



# Elimatta

Aboriginal Support Group - Manly Warringah Pittwater

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023



# MAN MADE THE CITY BUT GOD MADE THE BUSH

**B**erowra's local indigenous people were highly mobile hunter-gathers. Different resources were available seasonally, necessitating movement or trade. There is evidence to say that the Aborigines were living in the Hawkesbury area for around 25,000 years before the Europeans arrived.

We are fortunate that in and around the Berowra district there is a very rich history of the first Australians. It has even been said by some local historians that the area around Berowra was the centre of Aboriginal spirituality for the Sydney region. It is widely understood that the Guringai tribe, for which the local Aboriginal clan, the Garigal, were part of, roamed lands that ran all the way between Lake Macquarie and the Sydney Basin, therefore Berowra being a central location is a reasonable assumption.

In Sydney, including around Broken Bay and Berowra Creek, a devastating impact from social dislocation, disease, conflict and dispossession came, almost immediately, with the colonization of the area. It is for this reason little first-hand information of the Sydney Aborigines has survived. The knowledge that is available has been filtered through the eyes of early colonists. It should also be remembered that those who did record details of the local Aboriginal culture also contrib-

uted to the destruction of that culture. Therefore errors, bias and silences are an inevitable part of the surviving records.

The Aboriginal people organized themselves into clans, of around 25 to 60 members. These people lived together as an extended family group.

Berowra Creek was thought to be a boundary of the two neighbouring tribes which are today identified as Dharug and Guringai. The local Guringai clan in the Berowra District were called the Garigal. It is more likely that there were no formal boundaries and that tribes and clans had "catchments" that often blended into other tribes and clan's catchments, rather than there being boundaries or borders as Europeans know them.

The tribal and clan ranges and the number of language groups in the Sydney area is a source of ongoing debate. For the purposes of this article I have used these names listed below throughout.

Berowra Creek was clearly a meeting place where trade was regularly conducted between clans and tribes. On Berowra Creek they would have fished, traded and socialized together.

The clear physical difference between male members of the two tribes was that the front right tooth was removed as part of the initiation process of boys to men



for the Guringai. This tradition was not practiced by the Dharug.

The Dharug tribe is more accurately described as the inland or forest tribe. With the Guringai being the coastal tribe between the northern side of Botany Bay all the way to Lake Macquarie.

It is thought that the two tribes had different dialects, as well as different diets, hunting techniques, cultures and rituals. Aboriginal artwork in carvings and cave paintings are found on either side of Berowra Creek although subject matter of the carvings is said to vary.

When these tribes put together shelters, these were also said to be significantly different with the forest tribe putting together a simple lean-to frame with a bark covering. The Guringai people had better construction with solid frame structures that had various bark coverings which provided a much more effective shelter especially during storms.

The Dharug relied heavily on hunting land animals to survive and

they employed very effective group hunting techniques. This included surrounding a group of animals whilst tightening their circle as a team and striking when the animals attempted to escape past them. They carried spears and used a lot of stone with their tools which were largely sourced from their lands in various locations including up towards the Nepean area.

The Garigal's clear liking for the Berowra district is not surprising as the area has always been naturally very beautiful with creeks on both sides of the central land mass all of which provided these ancient residents with an abundance of food. Put simply, Berowra was, and still is today, a well-stocked Aboriginal super market with a wonderful variety of food all year round. Natural shelters such as caves and overhangs were also very common throughout the Berowra area.

Garigal Aborigines lived mostly on seafood which were abundantly available especially during the warmer months.



# PATYEGARANG PLANNING PROPOSAL



'Lizard Rock' along Morgan Road in Belrose

**C**ouncil strongly opposes the planning proposal to rezone land along Morgan Road in Belrose to permit development for 450 dwellings for its destruction of natural bushland among a range of other concerns.

The Sydney North Planning Strategic Planning Panel and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment recently approved the public exhibition of the planning proposal.

The proposal and associated documentation is available to view on the Department's website.

The proposal would allow the destruction of around 45 football size fields of bushland to build 450 homes surplus to any housing targets. The new homes would be built in precious bushland and residents would face extreme bushfire risk.

Council has warned that the planning proposal should be reconsidered in view of significant planning, environmental and hazard issues, including:

**Bushfire risks** – Significant concerns exist regarding the bushfire hazard that applies to the site. Further, the proposal was developed on the premise of evacuation being provided by Morgan Road, including a new slip lane onto Forest Way and a new emergency access onto Oates Place but the availability and utility of these aspects have not been demonstrated in the proposal.

**Inconsistency with planning strategies** – The proposal does not demonstrate strategic merit and is inconsistent with key aspects of the Greater Sydney Region Plan, North District Plan, Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement – Towards 2040, and Northern Beaches Local Housing Strategy.

**Inconsistency with Conservation Zones reform** – The reform recommends applying a C3 Environmental Management Zone to most of the site due to its high environmental value and the hazards impacting the site

**Enormous loss of high biodiversity habitat** – With 44.7 hectares of bushland to be cleared (equivalent to the size of around 45 rugby fields) the proposal and new development will have significant environmental impact.

Council has repeatedly advised the Department that the planning proposal by Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) does not demonstrate strategic or site-specific merit and should be rejected.

In April 2022, following a Council Resolution, Council wrote to federal and state MPs and relevant ministers to negotiate an alternate solution and financial model so that the MLALC can benefit financially from its land and that the land is preserved as is – in perpetuity.

Whilst Council supports the intent of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and appreciates the importance of enabling Aboriginal people to achieve economic self-determination through developing land, this proposal

however lacks merit due to the significant planning, environmental and hazard issues.

It is this lack of merit that underpins Council's position. The consequences of the proposal are simply unacceptable and do not reflect the community's aspirations for this site.

This matter has been of significant community interest and will continue to be so the MLC saying that Patyegarang is a young Gadigal woman from the south side of Sydney Harbour.

**She is not! This is very well documented.**

After British colonisation Patyegarang taught William Dawes her language which is Cammeraigal/Dhurag from the north side of the Harbour.

She told Dawes her name 'grey kangaroo' from the language of that area!

A case of denial of cultural identity for the traditional custodians of the area.



# CALLS FOR BETTER EDUCATION AFTER SACRED ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SITES VANDALISED ON NSW CENTRAL COAST

**S**acred Aboriginal sites on the NSW Central Coast show signs of vandalism.

Ancient Aboriginal rock carvings on the New South Wales Central Coast have been vandalised in recent months, prompting calls for better education about the significance of such places across Australia.

Carvings at the Bulgandry Aboriginal Art Site near Kariong were damaged, along with a separate sacred women's site dating back thousands of years, with each telling a unique story about Aboriginal culture and spirituality.

Dundullimal Dubba-ga Wiradjuri woman Minmi Gugubarra said the destruction of the ancient rock carvings at the women's site was heart-breaking.

"The formations and the features of [Dinawan's] face, which have been here since those women who carved this thousands and thousands of years ago, have now been decapitated," she said.

"I literally cried when I came here ... I dropped to my knees, and I cried."

Despite it not being her "blood country," the 26-year-old felt a strong connection to the Central Coast and the sacred places because she was born there.

"It's not just a drawing on the ground," Ms Gugubarra said.

"These are our stories. This is our lifeblood."

## **Motorcycle tracks, fires, scratch marks**

The ABC was invited to visit the sacred women's site, located in a state forest, to see the vandalism.

People were not permitted to take photos or videos at the site but there were clear signs of damage.

Fire remnants littered the ancient rock face and several engravings had been scratched over, including the sacred carving of the emu, Dinawan.

Damage was also evident at the Bulgandry site, which could be photographed, with motorcycle tracks and scratch marks over the rock carvings.

That site is within the Brisbane Water National Park.

Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, it is an offence to "harm or desecrate" an Aboriginal object or place.

The maximum penalty for individuals found guilty of damaging an Aboriginal place is a \$550,000 fine or imprisonment for two years, or both.

## **'Older than the pyramids of Egypt'**

Gomilaroi, Mandandanji and Awaba man Kevin "Gavi" Duncan said the damage revealed a lack of respect within the community.

"Imagine walking into an art gallery and rearranging the Mona Lisa or defacing the engravings on the pyramids of Egypt," he said.

"Some of these sites are older than the pyramids of Egypt [and] they're much older than Stonehenge."

"I think in the Australian culture we don't regard or recognise these properly, which we should."

University of Sydney historian Tristen Jones said vandalism was happening at important cultural sites right across Australia.

Two men were recently convicted and fined \$8,600 each in an Alice Springs local court for vandalising sacred Uluru cave art.

Dr Jones said the ongoing instances of vandalism showed more education was needed.



Minmi Gugubarra shows disrupted ancient rock carvings at Bulgandry Aboriginal Art Site.

"Vandalism of places like that really represents an under-educated general Australian public on the significance of these places to Aboriginal communities," she said.

"But [also] to the broader bigger story of the significance of that story to Australian and global history."

Dr Jones said it was a complex issue that needed more on-the-ground consultation.

"[It] requires a lot of people thinking through resolutions and [sitting] down with Aboriginal people and doing a lot of talking and, more importantly, listening," she said.

"Then resourcing cultural heritage managers to be able to action protection for those cultural sites."

Mr Duncan said the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Forestry Corporation of NSW had important roles to play in educating visiting tourists and preserving the sites.

Both the Forestry Corporation and NPWS did not answer specific questions about whether anybody had been held to account for the recent vandalism.

A Forestry Corporation spokesperson said it

worked "with local Aboriginal communities to manage a large number of cultural sites within state forests".

"We [also] have a female cultural heritage supervisor based locally who works with the community to follow up on any concerns regarding protection of the site," the spokesperson said.

An NPWS spokesperson said it worked with local Aboriginal groups to manage and protect cultural sites.

They said it had also highlighted engravings under supervision of traditional owners and installed signage to explain that "the site is sacred to Aboriginal people and irreplaceable".

"[National Parks] is always looking for ways to improve working with the Aboriginal community to better educate people as to the significance of the site as well as impacts on the engravings," the spokesperson said.

"Anyone with information about vandalism at Bulgandry, please contact the local NPWS office."

**KEIRA PROUST**

**ABC CENTRAL COAST**



# WELCOME TO COUNTRY IS NOT A NEW THING!

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by a local Aboriginal person of significance (usually an Elder) to acknowledge and give consent to events taking place on their traditional lands. It is a sign of respect and protocol which dates to traditional times prior to colonisation.

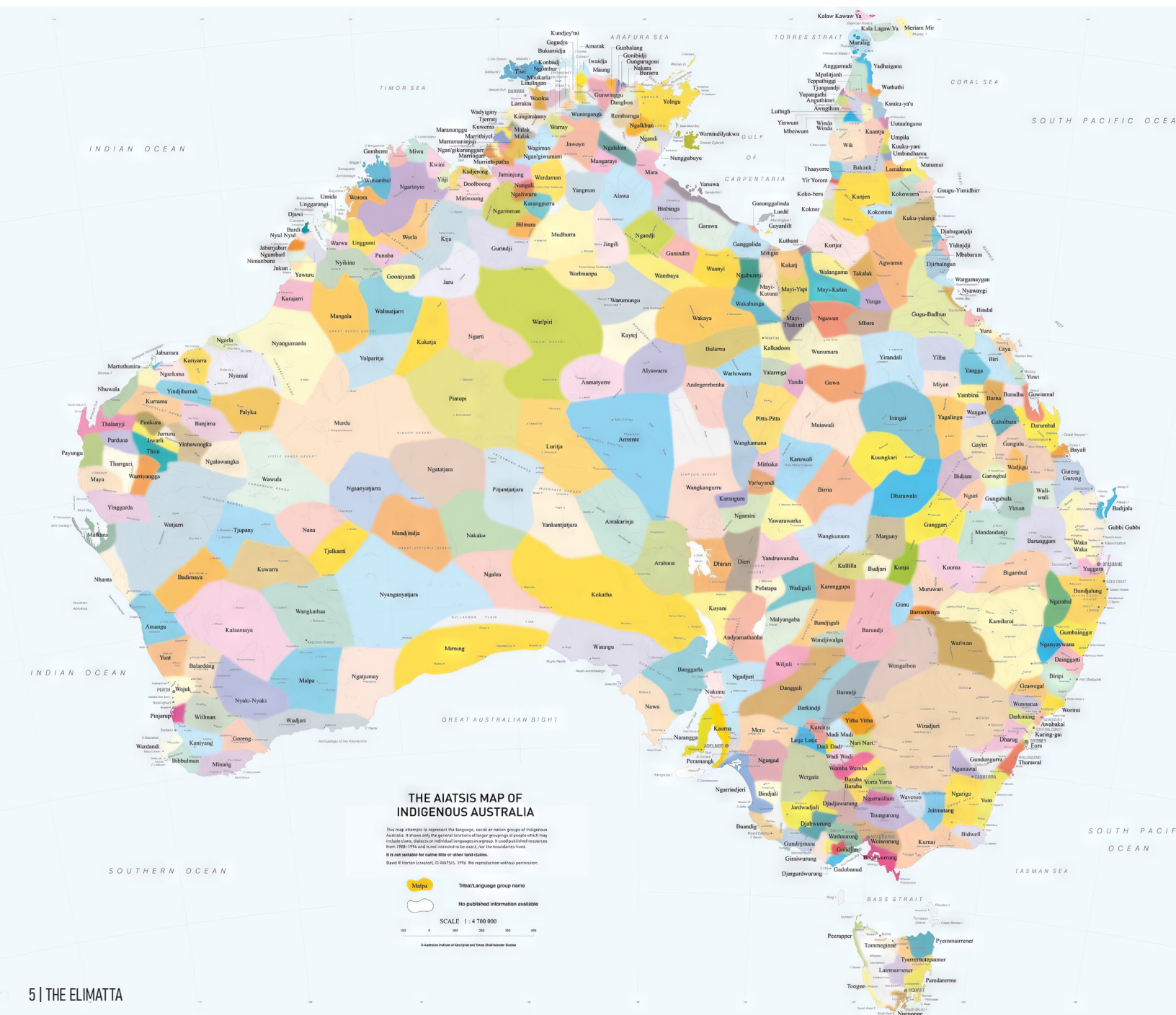
This is a tradition that has been practiced in Aboriginal culture for thousands of years. Australia is made up of many different tribes with different land areas. In the old days, tribes that wanted to pass through another tribe's country needed permission to do so and had to be welcomed through.

Today we need passports and permission to enter another country or have safe passage through. It showed respect to the country you were passing through recognising the sacred places.

Today we welcome people into our country or what we now call our home, we ask for respect.

Just like Aboriginal people ask you to respect the home of their ancestors.

Contact [asgmwp@gmail.com](mailto:asgmwp@gmail.com) if you need more information.





# MACKELLAR FOR YES CAMPAIGN MEETING

MONA VALE MEMORIAL HALL SUNDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2023



Thank you, it is a great privilege to be with you for this moment in time.

I'd like to pay my deepest respects to Uncle Neil Evers, of the Garigal Guringai peoples and thank you for welcoming us. May we acknowledge the original Custodians of this beautiful land where we meet, the oceans harbour, water ways, the life blood of this Country that runs through all sentience.

We acknowledge the impact of Colonisation on your family and indeed all Indigenous people. It is this continuing legacy that we meet here today to take part in the healing of.

To the Ancestors who are here with us, where Past, Present and Future exist simultaneously and to the Elders, our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters here and all future emerging leaders -may we become worthy ancestors.

This room is filled with hearts, hearts that have listened, opened and come together to co-create actualised spaces of Hope and Transformation. It is a great honour to be invited to share my personal reflection and then hold space for the rising collective consciousness, so palpable in this room.

May we begin by sharing deep gratitude to YOU as the Mackellar

Together Yes Volunteers on behalf of my Indigenous and non-Indigenous family and the volunteer organisations The Aboriginal Support Group - Manly Warringah Pittwater, The Women's Reconciliation Network and Voices from the Heart Alliance. We could not have achieved what we have without each and every one of you.

Personally, the result of the referendum came as a great shock. I was with many of you in North Narrabeen Surf Lifesaving Club that night.

My grief, as for so many of you, was visceral and deep. The sense of bewilderment, rejection, shame, anger and guilt palpable, for such a lost opportunity.

However, as I held this space within my being, these incongruent energies transmuted into an even stronger determination to answer the call in The Uluru Statement from the Heart, and to continue to be driven by a guttural knowing that we have been given a powerful existential invitation, which I accept as the healing for us all. Indigenous cultural ontologies are the seminal truth of sustainable and regenerative ways, it is critical we honour this culture that has these ancient wisdoms at its

core.

Indigenous First Nations culture has always fostered the continuing opportunity for balance and vital thriving life, through a way of relating known as Custodianship- relationships of care.

We have so much to learn from this way of Being.

The opportunity to make us see differently and offer vastly neglected truths into our contemporary culture, whilst simultaneously connecting us to an existence, a history and a future, so much bigger than ourselves is **powerful**.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart remains a "live invitation" and will remain so until ALL Australian and Torres Strait Islanders are living equitably.

This unprecedented call to action made on the 26th May 2017 to awaken and activate the people of Australia, was co-authored by my cousin proud Minjerribah Quandamooka man Dean Parkin and many other incredible friends and contemporary community leaders whom I have had the deep privilege of walking next to over the last decade.

We have not yet adequately responded. Substantive, meaningful systems change is critical to enable the voice of ALL Indigenous Australians to be heard as not only experts in their own lives but wisdom holders, of deep time knowledge, for life.

This is the Truth that resonates through our cells and will no longer be suppressed.

There has never been more awareness of the need for the people of Australia to listen and respond from our hearts to the Statement and through continued action and co-create a healthy, vibrant nation for us all to thrive within. The time for shared power and listening to the wisdom of First Nations people is now.

Miriam Rose Ungarner of the Ngangikurungkurr people profoundly describes this essential Deep Listening as quiet, still awareness through Dadirri and speaks of the need for us to tap into this space that is within us. From this space of co-envisioning, we can address the issues that face specific, environmental, and collective wellbeing.

The overwhelming successful majority witnessed in the 1967 Referendum symbolized a unified fight for equality. There is increasing col-



lective awareness that the health of humanity and future generations undeniably rests here.

The majority of Australians are intent on improving relations. The gap in life quality, wellbeing and opportunity metrics make it clear there is an urgent need to act on the requests made. Beyond the statistical figures lives the warmth of voices embedded in lived experience -making it extremely apparent why the continued action towards formalising Voice, Treaty and Truth will be enriching for all Australians.

The context for this work of activism is personal, spiritual, social, financial, educational and reaches multiple trans-contextual realms across the entire fabric of our culture.

A few years ago, Thomas Mayo and I co-authored a book proposal, the concept was an RSVP to the invitation he provided in his epic book *Finding the Heart of the Nation* and I share a small excerpt with you now.

We have been taught and conditioned to believe in the illusion of separation, when actually everything is intrinsically connected.

We yearn for a deeper connection of belonging to sentient Country.

There is something to be said for a mother's innate nurturing that

sustains all life.

My daughter turned blue and stopped breathing the day she was born (although now well). However at the formal 6 week checkup I sobbed in tears "she's not thriving". There is nothing more heart-breaking for a mother as the wrenching moment when the Doctor turned to me and declared;

"She has a hole in her heart, it's not one hole between her chambers, it's like gauze: there are many holes."

I share this with you because it is my story, but I believe much more than that, it is OUR story.

As Australians we have many holes in our relationship with the Heart of the Nation, the people and land.

When we come to live with embodied love as collective care, honouring the sacred and regenerative wisdom of deep relational values with the First People of this country we will heal together.

Today you are bringing this consciousness to the fore through your presence creating a culture of inclusion that moves beyond the confines of the limited, siloed and detached, colonised mind.

Your involvement as a volunteer through active citizenship is felt and appreciated in all the ways, large and

small, through badge making, snap actions, the Voice Choir, the street listening and kitchen table conversations. All ways of activating mutual and reciprocal, respectful relationship within the context of restorative justice for both people and Country. Please continue with this work.

Together, through gatherings like this, we find the sacred spaces to reconnect to the essential depths of meaningful relationship, to Country and each other. Let's be sure to continue to cultivate this with profound personal responsibility.

These moments are crucial for our time when we meet to more deeply honour and participate in Custodianship. This notion of care is inextricably tied to existence throughout Indigenous Culture. The land, ocean and waterway and the interconnectedness with all sentient life.

Our collective future relies on the acknowledgement of this truth and its lived expression.

The week of silence, requested by Indigenous Australians was a time for deep and quiet reflection. With peaceful compassion for all perspectives. We are now being called forward, to renew our commitment and listen more deeply and continue to honour the call from our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters and co-create the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible.

I thank you for your presence here and action beyond your awareness.

Let's continue to hear the gracious invitation as given to the people of Australia, to walk together for better outcomes and achieve positive systemic change.

To conclude with a quote from The Uluru Statement from the Heart:

"Sovereignty is spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors.

This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise?

That people possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappeared from world history in merely the last two hundred years.

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood."

Thank you.

**Catherine Donnelley**



# TAKING CONTROL OF OUR FUTURE - HEALING THROUGH TRUTH TELLING

**H**ow did our nation miss the opportunity to answer Yes to a very modest request?

The Uluru Statement invited all Australians to walk with the First Nations people in a movement for a better future together.

For all those that could not make it to the ASG community meeting on Monday 28th August for The Discussion on the Voice Referendum:

What a night!

Standing room only. The group from 23 YES group were there to help with lots of information, badges, etc.

The speakers were the best. Their knowledge held the audience who wanted more and more information.

Tim Rowse opening remarks set the scene for the night. Please read his transcript below.

I want to tell you about my main reason for voting Yes. My thoughts about this start with the idea 'recognition'.

To recognise someone, you need to know something about how those who you wish to recognise see themselves.

There is no point offering recognition unless you know what form of recog-

nition will satisfy the desire to be recognised.

If we don't know how Indigenous Australians wish to be recognised, then our offer to recognise them - however well-intentioned - risks failure.

Those doing the recognising - in this case non-Indigenous Australians - have to ask Indigenous Australians what form they want recognition to take.

Indigenous Australians have told us what form of recognition they want. They have told us that they want the Australian constitution to be amended so that it provides for the existence of an Indigenous advisory body - a Voice to the Executive and the Parliament.

If we are genuine in our desire to recognise Indigenous Australians in the constitution, we cannot ignore their clear statement of the form of recognition that they desire.

After several years of nation-wide debate about possible terms of recognition, Indigenous Australians issued the Uluru Statement from the Heart in May 2017. It made clear that a constitutionally entrenched Voice is the form of recognition that they de-

sire.

There are people on the No side who claim that they are in favour of recognising Indigenous Australians in Australia's constitution. Their position is absurd and illogical. They fail to understand that to deny Indigenous Australians the recognition that they say they want is to fail to recognise them.

People on the No side would be more consistent, more honest, if they admitted that by objecting to putting the Voice in the constitution they are refusing to recognise. It is an absurdity for the No campaign to say: "We want to recognise you in the Australian constitution, but we insist on telling you what form that recognition will take. We insist on recognising you in our terms, and we refuse your terms." That is not recognition; that is paternalism.

How can we be sure that we know that Indigenous Australians want the Voice as the form of recognition? The process of consultation that led to the issuing of the Uluru Statement from the Heart was unprecedented. Never before have so many Indigenous Australians assembled, in a series of regional meet-

ings over many months, to debate the options for constitutional recognition.

The regional dialogues and the national assembly that climaxed those dialogues were the work of democracy. The work of democracy is difficult. When Indigenous Australians succeed in it, we had better take seriously the statement of Indigenous wishes that issues from it. The Uluru Statement from the Heart should command our respect and admiration. To tell the authors of that statement that they are asking for the wrong thing is to deny recognition.

Tim's commentaries on the referendum debate are available on the internet, in 'Inside Story' - free of charge.

The Meeting was filmed by John Illingsworth and is available on **asgmwp.net** so you can see the outstanding comments from our guest Julian Lessor, MP and insightful knowledge from Jeff McMullen, AM. Tim Rowse.

Again, thank you for your continued support from the ASGMWP Northern Beaches Reconciliation Community.





# RIDE WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE



Dear Supporters and Friends, Warami or All-a (Hello)

## JUST A REMINDER - TELL YOUR FRIENDS

### Your invitation to the 2024 Bike Ride with Aboriginal People on 26th January 2024

This is not just for Bike Riders, so come along and support Aboriginal people by being involved in the ceremony at Kay-me-my Country (Manly) or Garigal Country (Church Point.)

Be at the start of the 26.8k ride on 26th January 2024, 7.00 am at the Manly Memorial, part way between the wharf and the Manly Art Gallery where you will enjoy the beautiful sounds of the didgeridoo to send you on your way.

We pick up riders at Dee Why, Narrabeen or Mona Vale. Or join us about 10.30 am in Garigal Country at Church Point Wharf. There will be with a Welcome to Country. didgeridoo, Play the clap sticks and a sing along.

## WE ALL COME TOGETHER AS ONE, THE WAY IT SHOULD BE!

This ride is a gesture to acknowledge that not all Australians see Australia Day in the same way and to stand with Aboriginal people's and aim for unity for all Australians.

Colin Hutton and Uncle Neil Evers. 0404 353 253

PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A FRIENDLY RIDE AND ALL RIDERS EXCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY

Go to [facebook.com/ridewithaboriginalpeoples](https://facebook.com/ridewithaboriginalpeoples) for more information







# VALE ALAN FORD

28/08/1940 – 04/11/2023



Alan was a valued supporter of the ASG for just on 40 years

A friend with his warm and loving attitude

He will be sadly missed by all RIP our friend

## HELP US SAVE DALWOOD AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES....

### Friends of the Dalwood Spilstead Service

It is with a heavy heart that we (The Parents in Action Group and Indigenous Advisory Group for Dalwood) share the news that as part of the NSW government DCJ's new recommissioning process (which commenced 2 years ago), the Benevolent Society, NSW Health and our beloved Dalwood, are parting ways after many years of partnership.

This is set to take place on 30th June 2024. With no new referrals coming in from DCJ and no more funding coming from the Benevolent Society through the Brighter Futures Program, Dalwood is now turning away vulnerable children and those most in need of family support services.

Dalwood has the reputation of accepting all referrals no matter how complex or challenging. More than ever, we need to raise awareness around Dalwood, the internationally recognised Spilstead Model and holistic services they offer. The unique services and programs results in no children attending Dalwood being removed from their family or entering out of home care, 50% reduction in those diagnosed with developmental delay and a completion rate of 83% compared to 33% in other services. This is a service that has strong ties to the community, provides support and ongoing care and assistance for many families. The NSW government has a base line for the services that should be provided by these NGOs, and Dalwood offers many services above and beyond the baseline. Yet funding is being cut, without reason or explanation.

#### **Please pass this information on.**

Get the word out there and send messages supporting Dalwood to your local council member, the Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Health and The Benevolent Society. One of the people you share this with will have had some dealings with Dalwood or perhaps even similar services, and we need to pass this message on to everyone.

If you haven't heard of Dalwood Spilstead Service, please go and check the website **[DalwoodSpilstead.com](http://DalwoodSpilstead.com)**







## A NEW APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING ABORIGINAL FOODWAYS

A University of Queensland-led research team says the key to a more sustainable food future may be a better understanding of ancient Indigenous food production systems.

Their ARC Discovery project "Testing the Dark Emu hypothesis" combines bioarchaeology, archaeobotany, palynology, ethnobotany and plant genetics in partnership with Indigenous communities to challenge existing perspectives. The research is published in *Archaeology of Food and Foodways*.

UQ bioarchaeologist Associate Professor Michael Westaway said transdisciplinary research was needed to confirm whether Aboriginal communities were farmers rather than foragers, with evidence of early aquaculture and possibly cultivation.

"We're working closely with Indigenous communities, because Aboriginal

people are increasingly keen to gain insights into how their people cared for Country and developed these types of sustainable food production systems," Dr. Westaway said.

"We've found extensive evidence the largest forager quarries in the world were in western Queensland, where the Mithaka people extracted stone slabs to make grinding stones for processing seeds." We've also excavated the fireplaces of gnyahs, traditional Aboriginal huts, and found remnants of burned carbonized seeds, which archaeobotanists are now examining to identify the species."

Dr. Westaway said pollen cores taken from ancient lake beds also allowed the team to reconstruct how the surrounding vegetation had changed over time.

"The ethnohistory shows us that Aboriginal people would prepare for a big flood by burning the surrounding riverine plains, to increase the productivity of the landscape," he said. "By identifying carbon peaks in the cores from the lake beds, we can learn about the timing of the burnings."

"We believe we're seeing records that indicate domestication of landscapes, which is an exciting element."

The research team has also looked at plant genetics, including drought resistance.

UQ Professor of Innovation in Agriculture Robert Henry said a methodical, transdisciplinary approach was necessary to reveal the complete story of ancient Indigenous food production.

"I'm looking at the con-

temporary flora and how the plants there now might have been changed by humans over time," Professor Henry said. "These can include changes in seed size or whether the plant would have been edible and trying to link that with the archaeological findings."

"This is significant from an agricultural point of view, as there may have been practices in the past that are useful to know about for the future. Climate change means we will have to adapt agriculture to new climates, as they did in the past."

Dr. Westaway said the research had the potential to open new ways of thinking about using native flora in a more sustainable way, that would support new industry.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND



# Don't be sad! Stay Positive!

It doesn't matter if you said Yes or No

People know more about Aboriginal Australia than they did before the referendum.

If you really want good for the Aboriginal people let's do it together.

It's not over, all that energy you have is needed within the Aboriginal community.

Re-gather our strength and resolve, and when we determine a new direction for justice and our rights, let

us once again unite. Let us convene in due course to carefully consider our path forward together as one.

Check Reconciliation NSW for your closest community. [ReconciliationNSW.org.au](http://ReconciliationNSW.org.au) or [ASGMWP.net](http://ASGMWP.net)

## GurNgai Words to learn:

**Beautiful view** = Taronga

**Big lagoon** = woy woy

**Calm Water** = nungha

**Clouds** = eudra, garagura, ura, yoora

**Cold** = tuggera (tagarr)

**Cold Wind** = tuggera-nallamine

**Creek** = turiban

**Day** = burrea (buRAya), gamarruna

**Day after tomorrow** = bool warikae, bool warakae

**Dark** = kooran

**Dark Night** = koora

**Dawn** = Girraween-gorokan, gorogan

**Daylight** = burreung, buneeong (bUn-ee-ong)

**Direction of Rising Sun** = kincumber

**Drinking place** = Ettalong

**Dry** = boorurra

**Sky** = burra

**This Day** = bung-eye

**Next Community Meeting March 11 th , 2024, More information in next newsletter**

If you have any suggestions for speakers and topics for future meetings or if you would like to present at the meetings, please get in touch [the.elimatta@gmail.com](mailto:the.elimatta@gmail.com)

ASGMWP THANKS DEE WHY RSL AND NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT

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**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!**

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Editor: Neil Evers  
Graphic Design: Nathan John