

## MAKARRATA

*... the truth will make you free*

John 8:32

### 11 JULY CONCLUDES NAIDOC WEEK 2021

Beginning in 1975, the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Committee (NAIDOC) has invited everyone to embrace their cultural knowledge and understanding of Country as part of Australia's national heritage. NAIDOC week has gradually grown as a widely known celebration at community, state and national level.

At the conclusion of this year's NAIDOC Week, there still remains Australia's longest standing and unresolved project for justice and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation for everyone to walk in step with First Australians to create a better future.

In May 2017, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates came together at the First Nations National Constitutional Convention near Uluru and presented the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The Statement calls for a First Nations Voice to Parliament, enshrined in the constitution, and a process for agreement making (Treaty) and truth-telling.

It was the culmination of 13 deliberative Regional Dialogues across Australia with First Nations communities. The Statement seeks to establish a

relationship between Australia's First Nations peoples and the Australian nation based on truth, justice and self-determination.

### WINNER OF THE SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE

Four years after the presentation of *The Statement from the Heart* to the Australian people, the statement was awarded the 2021 Sydney Peace Prize. The judging panel said the Uluru statement was a "powerful and historic offering of peace" that was crucial to the "healing within our nation", but had not yet been acted upon.

### SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE CITATION

For bringing together Australia's First Nations Peoples around a clear and comprehensive agenda; for healing and peace within our Nation and delivering self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, that enables Australia to move into the future united and confident.

Go to <https://fromtheheart.com.au/> for detailed information and to add your support for the statement.

### THE ULURU STATEMENT IN 62 LANGUAGES

Go to <https://ulurustatement.org/translations>

### PROPHETIC DISCIPLESHIP

As followers of Jesus we are privileged to be part of a great prophetic movement inspired and led, day by day, by the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus had a divinely inspired dream of a new Earth (*cf Is 65:17-25*). He invites us to share with him the task of channelling God's life-giving power and energy into dry bones (Ex 37). ...calling us to take on [his] life and mission ...

Donal Dorr *A Creed for Today* 162

The Gospel for today, the 15th Sunday in Year B, provides the image of Jesus' first disciples having responded to his call, being sent out to continue his prophetic mission in his name. Today's 'demons' we are called to challenge might well include prejudice, racism and the long standing injustices experienced by Australia's First Nations people.

### MAKARRATA - TRUTH - TELLING

Truth-telling about Australia's past is an incredibly important process for understanding who we are now and how we came to be as a nation. Truth-telling can be confronting, but the process can be powerful: grief can make way for healing, and healing unites peoples who were once divided. It is time we stop pretending that meaningful change can happen in a system that is grounded in denial.

Laura McBride, First Nations Director & Curator of *Unsettled* at the Australian Museum

In Aboriginal culture, healing after a conflict begins with a process of truth-telling. The Yolngu Matha term for this is Makarrata, a peace-making process. In Aboriginal ways of being, recognition of wrongs of the past encourages greater understanding on both sides of the conflict. From this, the development of a resolution and the peaceful coming together of those involved.

Makarrata is about a process that ultimately allows the restoration of wellbeing. This is the process of truth-telling proposed for the kind of healing that will address the deep wounds created by unresolved colonial history. It is a wound of the Australian nation as a whole.

As Aboriginal historian, Victoria Grieve-Williams from RMIT University says, the process of Makarrata needs to be led by Aboriginal cultural leadership, by those who understand the true spirit of this process. It is important that the whole difficult history be revealed, that every Aboriginal person has the chance to speak to a Makarrata commissioner, whether in public or in private. Be heard and with permission, be recorded for later reference.

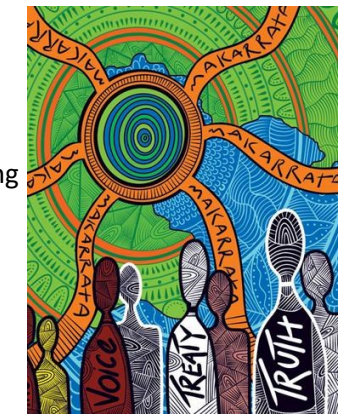
"As an Aboriginal historian, the prospect of using Makarrata to right historical wrongs is exciting - a once in the lifetime of a nation opportunity that would potentially lead to greater wellbeing, hope and most importantly - true healing." Victoria Grieve-Williams

### SACRED COUNTRY

The following extract is from the Introduction of historian Grace Karskens' wonderful book *People of the River*. The river is the Hawkesbury which runs through large parts of the Broken Bay diocese.

It has been scientifically demonstrated that Aboriginal people had lived in this area for 50,000 years. Their history, culture and spirituality were inseparable from this river Country. The history of the area includes violence, theft of Aboriginal children and ongoing annexation of the river lands. Despite this history, the river's Aboriginal people still live on river Country today.

*Dyarubbin, the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, has the deepest history of all, running vast and wild when Australia was still part of the supercontinent Gondwana more than 90 million years ago. Today, the river flows through the heart of a vast arc of sandstone country encircling Sydney and the Cumberland Plain on the east coast of Australia. Springing from a web of small creeks near the town of Robertson high in the Southern Highlands, Dyarubbin pours down through deep, stony gorges to the base of the Blue Mountains around Mulgoa, rushing deafeningly over weirs and cobbled rapids and*



*then meandering broadly through the flat, green floodplains. Further north around Dorumbolooa, Sackville, the river does something remarkable: it flows back into the ranges, the serpentine reaches twisting through a vast sandstone labyrinth. At Woolloomoorang, Wisemans Ferry, the river makes an immense hairpin turn and heads east towards the ocean. Here, on calm winter mornings the water lies mirror-flat beneath rising mists in box-sided valleys, the mountain suspended upside-down and stock still in the water. Then Dyarubbin deepens and enters its magnificent but treacherous harbour, Broken Bay, and flows out to the Tasman Sea.*

### BRINGING THEM HOME REPORT

This was the report of the National Inquiry into the stolen Aboriginal children in 1997. For individuals, their removal as children and the abuse they experienced, permanently scarred their lives. The harm continues in later generations, affecting their children and grandchildren.

The sense of grief and loss within Aboriginal families is made all the more vivid with reading Grace Karskens' *People of the River* with its careful and accurate documentation of the sacredness of this river Country.

They changed our names, they changed our religion, they changed our date of birth, they did all that. That's why today, a lot of them don't know who they are, where they're from ...

*Bringing Them Home*, Evidence 450