

Dear Ms Williams

## **PUBLICATION OF STORIES BY JIM EVERETT**

Mr Jim Everett has asked me for formal endorsement for his short legend stories to be published by Bowpress.

The stories, titled as follows, are:

- A STORY OF BALLAWINE (Red Ochre)
- A STORY OF KUTI KINA
- A STORY OF THE FISH SPIRIT
- A STORY OF TOHAH LEAH THE FIRE SPIRIT
- A STORY ABOUT THE MOON AND THE SNAKE

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council is pleased to endorse these stories mentioned above as being contemporary expressions of our people's past and present and encourage their publication.

I understand that there are to be two publications undertaken and support the proposals to publish as negotiated by Jim Everett with Bowpress.

I might add that we are pleased with the stories/legends as written by Jim and wholly support the initiative taken by writers such as Jim in confidently presenting our people's efforts to strengthen Aboriginal culture and spirituality in Tasmania.

The Land Councils endorsement in no way implies any condition applying to Mr Everett's contract to publish or otherwise in relation to these stories.

Yours faithfully

Greg Lehman  
SECRETARY  
24 July 1990

## A STORY OF BALLAWINNE (RED OCHRE)

By Jim Everett (Pura-Lia Meenamatta) 1990

The day was a dull early winters day in Tasmania on the edge of the foothills of Cradle Mountain.

A car door slams and a mans voice is heard, "This is the area Barbara, our tribal lands were centred around this mountain."

A young woman's voice replies, "Well, tell me the story Dad, you know I want to hear it all, what was our tribal people like?"

Barbara is a small boned teenager with big green eyes and wavy red hair, she sits on a rock and looks intently at her father.

"Our Band was of the Big River Tribe," he said, "the Band was called the Luggemairrerneerpaierrer."

"Gosh that's a long name Dad, I don't think I can say it." Barbara said.

"Yeah it's long alright," her Dad replied, "and hard to say, .....anyway, our Band had the best tracks of all, we could move from Cradle Mountain here, all the way up past Lake Saint Clair and even to the Great Lakes area."

He continued, "Way back before, even before the Giant Fish came and ate the land to make what is now known as Bass Strait, our tribe had the only ochre mine of all the tribes."

Barbara's Dad picked up a stick and then sat on a tree stump. He was a tall slim man with reddish brown hair, he too had green eyes, yet unlike his daughter he had a dark complexion.

He began doodling in the dirt with the stick, drawing a map of the Big River Tribal lands.

"Yes, we had a big mine somewhere on Cradle Mountain, and the other tribes would trade with us for the ochre."

"One day the Oyster Bay Tribe was trading with the Big River Mob when an argument started over who owned the ochre, the Oyster Bay fulla's wanted more ochre, and for no cost.

"Well , while the leaders are right into the argument, a young fulla from the Oyster Bay Mob sneaks 'round the back of everyone and steals a big lump of red ochre."

"Gee Dad," says Barbara, "what happened when he did that?"

"Ho! The Big River Mob went mad when they seen what was happening, and gave chase quick smart."

"But this fulla was real fast and they couldn't catch him. The fastest of the Big River runners were able to keep him in sight, but they couldn't get up to him."

"But Dad," says Barbara, "surely a lump of ochre wouldn't be that important?"

"Oh yes it would!" He said. "That lump of red ochre was all that was left from the mine,, and it was very important because it could multiply if broken into smaller lumps and thrown onto the ground."

Barbara laughed at this, and said, "No wonder them fulla's were mad Dad, anyway, go on, tell me more."

"Well that lad ran all over the Big River Tribal lands, even as far as the Ben Lomond tribal lands. He was breaking off little pieces of ochre and dropping them, hoping that his pursuers would stop to pick the pieces up. He was hopin' to slow'm down."

"Did his trick work Dad?" Asked Barbara.

"No, but it did leave a trail of ochre all over the place, anyway, he finally found a way out of the Big River lands and led his chasers all over the north of the island, still breaking off pieces of ochre to drop as decoys."

"So after awhile he can see he's almost out of ochre, and still they chase him, so he runs in a circle and back into the Big River land. In fact where he ran through into Big River country is now known as St. Peter's Pass."

Barbara asked. "Did they catch him Dad?"

No, he was too smart, he jumped into Lake St.Clair .and swam around in deep water until eventually the Big River Spirit 'Warrawa' turned him into a freshwater crayfish as punishment for stealing the ochre."

"Later on that smart fulla, now a crayfish, sneaked out of the lake at night and went down the mountain in a small creek. He lived for years makin' more crayfish to live in the creeks that run into Bass Strait."

"Anyway," Barbara's Dad continued, "there was now ochre all over the north people's lands, and as the rain came the ochre grew to be new ochre mines. Ballawinne our old people called it, means red ochre."

"Now the northern tribes had their own ochre, and could trade with the southern tribes for all sorts of things."

Barbara was thoughtful, and said.

"I think that was a good way for things to end, pitty about the fella who stole the ochre, but it did help a lot of people get some ochre, didn't it Dad?"

"Yep," he replied, "It sure did. Our ancestors left us with two important things because of the ochre bein' stolen; that's the ochre of course, and now we can get crayfish from all of the creeks that run into Bass Strait."

"Yeah, well come on Dad, let's drive up to that creek outside of Penguin and catch a feed of crays to take home, Mum loves'm."

Note " Penguin is a small town in the north of Tasmania.

end

## A STORY OF KUTI KINA

By Jim Everett (Pura-Lia Meenamatta) 1990

"Hoy! You jungin's, come away from there or Kuti Kina will come and get yuh!"

It was old Aunty Rya calling to a group of Aboriginal children who were climbing a big rock at the foot of Sharp Hill on Babel Island.

Sharp Hill was the subject of many ghost stories told by the Aborigines who went muttonbirding on Babel Island each year.

Aunty Rya believed that Kuti Kina lived there, protecting the Spirits on Sharp Hill, and children should not disturb the Spirits.

The children respected Aunty Rya and did as they were bid, running down the hill to the sheds where their parents were working.

Muttonbirds are seabirds that have been a food resource of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people for more than 12,000 years. The muttonbird chicks are harvested from their burrows in the ground over a five week season each year.

This cultural activity is still carried on by today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Anyway, Aunty Rya was doing her bit keeping the children out of trouble.

One of the Children, Larni, a light haired boy with brown eyes came down to where Aunty Rya was sitting.

"Is Kuti Kina an evil Spirit Aunty Rya?" he asked with a frightened look on his face.

"Oh no my boy!" She said, " Kuti Kina is the protector of special places that belong to us."

"Why should we be frightened of Kuti Kina then ?" Said Larni.

"Sit down and I'll tell you all about Kuti Kina." Replied Aunty Rya.

Larni sat on an old kerosene tin next to Aunty Rya's hut and leaned back on the wall, enjoying the warmth of the sun.

Aunty Rya began.

"A long time ago there was this Aboriginal woman named Mennuggana, her name meant Black Cockatoo, and she was always trying to learn about things around her."

One day she was near the Sacred Caves, a place where only the Spirit People in the tribe were allowed to go . "But Mennuggana wanted to see what they looked like inside, so she crept close to the entrance of the biggest cave."

"Well what was in the cave?" Asked Larni.

"The Spirit People's art, hand stencils made by spitting ochre on a hand on the rock wall, our Old People believed that the art would protect the cave spirit."

Aunty Rya continued with the story.

"Anyway, as Mennuggana got close to the cave entrance a cold wind began to blow from the cave. Mennuggana got frightened as the wind blew harder."

Larni's eyes were big as the moon, he could see a picture in his mind of the wind blowing Mennuggana away from the cave.

He asked, "Did the wind hurt Meenuggana Aunty?"

"No no no boy!" She said, "The wind began to make a funny noise, then its voice could be heard, real loud,.....it said 'GO AWAY WOMAN, THIS IS A SPIRIT PLACE,' Mennuggana knew it was the Great Ancestor speaking and she got so frightened that she ran into the cave to hide."

"The Great Ancestor was not pleased at Mennuggana going into the cave, and he sent a Birdman down to get her."

Aunty Rya went on.

The Birdman went to the cave and quickly carried Mennuggana off, and up to the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit was very angry, and said 'You are to be punished for breaking the law' and a blaze of bright sunlight shone on Mennuggana."

Larni interrupted, "Gee Aunty, did the Great Ancestor kill Mennuggana?"

"Oh no my boy!" She exclaimed. "The sun is the giver of all life, no.....the Great Spirit wouldn't use the sun like that. The sun turned Mennuggana into a Spirit of the Great Ancestor."

"What sort've Spirit was Mennuggana turned into Aunty?" Said Larni with a look of awe on his face.

"Mennuggana was turned into Kuti Kina my boy, the Spirit to protect the Sacred Places of our people. Kuti Kina was sent back to the land to keep the law."

"Gee Aunty, Kuti Kina is like the white people's Boogey Man, isn't it?" Comes Larni speaking quite fast.

Aunty Rya thinks for a minute before answering.

"I 'spose that's right, but you mind now that you don't go up Sharp Hill or otherwise Kuti Kina will get you, now off with yah."

Larni gets off his kerosine tin and runs over to where some of the children are playing chasey around the boxthorn scrub.

"Hey!" Larni yells. "Aunty Rya just told me all about Kuti Kina, we better not go up Sharp Hill or Kuti Kina will come and take us to the Great Ancestor."

"Gosh, what'll the Great Ancestor do if that happens?" Says Louana, the eldest girl in the group.

The Great Ancestor will turn you into a Spirit and make you protect Sharp Hill forever." Says Larni.

That evening as the sun set, the group of Aboriginal children sat by the camp-fire and looked up at Sharp Hill, a place where Kuti Kina watches over Babel Island.

NOTE : Babel Island is one of the many islands in the Furneux Group off the north east coast of Tasmania.

It was the most popular muttonbird island of the Straits in post-war years, having a population of upwards of 300 people for the then 6 week season.

Today it is becoming less used for muttonbirding, and is only catering for about 20 Aboriginal muttonbirders each season.

end

## A STORY OF THE FISH SPIRIT

By Jim Everett (Pura-Lia Meenamatta) 1990

They were sitting around the deck of the "Christine Carol" a 45 feet crayboat tied-up at the wharf in Hobart.

Talk was about their ancestors, the Old People, Tasmanian Aborigines.

These young Aborigines were of course talking about Aborigines and fish, they being fish-catchers themselves.

Jamie, about 18 years of age with blonde curly hair and a cheeky smile was on the subject of the Spirits.

"My father reckons that 'Ria Warrawah the Sea Spirit made our Old People stop eatin' scale fish." He said with a rather intense look at the others.

His sister, Ebonee, quickly broke in.

"I know what our Tribal People called the fish Spirit, 'Peeggana' that's what it's called." She said in a smug way

An old voice drifted into the conversation just then, a quiet voice, it was Granpop Edgar.

"Yuh know, I heard the story 'bout why the Old Fulla's stopped eatin' fish." He said.

Rosie started to say, "How can we be sure that the Spirits had anything to do with....."

As Justin said in a loud voice. "I want to hear the story anyway, so just be quiet and let Granpop tell us about it."

"Well, it seems there were three Sea Spirits way back then, there was Peeggana and Nunnya, they were the fish Spirit and the crayfish Spirit.

But the bad one was Ria Warrawah, the Sea Demon Spirit."

Granpop Edgar looked at the young ones and continued. "The tribes were eating mainly scale fish around then, along with emu and possums .....and that kinda tucker....you know."

He puffed on his old blackwood pipe and went on. "A real cheeky young fulla called Maywerick was always fishin' close to where Ria Warrawah lived. Now Maywerick loved to eat scale fish, and he was friendly with Peeggana."

"Of course Ria Warrawah was Peeggana's worst enemy, because Ria Warrawah didn't like Peeggana lettin' Maywerick have any fish."

"Was Maywerick the fish-catcher for his people Granpop?" Asked Ebonee.

"Yep!" Said Granpop, "And everyone was happy and had plenty tucker, but they mostly sat around and just waited for Maywerick to bring the food."

Justin piped up. "Yuh mean they was lazy and didn't help to get the fish, Granpop?"

"That's right," said Granpop Edgar, "and the crayfish Spirit, Nunnya, was always tryin' to get Maywerick to talk to the people about catching shellfish and crayfish because it would be good for their diet."

Old Granpop Edgar was warming to the subject now, he went on. "Now Ria Warrawah was so tired of what was goin' on that he decided one day to kill Maywerick. He sneaked around underwater to near where Maywerick had a big catch of fish, and before anyone could see what was happening Ria Warrawah threw a Neaggara Pe-na at Maywerick and killed him."

"What's a Neaggara Pe-na Granpop?" Asks Rosie.

"It's a Dream Spear of the Spirits my girl." Granpop gives the answer.

"Yuh see, this Neaggara Pe-na, when it kills Maywerick, it brings his dream to life. Now as it happens Maywerick had often dreamed that his people would stop eating scalefish, and start eating lots of shellfish and crays and crabs and the like."

"Oh boy!" Exclaims Jamie, "Yuh mean they stopped eatin' scalefish when the dream came true?"

Granpop Edgar laughed quietly at this, then said.

"Well sort of I 'spose yuh could say,.....but it wasn't until Nunnya , who came along just after Maywerick was speared, and had a big fight with Ria Warrawah that the dream started to be seen."

He puffed long and noisily on his pipe, and went on.

"The water was boilin' from the fight, and the Spirits were goin' mad. Just then along came Tiabeah, Maywerick's wife, who threw the big catch of fish that Maywerick had caught into the sea where the Spirits were fighting."

This made the Spirits fight even more.

The young ones on the deck of the Christine Carol, were silent with attention. Granpop continued the story.

"Tiabeah was busy trying to bring Maywerick back to life, and as the two Spirits fought, Peeggana the Scalefish Spirit grabbed both Maywerick and Tiabeah and carried them into the deep water never to be seen again."

"The people were very scared," Granpop went on, "and ran away from where Nunnya and Ria Warrawah were making the sea boil, and you know, our Old People never ate scalefish for hundreds of years after that."

Justin was quick to ask, "What happened to the Spirits fighting Granpop?"

"Oh.....they still fight a lot, and yuh can see 'em on a windy day in the shallow water stirrin' up the sea." Granpop Edgar told the story.

"Yuh gotta be careful and respect the sea, 'specially when yuh go out fishin', that damn Ria Warrawah plays all sorts of tricks so be careful." He said in a tired voice.

He went on to say in a slow voice now, "The people started to catch lots of crayfish after that and dive for shellfish, and work very hard to see that everyone had enough food to live comfortable like."

Granpop got up from his deckchair and walked over to a big pile of ropes on the deck, he sat down on the ropes.

"You should always remember that Ria Warrawah and Nunnya are still about, and if yuh spot the sea on the boil take your boat away from them, it's dangerous to go where they are, you could lose your boat

"Anyway," he said, "Maywerick and Tiabeah are Spirits now with Peeggana in the deep water, we don't see 'em any more.

Now that these Spirits are so busy fighting or hiding in the deep water.....there are no Spirits.....to see our.....fish are safe.....from being caught out...altogether."

Granpop Edgar laid back amongst the ropes and closed his eyes, he was falling asleep.

Just then Aaron, the youngest of the crew stuck his head out of the fo'castle and yelled to the group. "Righto you fulla's, got a good feed of fish cooked for lunch, come'n get it."

Jamie yelled back. "What kinda fish did yah cook?"

"Some flathead, some perch and a couple of salmon," says Aaron, "come on or they'll get cold."

Almost as one the group yelled back at Aaron.

"I'm not hungry!"

If anyone had cared to look at that very moment, they would have noticed a sneaky grin come over Granpop Edgar's face.

end

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## A STORY OF TONAH LEAH THE FIRE SPIRIT

By Jim Everett (Pura-Lia Meenamatta) 1990

It was a nice sunny day on the Tasman Peninsular, it was Xmas time and the campers were there in droves. Ben and Marge were there with their children, Tigh and Nicki.

Tigh was tall for his age, 10 years, and Nicki was 13 years of age, a teenager to the bone.

There would be other Tasmanian Aborigines on holidays at the Peninsular even though Tigh and Nicki hadn't spotted anyone they knew, so far anyway.

"Come on kids, get some wood, we want a big fire tonight." Said their father.

Nicki was quick to help around the camp, and started off to get wood from the nearby scrub.

Tigh hated the idea and walked around with his hands in his pockets.

"Aaww, come on Tigh," said Ben, "help Nicki get the wood it's gettin' late."

So Tigh forced himself to actually go and get some wood.

Later that evening the family sat around the camp-fire and talked.

"I Always enjoy food cooked on a camp-fire." Said Marge.

"Me too!" From Tigh, who thought of food above all other things in life.

"Yeah, me too," said Ben thoughtfully, "Yuh know.....this place is where the Fire Spirit first gave fire to our Old Fulla's."

"You mean right her at our camp site Dad?" Asked Nicki.

"No, I mean Tasman Peninsula, want to hear th'story?" Offered Ben.

Tigh nodded, Marge and Nicki both said they would like to hear it.

So, Ben started.

"Way back in th old days, way back when our tribal people were just beginning to learn the ways of life, there was hardly any light."

"No light! even of a day Dad?" Said Tigh.

"That's right mate, it was like dusk all the time. Anyway, our tribal Band was called the Pydairrreme, they were part of what white people called the Oyster Bay tribe."

Ben went on with the story.

"Well, the Pydairrerme Band were great hunters, they hunted wallaby and emu, and dived for shellfish and crayfish. The trouble was that because there was no light, it was very cold, and the people did not know about fire."

"One day the Great Ancestor came to the land where the Pydairrerme lived, the Great Ancestor was in the form of the Lyekah, the Firetail bird."

"The Lyekah perched in a tree near the camp of Kakannawayreetya, a brave hunter. Kakannawayreetya saw the Lyekah and quickly speared it."

"Crikey Dad, did this mean he killed the Great Ancestor?"  
Queries Tigh.

"Not at all mate, you can't kill the Great Ancestor, its a Spirit that's always with us."

"But Kakannawayreetya didn't know it was the Great Ancestor, and he plucked the bird and tied its red feathers to his hair."

'It had made the Great Ancestor sad to see his people living in darkness. But by killing the Lyekah it made the Great Ancestor take the body of a white cockatoo, the Weeanoobryna, this made the Great Ancestor see the darkness even more."

Ben stopped for a minute and leaned over to grab the billycan of tea, he poured it into a tin mug and stirred some sugar in it.

He sipped it before returning to the story.

"The Great Ancestor decided to help the people, and as the Weeanoobryna it flew at Kakannawayreetya and grabbed the red feathers from his hair. The Weeanoobryna flew round and round Kakannawayreetya, so fast that the red feathers got brighter and brighter.

Ben drank some more tea, noting that his family were laying back, relaxed, but obviously listening.

He went on.

The feathers got so bright that they started to burn, and the cockatoo began to singe, its feathers going black."

"There was fire everywhere around Kakannawayreetya, and it started to burn him, until all that could be seen was one big flame. It got so big that it lifted into the sky, making a sun and giving light to the land."

Ben finished his drink and hung the mug on a branch.  
He continued the story.

"All of a sudden the cockatoo, now black with red feathers came out of the sun and flew over the people, it was still the Great Ancestor."

"The Great Ancestor spoke from the cockatoo, 'FROM NOW ON YOU WILL HAVE THE SUN TO GIVE YOU LIGHT AND WARMTH, BUT ALSO NIGHT WHICH IS DARK, KAKANNAWAYREETYA WILL BE YOUR TONAH LEAH FOREVER, YOUR FIRE SPIRIT, HE WILL GIVE YOU FIRE."

"The blackened cockatoo flew to a tree and landed, the Great Ancestor spoke from it once more, THERE IS A COST FOR THE SUN AND FOR TONAH LEAH, FOREVER ONWARDS THE BLACK COCKATOO WILL BE KNOWN AS MENNUGGANA AND WILL BE THE MESSENGER OF BAD NEWS."

"Is that true Dad." Said Nicki, doubtfully.

"I reckon so, my mother and father always said that when a black cockatoo was about there was bad news in the air."

"And you just look at the red feathers on a black cockatoo next time yuh see one." Says Ben confidently.

"What about the Fire Spirit dear?" Asks Marge.

"Yes," said Ben, "The next day a fire was burning near the Pydairrorme camp, just like our camp fire, anyway the people made small torches of the fire to carry around with them."

He pauses, and, "The people would sometimes lose their fire, but Tonah Leah would send lightening from the skies and make more fire."

"Later, the people learned to make fire, but because it was easy to carry they did that more often than make it."

Just then a big streak of lightning lit up the night, it was way out to sea though.

"I wonder why Tonah Leah tries to make fire at sea, Dad?" Says Nicki with some mischief in her voice.

Ben is not fazed, "Tonah Leah is the Fire Spirit and must be able to make fire when it's needed, that's why that Spirit practises out to sea."

Marge's voice comes back quickly. "Yes, well if you don't practise pretty often right here this camp fire is gonna need Tonah Leah to get it goin' again."

Ben got up without a word and went to get more wood from the pile near the tent. He looked up at another flash of lightning and smiled, he was thinking that perhaps Kakannawayreetya was unhappy at being the Fire Spirit, or it might be just a way of letting us know he's still with us.

## A SHORT TRIP WITH SHORTY O'NEILL

By Jim EVERETT

It all started with a phone call from Shorty O'Neill, asking me if I'd started any action on what he'd told Michael Mansell. Now we all know Mick Mansell has the memory of a lawyer, so it was of no surprise that I knew nothing about what Shorty had told him. It appears as the phone conversation goes on that Shorty is heading a protest planned for Canberra.

Shorty O'Neill is a Murrie from Palm Island, and a shit-stirrer from way back. Story has it that it was Shorty and his mate Mick Miller who stirred the Queensland Government up so much that the courts tried to put Shorty in a mental asylum.

Anyway, Shorty has taken a group of Blacks and re-occupied some land on the outskirts of Townsville, a place they now call "Happy Valley."

Happy Valley is situated between the Townsville Airport and the cemetery, or as Shorty says, "between the quick and the dead."

"A protest in Canberra!" says I; "What the bloody hell's up?"

It seems that Shorty had set the agenda to protest at Canberra when Parliament opened on Tuesday 28th. February 1989, and was eager to get 'the Mob' into gear and mobilize to meet him there.

So I take this phone call from Shorty; and he says, "'ey, I wantta see two busloads you fulla's 'ere in Canberra in the next two days!"

"What's up?" I reply.

"Look! I sent the fucken fliers out months ago about this, Parliament opens next Tuesday, so get up 'ere."

"Okay," I say, "We be there, but might only be a couple of's."

"Get as many as yuh can," says Shorty, "Big mobs comin' already."

Next day I catch a plane along with Mike Strong, Office Manager from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and get to Canberra. I phone Shorty at a contact number and he tells me to wait, he'll come and get us.

We stand around outside the lounge at the airport waiting, the next thing we see is this old Ford wagon steamin' in the gates. A big six plug job with the Aboriginal flag flyin' at the front and land rights stickers etc. all over the back.

In goes our gear and off we head into Canberra, first stop is a DAA office.

"We got some of our mob on side in 'ere" says Shorty.

Shorty gets on a phone and starts to call Blackfella's around the country.

"What'd yuh mean? Yuh didn't fucken know about this?" Says Shorty into thephone,

"I sent fliers out months ago, fucken oath son, get a move on" pause "yeah okay, we see yuh on Sunday Bruz, right?"

Anyway, that was the gist of what was goin' down, and plenty of the mob was razzed over the phone.

Later on Shorty took us out to the camp at Boomanulla Oval, and we met those fulla's who were already out there. Some of them fellas names were Meekatharra, Bourkie, Colin Neal, Percy, Kelvin, Arthur, Jeanie, Wayne and his Mum; oh bloody hell! Quite a few, but one I wont forget was....."Henry Wallace!?"

Henry walked over to the kitchen area where we were standing, carryin' a bottle of beer and a smile big enough to make him look like a politician.

Shorty says, "'ey! I thought this a dry camp?"

"Who said that one?" Says Henry.

"At the meetin' yesterday, you mob fucken voted the camp dry."

Henry looked at the Yarrabah Dance Group and the lads from Happy Valley.

"ey! Where wuz you fullas yesterday, you vote this fucken dry stuff?"

The mob all silent, lookin' at each other, a reply comes.

"Not me," head shakin', "musta been asleep."

"Yeah, well fuck the dry business, vote what yuh like, we vote again today to make 'im wet." Laughs Henry.

That night we all had a good drink, Shorty too, and the Dancers gave us a good show.

Everyone slept in tents or the open

that night, and we were lucky with the

weather. The next morning I awoke to

hear Shorty's voice, "If yuh can't fix

the fucken exhaust we all gotta walk

home!" It was Shorty buzzin' Meeka and

Bourkie to fix the Ford. The lads were

actin' like it was a 50 mile walk they

had to do, and speed wasn't their good

side.

A bit of a worry was the women Elders

comin' down from Brisbane to cook for

the camp, they always do this as their

part in the struggle. We had news that

their van had hit a kangaroo and rolled, some had been injured and about half the

Elders couldn't continue the trip. The rest were stranded, and people at the camp

were organising to go and get them.

It wasn't long before we got down to tactics for the protest, and the first thing

we agree to is to burn the Australian flag on Parliament steps.

"We gotta get a Aussie flag ," someone says.

"I saw one outside that flash motel place," someone else offers.

"Yeah!" Says Henry, "Fucken flags from all over the world there, let's help ourselves."

That night a few of the lads went on the flag *hunt*, and some time in the evening they returned to camp with a flag.

"There she is you fulla's." Said Henry.

Henry held the flag up for all to see.

Shorty starts laughin', and says, "How come it's only got five stars?"

The flag hunters all looked at each other with dismay.

"That's a fuckin' New Zealand flag yuh fools." Someone laughs.

"Oh no!" Comes Henry and the mob.

"Well we can't fucken burn that bastard at parliament, we look real fucken stupid." Goes Shorty.

"Have ta go back and get the right fucken flag now." Says Henry, meekly.

And off they went.

Later that night the lads come back with the right flag, laughin' and skitin' about how brave they were to go back to the same place to get it.

Next morning there was some fear that the gunji's would come and search the camp for the flag. The next thing we see is the New Zealand flag burning on the breakfast fire. The Women Elders who were cooking had a good laugh at that.

Anyway, it was Tuesday, Protest Day.

We line the convoy up on the access road at Boomanulla, all eight vehicles.

Off we go like a caterpilla, up to Parliament. I'm in the lead car with four others.

"ey! Which way we go?" Someone says.

"Fucked if I know!"

"Me either"

"Pull up and get Shorty to take the lead."

We pull up and I run back to Shorty's car.

"Shorty, we don't know the way, you'll have ta lead."

"Don't fucken ask me ta lead, I get's all lost." He says.

"Ask some of the others, they should know."

"Okay."

I ask in five vehicles before someone says they know the way, off we go again.

We got the guide in front with us now.

"Turn left 'erel' He yells as we get close to Parliament.

And we turn into a dead-end, do a U-turn and fuck thr traffic up behind us. Finally, we get there, park the vehicles and unload.

It was a real hot day, fucken hot, we go sit on the grass and start talkin' to people on the megaphone. Wayne gets the megaphone and starts a rave about what's goin' down. He was soundin' real good for awhile, when all a sudden he starts ta stirr the shit out've the Black public servants. Big problem, specially seein' as half the protesters were the public servant Blacks.

Shorty hadta speak with old mate before we all alone.

The sun was comin' in at full blast, we set up a shaded area, specially for the older people. It was just a tarp on some poles but it done the job.

Shorty did a few press conferences during the day, a few of us did some media stuff when we got asked.

A group of Aboriginal women did a dance on the grass down the slope from us, the media was there in strength for that. It was a ceremonial dance about our land, but I could tell by the way a lot of the gubs were lookin' that they had no respect for it. I don't reckon we should even let the bastards see our dances.

The protest group start to work out some kinda strategy, we decide to make a deadline for Bob Hawke to come out and talk to us.

We send the message in, "Come out by 3 p.m.; if he don't we'll hold a ceremony of finality (whatever that be) and leave to organise the National Aboriginal Government." (we really frightened him)

A few independent politicians come out and talked to us, but they all shonky anyway, even that fucken Democrat.

Heaps of tourists started arrivin' through the day, Shorty loves tourists.

Shorty had the megaphone and welcomed the sightseers.

"ey! Pay the rent over 'ere, we give yah a receipt, that's more'n you mob give us; don't 'ang yer 'ead pay the rent over 'ere and yuh can 'old yer 'ead up.'

"ey you! That photo gunna cost yuh \$50;.....now it cost yuh \$100 for not payin' first!"

Our mob would laugh out real loud like, and it helped to make the day go fast.

3 p.m. comes

We widen the deadline to 4 p.m.; we not unreasonable blackfella's.

Anyway, we know that the pollies're in question time, while we're at it we invite John Howard to come out too.

Hawke 'n' Howard are brave men, they don't come out at 4 p.m.

What now? Burn the flag!

Some debate over burning the flag , the Australian flag. The local Blacks have reservations about it; we talk; finally it's agreed.

Burn the bastard!

Henry gets the flag ready, soaked in metho I think, lucky we had any left with Henry in charge of it. The coppers are there, waitin' as usual with their normal racist smirks on their faces.

The Mob groups for marchin' and away we go, up the steps to see Bobby fuck-im-up.

Around the fountain we walk and on up to the big glass doors at the front of Parliament. There's cops and security all around us now, one cop with heaps of gold braid yells at us. "You are not allowed to demonstrate on the reception area, please leave this area at once."

"GET FUCKED!" Is all he gets back.

We mill around, Henry holds the flag, Desi Walsh with him looks like a Libyan with a scarf over his lower face. (the Canberra cops are after Des)

Desi lights a match and sets the flag a burnin'.

Burn yuh bastard!

Wayne, Desi, Bourkie and Meeka set distress flares off; what a sight, coloured smoke billows. It was beautiful, the Aussie flag burnin' and coloured smoke blowin' straight into the open front doors of Parliament.

The scene was sort've eerie, through the smoke yuh could see cops and security standin' like ghosts, not movin' and probably not knowin' what to do.

I'm on the megaphone, "Burnin' the Australian flag is our message to the world, we reject the notion that we're Australians."

"We're Aborigines! Always was, always will be!"

The flares are a signal to the United Nations that we're comin' for their support of recognition of our Sovereignty as a Nation under international law."

I continue the rave. (A bit like Foley I was that day, all rhetoric)

"We want to take the Australian Government into the International Court of Justice on the charge of illegal occupation of our land!"

"No more Australia!"

Everyone seems to be happy that we've let off steam and start headin' back down the hill. The gear's packed and we walk to our cars and vans, load up and head back to Boomanulla Oval. I get in with Shorty and the lads for the return trip, Shorty is in the passenger seat with the megaphone.

We do a lap of the Parliament while Shorty talks real nice to the white fulla's.

"Who's land is this?"

"Our land!" The mob yells in the car.

"Who stole it?"

"They did!" From the mob.

As we pass a big group of whities and cops

Shorty yells, "Pay the rent you fulla's, be able to 'old yer 'ead up then, we give y'all a pardon so you can go 'ome to yuh Queen Elizabeth. We 'elp yuh build the second fleet to take yuh all back!"

Shorty keeps it up all the way back to Boomanulla, givin' it to pedestrians and car drivers as we go.

Back at the camp everyone relaxed, pleased with the effort and knowin' that Gerry Hand had shortened our numbers by making vielded threats of cutting off funds to our community organisations and tellin' them that the protest was off.

Some of the mob left for the long trip back home that night, the rest of us had a few drinks and went on 'til late in the night, 'til we all had dropped off to sleep. The next day Shorty packed the wagon ready to go, I was helping.

"Where yuh goin' from 'ere?" I ask.

"After we see that Democrat woman, Irina Dunn, up at Parliament, back t'Townsville."

"Got room for me?" I ask.

"Yeah Bruz, no worries." Says Shorty.

"Well I'm comin' too!" Pipes up Desi Walsh.

"Might's fucken well," says Shorty, "Someone gotta look after yuh."

Not long after, we headed off, first dtop was DAA, made some phone calls and Shorty had to "Fix some business," and we left for Parliament.

There we was drivin' along, in circles it seemed to me, we could see Parliament but never seemed to get to it. In the wagon was Shorty, Henry, Meeka, Bourkie, Desi and me. Henry says to Shorty.

"ey! This not the fucken way, 'ey! Fucken goin' nowhere 'ere 'ey!"

"Gotta take this fucken turn cunt," comes Shorty, "fucken foller you 'n' we all get lost 'ey!?"

"Well you not fucken gettin's there this fucken way, are yuh!?" Henry comes back.

And so as we tour the near surrounds of Parliament these two go at like cats makin' love in the moonlight.

We get lucky and Shorty makes a 'wrong turn' and we find ourselves at Parliament.

Around we go until Shorty finds the Senate entrance, he parks in the 15 minute park area and out we all get.

Through the big glass doors (gubs love glass) into the foyer where the nice little gub security is fallin' over'm selves bein' nice to us; a real raggedy lookin' mob. We find the 'sign-in office' and wait to sign the book.

While we're waitin', a man and a woman enter. Henry's gotta greet'm.

"How yuh goin' Buz?"

"No fucken good, 'ow're you goin'." Comes the reply in broad Irish accent.

"Well we not goin' fucken good either." Says Henry, taken aback.

I notice that the security man at the desk keeps his head down while this interchange takes place. We get signed up and wait for Irina Dunn's staff to come get us.

This girl comes along and tells us to follow her, we do because the place looks the same where-ever you go and we don't wantta get lost.

As we go we come onto these little windows that look into offices.

Young Bourkie gets cheeky, over he goes to a window where a young white girl is sitting on the other side.

The lad's got his stetson on, tilted forward, black face peerin' from under.

He stares at her.

She stares back, all froze up like.

The lad checks her out real sexy way.

The girl probably don't know she's only bein' assessed all sexy-wise, just freeze-up. The lad winks and leaves her all statue-like while he goes barefoot down the white-mans kingdom not givin' a fuck.

Senator Irina Dunn's office is small but rich, we sit and the secretary gets us a coffee, Irina's not there yet.

We wait, all hangin' out for a smoke.

"No smokin' in these places 'ey?" Says Henry with a question.

"Don't t'ink so." Comes Shorty.

We wait, readin' office pamphlets and lookin' like Rambo in a womens hairdressers.

The door opens and in comes 'Irina'.

She's alright, real stunner, young and sexy, we all lookin'!

She stands just inside the door, lookin' at us one at a time.

"Which of you is Shorty?" She asks real serious like.

"He is." Points big-mouth Wallace.

"Oh, stand up and let's see how short you are." She says kinda nice like, and we all laugh.

So we wait while she shuffles around and gets a seat setup in the middle of the room, and sits down.

Next thing up she gets and heads off into her main office, comes back fast sayin', 'You don't mind if I smoke do you?' As she puts an ashtray down and pulls out the roly's.

"NO!NO!" We all go together as we reach for our fags, all real hung out for a fix. The meeting was okay, Irina was not fazed by our expressed intentions for sovereignty and offered her resources such as photocopier use, computer use and library for law study on international law.

After the discussion we were taken out again by Liz, the secretary, (henry had to ask her) and got back to the wagon. Shorty spots a brown envelope under the wiper blade and plucks it off, opens it and reads it out loud to us.

We all laugh at it.

"Fancy them fella's takin' the time to write us a letter to tell this is a 15 minute parkin' zone, and that long term parkin' is in the public park."

We jump in the wagon and Shorty heads her off down the wrong way of the one-way entrance. The group of government chauffeurs standing alongside the big Senate limo's wave their arms and yell at us. "Wrong way!"

Shorty pulss up and reverses, mumbling out loud, "Why the fuck don't yuh put a sign up yuh fucken fowls, 'ow we s'posed ta know it's one-way!?"

He does a U-turn, upsetting a senate car in the process by blocking his way.

Shorty guns the motor and yells, "Townsville or bust."

Just picture the Shorty mob in a Ford stationwagon, 6 of us, all our gear piled up in the back leaving about 12 inches gap between the roof and Shorty's swag laid out over all our gear. One fella (at all times) layin' on the swag, 3 in the back seat and 2 up front(countin' the driver).

A stinkin' hot day and we head off at 2 p.m.; the peak of the heat of the day; only blackfella's 'd do somethin' like that.

There we were, goin' through Canberra, the Ford tickin' over, Aboriginal flag flyin' from the front and six blacks inside. What a fucken sight!

We get out of the city and purr through the country, hot dry farmlands. We see sheep around a mudhole that was once a sizeable damn, sittin', too hot to move.

I wonder about the obvious lack of feeling the white farmers have for the animals that provide their well-off lifestyle. The route takes through little country towns, we see a couple of Murries, but not many, through Yass and on. Shorty drives the first shift for a long time, and doesn't change until late evening. I was in the front seat with him during his shift,

it was like bein' with Evil Knevil

in a car he intends to make fly.

Anyway, we stop and get a feed at one of our petrol stops, and when we get underway again Henry is the driver, Shorty in the passenger seat, me in the middle back seat.

(thank the bloody hell)

Now don't get me wrong, Henry can drive, he's a sort've collector-driver really. Well we're somewhere out west headin' for Dubbo, I'm dozin' when the wagon sort've goes bush. I sit up real quick-like to

see guide-posts in line up front of us, and the road is to our right. The bloody wago is crabbin' sideways and tryin' to get back on the road.(anyway that's how I saw it)

"Did yuh fucken see that! 'ey!?" From Henry.

"See what?" says I.

Everyone hangs on as the wagon's arse swings further 'round and begins to climb the road bank to gain the road again. Henry isn't even lookin' where he's goin', he's lookin' at me with his one-tooth grin; he says, "A fucken big pig! Did yuh see it?" "Ey! Did yuh see that fuckin' pig?"

I was speechless, here's Henry lookin' back at me, the wagon swingin' between road and bush and he's not fucken interested in anything other than; "Did yuh see the fucken pig!"

Relief! The wagon settles back on the road and Henry's got his eyes back on where we're goin'. He's still babblin' though, "What a fucken beauty, 'ey? Good fucken eatin', 'ey? I'll turn around and we'll get 'im, 'ey?"

I couldn't believe me fucken ears. Here we are in a wagon so full that we have to limit the tucker we eat so's we don't get that fat that we can't all fit in the wagon; and Henry wants to go get a fucken pig big enough to fill the back seat.

The accelerator eases, my heart skips, he's gonna fucken do it, when.....

"Don't be so fucken stupid Henry" says Shorty, (I feel saved) "We aint got all fucken night to chase pigs."

That didn't boost my confidence to the forthcoming 2,000 mile drive ahead of us to get to northern Queensland.

My unusual heart-beat was not to be allowed to get back to normal.

Not 20 minutes later I'm propped with my head between Henry and Shorty, when up ahead two kangaroo's do a kamakzi across the road.

"Holy fuck!" Says Henry as he hits the anchors and the wagon does a 120K. arse swing all over the road. The lead 'roo doesn't fuck around, he just bounces on no worries; but his mate (a doe) stops al-a-sudden like, and I swear it looked straight at Henry, with a grin on it's face. It looked like one of Henry's one-toothed grimaces actually. "You fucken bastard!" Yells Henry as the 'roo does a death roll under the wagon. "Oh fuck!" Henry lets out, "Couldn't miss the poor bastard, 'e shouldn't'a fucken stopped." We all felt sorry for the 'roo.

My view is that the swagger that Henry put the Ford into had completely mesmerized the 'roo into believing that any driver who was so bad as to drive like that couldn't possibly hit a still object. Poor little girl 'roo just didn't know Henry, did she? But that's not the end of it all.

"There goes the fucken exhaust now!" Yells Shorty, as the sound of steel on bitumen fills the wagon and Henry brings the old girl to a stop.

Now you'll remember that the exhaust system had only just been 'fixed' by young Bourkie and Meekatharra back at Boomanulla Oval, before we left. As I remember it they took about 4 days of pulling the exhaust off and puttin' it back in what was thought to be better shape.

We all get out and look under the Ford, the pipe's off the muffler, and hangin' on the ground.

" You fulla's did the job, you better fucken fix't now." Says Shorty in a quiet voice, off handed like. So the lads get under the wagon and sort it out with a lot of swearin' at each other. After burnin' their fingers and usin' Bourkie's T-shirt to hold the hot pipe with, the exhaust is back together again.

I feel a bit safer now 'cause I take the wheel, and I don't intend to drive like either Henry or Shorty.

Sittin' on 110 kilometers I'm enjoyin' the lonely road at night, hardly any traffic about when up ahead 2 'roos come up in the headlights, they're squattin' smack in the middle of the road. Well I know 'roos, and can say I would've missed them no problems, but no, Henry's gotta back-seat drive.

"Quick! Vere left, he'll....."

I vere left in quick reaction to Henry, which put me on course with one of the 'roos who happened to jump left. The fucken death-roll wakes the sleepers as the other 'roo heads off to the right and safety.

The exhaust plays that all to-familiar tune to us as I pull up to the side.

We find a dip besides the road and put the wagon across it so's the lads can get a good go at it. (I knew who would have to fix it of course)

"I fucken told you fulla's didn't I, fucken oath! 4 fucken days work and yuh didn't even put a fucken clamp on that pipe joinin' the exhaust, fucken lesson to learn; go on get into it, fix the fucken thing properly this time."

The lads get under the wagon like porcupines diggin' in to get away from a dog. After a lot of buggerin' about they finish a make-shift sort've repair, unsteady but enough to go.

The road goes on, someone else drives  
and I doze on the back seat.

The exhaust comes off again, once,  
twice; a number of times. The lads  
end up wirin' the bastard up but not  
connected, the Ford sounds like a  
truck. I wake up as the wagon pulls  
into shop-like petrol station. Out  
we get, all sleepy-eyed we look around  
to discover that the little town is  
called Banana. We petrol up and eat.

The woman owner comes outside where we're eating and starts a discussion with Shorty, talking about the name of the town.

"You look like you'd know something about Aboriginal culture." She says.

(I swallow in expectation)

Shorty just looks at her with an amused grin on his face.

She continues.

"Can you tell me if your people spelled banana with an 'H' on the end?" Her tone was polite.

"Na!" Says Shorty, "We didn't spell in english at all." (Straight faced)

"Oh....." She says back, "No.....of course.....anyway, we're not sure whether the town was named by Aborigines or whites, all we know is that the place was named after a yellow water-buffalo."

Silence from us blackfella's, all lokin' at each other grinnin', almost laughin'.

The discussion come to an end from that, the woman was okay, had a good attitude but was a bit niave, so Shorty let it go.

Or so we thought as the woman moved to go back in the shop.

"White fella's brought bananas out 'ere" Remarks Shorty.

She stops, yuh could see she wanted to talk.

She talks, starts with the old opener.

"Well I don't want to talk politics..... but....."

And for a fulla in a hurry, Shorty made it quite clear that he did want to talk politics . ON AND ON IT WENT!

One hour later we take off, Shorty re-tellin' the discussion with the woman, as if we didn't hear it.

Henry is at the wheel again, as we drive out the shop drive-way he says.

"Which way?" (As he heads for Biloela)

"Hang on fuck yuh;" Yells Shorty. "We goin' t'Rocky!!?"

"Well which fucken way's that fuck yuh?" Comes back Henry as we get to a fork in the road, only fifty yards from the shop. He veres left and pulls up in the little street which runs between the two forks of road.

"Go back and look at that fucken sign." Says Shorty.

Round we go, pull up at the sign, right

to Biloela, left to Rocky. The lad does

a U-turn. (I thinks to meself, "This wagon does more U-turns than a female sheep.")

Away, down the road to Rockhampton.

The road's not as wide as the earlier ones, lot of loose metal on the sides.

Henry opens her up, and we get out of the town called Banana.

We're headin' north again, a big semi is comin' towards's and Henry moves well over on the side of the road. The semi is fair steamin' to it and as we get near to it me and Henry see this fucken big boulder leave the semi's rear wheel and head straight for us.

**CRASH!**

"Fucken cunt, fuck me dead" Yells Henry, as the windscreen shatters in what seems to be slow-motion. The wagon comes to a halt.

Everyone is stunned, not a word....when...

"What fucken next." Says Shorty. "Well don't fucken sit there, take the cunt back, we'll have'ta do somethin' about it."

Henry peers through a thousand little windscreens, puts her in gear and,..... let me guess.....yeah.....does another fucken U-turn and heads back to Banana.

Henry does a slow trip back to the shop.

We pull into the park area and the woman comes out to look at the damage, her husband follows. They give us a handbrush and we put a sleeping-bag inside the windscreen and break the fractured screen in onto the sleeping-bag. After the clean-up, we find out that we can't get a replacement at Banana, so off we go again to Biloela, the nearest big town.

"I wanted to go to Biloela in the first place yuh cunts," says Henry, "if we'd done that we'd still fucken have a fucken windscreen, 'ey!" (Real conviction in his voice)  
 "Shutup fuck yuh!" Says Shorty, "Yuh miss a pig as big as a fucken elephant but can't miss a fucken little stone; fucken drive fuck yuh!"

Less than an hour later we arrive at Biloela, on the straight into town we spot a windscreen joint, we pull up, it's 7.45 a.m.

A fella next door tells us they don't open 'til 8 a.m., better try the others first. He points to the service station across the road.

We go over, the workers don't like blacks, we can tell by their immediate attitude. After a bit of waiting to get served, and then get the run-around, we find that the only windscreens we can buy are laminated screens at \$350 a pop, and they are sold across the road where we just came from.

Now while all this is goin' on, Shorty is catchin' a nap in the back of the wagon.

"Wake Shorty an' tell 'im it's gonna cost 'im \$350." Yells Henry.

The lads back at the wagon open the wagon doors and stick their heads in, the next thing they all get in the wagon, that's the answer from Shorty.

So,...guess what.....another fucken U-turn and away, to Rockhampton with no fucken windscreen.

It was basically eat, sleep, drive, road, play country and western and boring as we continued the trip.

About the only thing that was remarkable on this leg of the trip was the continual ferocity that Henry displayed in lookin' after his stomach. At every stop he would get enough tucker to feed three men, and he'd eat it in less time than it takes one man to eat a hamburger.

Somewhere in the haze of memory and sleepyness I remember getting to Rocky, it comes and goes without event or emotion. But unbeknowns to us mob, the next little ole problem is not far away.

The wagon has been purrin' along now for over 24 hours, when all've a sudden she starts to act up on us. I'm driving along, and I feel these sort've hiccups in the old girl..

"She's missin' I think." I say.

The wagon starts to act like a stop start hiccup machine real proper like now, Shorty is in the passenger seat, rocking back and forward with the hiccups.

"Better pull up at the next service station." He says.

Couple of K's down the road we pull off into a servo, get petrol and check the carby, screws are loose.

"I told you fucken youngin's t'do the fucken job properly, didn't I? Blasts Shorty.

"Do it properly an' don't cause problems later.....didn't I?"

Meeka and Darren hang their heads and look on as Shorty tightens the screws.

Henry takes the distributor cap off, checks the points, gives'm a clean and puts it back together.

"Give 'er a try." Says Shorty.

I wind 'er over, no go, she wont even start now.

I get out, say t'Shorty. "Must be the points.

I pull the top off the distributor and take the points out.

"No wonder she wont go." I say. "The fucken points got a hole right through the centre, you'll need new points ol' man."

Shorty arranges to get new points from

Rocky because this servo only sells

petrol and tucker. We eait around,

stretch our legs for awhile. The taxi

comes and Shorty gets the new points.

He's spittin' chips when he comes over to the wagon.

"Fucken robbers!" He says.

"They charged me seven fucken dollars

for the points and twenty fucken dollars

for the taxi, cheap bastards!"

We all laugh; and stop when Shorty looks at us with that 'wanna fucken walk do yuh' look. I put the new points in and Shorty gets behind the wheel (I think he's fucken sick of us drivin', always makin' problems for his wagon) and she starts first go. Off we go like a bat outta hell, me in the passenger seat, both of us wearin' shades in place of the windscreen we aint got. I love the cool breeze comin' in through the front, a few drops of rain hits us.

"Better put that fucken plastic screen on 'ey." Says Henry in a voice which indicates that water is his worst enemy. We'd bought an emergency plastic windscreen at Biloela, and now we look liked using it.

The wagon comes to a halt, everyone out and on goes the the plastic screen, pulled tight across and inside the front doors, doors closed to hold the plastic in place. "We'll need to tape it." Says Shorty.

"I'll get some tape over the road at that servo." Says Henry.

Five minutes later he's back with some of that skinny stretch-type tape, two rolls, one yellow, one black.

"I told yuh t'fucken buy the proper tape fucken tape, that fucken stuff's no fucken good!" Comes Shorty.

"That's all they fucken 'ad, fuck't!" Says Henry in defence.

"Yeah yuh silly cunt but I tol' yuh t'get the fucken proper stuff from the fucken place where we got the plastic fuck yuh!" Shorty fires back.

I look in the glove box, sort've rememberin' I saw some good tape there.

Yep, it's there, the solid kinda tape we need, I pass it out, Henry tells me to get fucked just by lookin' at me.

The lads finish the tape job with both kindsa tape, mostly with the weak tape, and put the finishing touches to the job with the good tape. Away we go again.

I'm not impressed, I've lost me air-conditioning through the open front, now closed off it's like a fucken oven to a Tassie black-fella.

The plastic rattles in the wind as we drive, makin' a hell of a noise.

The rain runs across it, don't make it that good to see through, but it keeps us dry. (And me cooked)

Desi is driving now and he puts his hand against the inside of the plastic

everytime a semi passes us from ahead, this to ease the airpressure from the semi as it passes. It don't work, I'm half dozin' when **BOOF!** a dull bang, a hole appears in the plastic. We pull up, patch it best we can and I take the wheel and off again. The screen looks like it'll go again, black tape everywhere on it t'patch it.

"She's right." I say, "This'll get's 200k's at least." (Tryin' t'keep the spirits up)  
Ten kilometers down the road, BOOF! Real loud, the bloody plastic blows right in.  
"Fucken good go! Laughs Henry, " 200 fucken K's 'ey?! Ha ha ha, what a setup, take  
the fucken thing right out, it's 'ad 't now."

We do.

Back on with the shades, Shorty takes the wheel again, he's real fucken sick of us  
I reckon, every time we drive the wagon fucks up. I reckon he's drivin' again just  
to make sure we get to Happy Valley with the rest of the wagon in one piece.

A shower or two sees me'n Shorty up front usin' tissues t'wipe our shades as we go.  
The rain goes, it fines away a bit. The light is going fast.

Now me an' Shorty find ourselves duckin' an' weavin' in the front seat, tryin to  
get outta the way of these fucken big dragonflies and other insects that're comin'  
through the open front.

The lads up the back are hidin' under a sleepin' bag, bloody sooks.

Over the hill and there stretch the lights of Townsville, jesuss I'm pleased, I'm  
sick of Northern Queensland already, especially the way they travel up here.

I giggle to meself, ole Shorty 'as been talkin' t'me for the last 200 k's and I  
couldn't even hear a word of what he said for the wind rushin' in the open front.  
Now he slows down I can hear a bit better.

Before we know it we're in Townsville, through mid city we go and on until we get  
near the airport. Shorty turns down a gravel road and on further to a bush track.  
We pass a hut, it looks good in the headlights of the wagon, I see a sign.....

**"HAPPY VALLEY."**

"Batchelors quarters." Shorty tells me.

Down a couple hundred yards we see the camp, we drive in, pull up and get out.

Here we are, 29 hours after leaving Canberra, beatin' everything that come up agains  
us over a 2,000 mile drive with Shorty O'Neill.

Yes, here I am, relieved to see meself after a short trip with Shorty.

Standin' in the fucken dark with this silly blackfella from Morwell, on a patch of  
land and Shorty and 'is mob,.....with these fucken F one elevens roarin' off  
the airport on one side.....and fucken great paddock of dead white people on  
the other.....

no one gonna believe this story.....

I'm not gonna tell anyone about't.....

fuck that!!!!?

(THANKS FOR THE TRIP SHORTY)

## OUR EARTH EYES

We see your paper mills  
Woodchip piles and smoking stacks  
We see Mount Fuji  
In the haze of industry  
We met those people of the market  
They who buy our forests wild  
Who speak of good in double tongue  
We came from Tasmania to see  
With our Earth Family  
Where our forests are chewed  
And paper rolled for throw-aways  
We looked in your country  
Where tradition on land  
On bended knee holds sway  
Against big paper makers  
And pray that like cherry-blossom  
They will come and go  
Yet like our forests free  
That are clear-felled down  
And pray  
That they the paper makers  
Of our woddchipped trees  
Will not return.

Pura-lia  
Japan 1994

## ANGUISH TO VICTORY

I hear the scream of wounded forests  
Trees and flowers dying in exposed cuts  
And the possum looking for home  
A matriarch tree-hollow torn away  
As the wallaby trail dries and cracks  
The birds are lost from the trees  
And the trees are lost from all  
While woodchippers push ahead  
Their trail levelling in a native place  
To look back at death  
At stumps and the skeletal rows  
We drop our tears on the ripped earth  
Our Mother raped and barren  
Meeting the male seeds of power  
And Aboriginal people weeping  
In silence at the pillage  
From colonial customs  
That absorb our custodianship  
To leave no protection of our family  
In animal flower tree and spirit  
We must struggle struggle struggle  
Until the last woodchip

Woodchip woodchip wodchip

Woodchip mill

Is no more.

Pura-lia  
Japan 1994

## INDIGENOUS PACT

When we get there to our freedom  
And the job is clear to our minds  
Then our lands must be treated as fragile  
To be saved from a plague of all kinds  
With a mind to bring back the numbers  
To bring down the human increase  
For the real threat is the philosophy  
That started when our lands were siezed  
And the idea that is a continuum  
In growth and exploitation and greed.

Know the minds of indigenous people  
Learn of respect and the right way to share  
With all of our brothers and sisters  
The animals and plants in our sphere  
Go forward into old world culture  
With it's power to rid us of hate  
To end plastic polution and money  
And this poisonous vomiting state  
And the careless rape for white comforts  
And their political structure so cruel  
To a planet of cultural safety  
And boundaries of Ancestral rule.

Where every job is a good way of life  
And a sharing affair for us all  
With the measure in cultural achievement  
That gives back equal to you one and all  
To a place where ridicule has no meaning  
And children can learn about love  
About love that comes from our Mother  
And the Spirits that watch from above  
About her trail for indigenous peoples  
For us there is but one way to see  
Where the world will become the safe haven  
As it was when our Elders were free.

And the possums and porcupines were safer  
Because roads were but tracks for us all  
To a time when animals would feed us  
And we thanked them with genuine respect  
To a time when oil wasn't needed  
And the sea families could live without threat.  
From the tankers that spew out their oil  
To kill and maim all that is left  
To a place that has people of wisdom  
Who know that great numbers cause death  
And we take that responsible action  
To get back to a land without grief                      jim  
everett

jan 1993

## TOUCHING

Touch the trees  
Feel the rocks  
Moon and sun  
And milky stars  
Touch  
Ferns and flowers  
Stumps and ground  
Breathe the air  
Smell of senses  
The Shrouded Spirits  
All of all  
Touch  
Your Earth Mother.

Pura-lia  
22-10-94

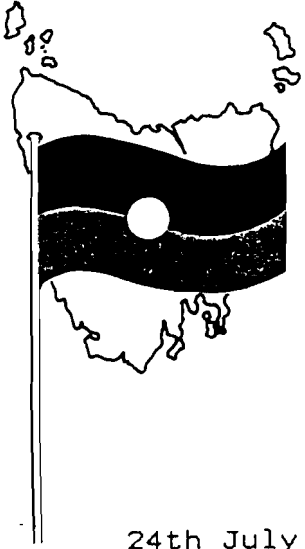
# TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE INC.

249 ELIZABETH STREET, HOBART

G.P.O. BOX 569 F, HOBART, TAS. PHONE (002) 34 8311

YOUR REF.

OUR REF.



24th July 1990

Ms. Helen Williams  
BOWPRESS  
208 Victoria Road  
DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047

Dear Ms. Williams

On behalf of the Aboriginal community in Tasmania I wish to advise that the legend stories written by Jim Everett, as follows, are reflections of our contemporary expressions:

A STORY OF BALLAWINNE (Red Orche)  
A STORY OF KUTI KINA  
A STORY OF THE FISH SPIRIT  
A STORY OF TONAH LEAH THE FIRE SPIRIT  
A STORY ABOUT THE MOON AND THE SNAKE

I am pleased to advise that the abovementioned stories are acceptable to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, recognising that they are creative expressions by Jim Everett that bring our history and present together as a reality in legends.

The stories are therefore the property of Mr. Jim Everett, albeit the community's stories, and are accordingly free of constraints for publication as negotiated by Mr. Everett. I am pleased to advise that the stories are endorsed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and supported for publication by Bowpress in two planned books, as agreed to by Mr. Everett.

For any further advice please contact me on (002) 34 8311

Yours faithfully,

DENISE GARDNER  
STATE SECRETARY