

The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Environment and Planning  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne  
Vic. 3002

Dr David Barton



27/8/2020

Ref: DBA200827

### **Submission to the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria**

#### ***Dedication:***

*This submission is dedicated to the memory of the life and work of Rita Bentley OAM, a tireless worker and advocate for the rights of all bush users, who battled cancer for 19 years and passed away in July 2020. Her never failing energy, work and achievements will long be remembered and are an inspiration to us all.*

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find as follows my submission to the Inquiry. Please note that this submission is not confidential and I am prepared to appear and make an oral presentation and answer questions at the Inquiry's discretion if required.

I believe it is time for some well overdue 'plain speaking' and 'truth telling' regarding what is really going on in the bush rather than the sham ideologically-based largely irrational propaganda we have now been subjected to and enduring for many decades. Indeed, the Victorian populace has been enduring dozens of fake so-called 'scientific' inquiries and studies, particularly from the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) with already pre-determined outcomes, most usually the creation of more parks, the exclusion of many recreational interest groups and the shutting down of many traditional industries, putting many people out of work. This has now been going on for over twenty years! It is time for all of this to stop! How can any civilised society make any real progress or operate successfully under such fraudulent conditions?

To begin with, I am very concerned from the outset about the apparent loaded agenda of this Inquiry, especially in relation to three matters:

1. The assumption that the ecosystem is in fact in decline.
2. The unwarranted emphasis upon 'First Peoples'.
3. The unwarranted emphasis upon 'climate change'.

There appears to be an assumption that there is an alleged overall and undefined 'decline' of ecosystems in Victoria, yet this has not been established. Where some decline has been noted, the real reasons for it seem to have been ignored or misattributed. In addition, there are so many other far more important, pertinent and concerning issues related to ecosystems in Victoria, so why the narrow and seemingly ideologically based Terms of Reference of this Inquiry? The alleged 'decline' of the last four decades cannot be attributed to either the lack of involvement in it by Aboriginal people, or the apparent advent of anthropomorphic 'climate change'.

I do not believe the ecosystem of Victoria to be in 'decline' at all, which would be to say it is on a gradual movement or slippery slope towards terminal eradication and extinction. This is not the case. Rather, the ecosystems of Victoria are 'damaged', and

in places very badly damaged. Nevertheless, ecosystems are resilient and can recover given good and proper management, which they currently show no signs of receiving. If our ecosystem does not soon receive proper care and management, then it will indeed fall into decline.

The second and third matters are dealt with in more detail below. In the main I will be addressing the issues of public land use, our forests, and in particular the forests of the 'High Country' of the Great Dividing Range, as that is where I have spent most of my time and where much of my experience and expertise lies.

**About Me:**

I am 64 years old and have spent much of my life living and working in the bush including brief stints in forestry and underground gold mining. During the late 1980's and mid-1990's I worked in the Victorian High Country around Aberfeldy and Woods Point and owned a property at Matlock for 25 years up until 2015. I also spent six years working in Central Australia on programs with and for Aboriginal people, and last year completed a two-month research project on the current state of affairs with Aboriginal people in the Centre. I am well versed in Aboriginal issues in both the Northern Territory and in Victoria, having followed and worked in these areas for almost 50 years.

After years in social work and community development, in the mid-1990's I started work as a contract lobbyist and activist at the Commonwealth and State level, principally regarding environmental management issues. In the early 2000's I was a foundation member of the original Bush Users Group (BUG), the Australian Environment Foundation (AEF) and of Game Conservation (GameCon), a group promoting hunting on public land. Years later I helped to re-establish the Public Land Access Council (PLAC) and have been involved in the new Bush Users Group United (BUGU) and the fight against the creation of a Great Forest National Park. Many of these ventures have come to nothing in the face of Green politicians, bureaucrats and well-funded Green lobby groups who have sought to advance the Green agenda to the detriment of both the bush and bush users.

In 2009 I lost my home, business, possessions and many friends in the Black Saturday fires which destroyed Marysville, and was intrinsically involved in the town's recovery and rebuilding, completing a PhD on the subject in 2017. Over many years I have attained a number of Certificates and a Diploma of Youth Work, a Diploma of Community Development, a Bachelor of Counselling, a Master's in Sociology and a PhD in Disaster Recovery. I am currently a self-employed consultant. During the last 40 years I have amassed a great deal of experience and knowledge about the management of the bush, and have watched its steady deterioration in management terms over that time. It is time for that neglect to stop.

**Background:**

There are two main issues to be addressed in relation to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, being as follows:

**1) 'First Peoples'**

In the present time it would seem to be completely politically incorrect and perhaps even seen as 'racist' to ask the question 'who is a real Aborigine?' This is a question particularly pertinent to Victoria at the moment. In recent years the Aboriginal population of Victoria has risen sharply so it is a valid question to ask who these

people are, given the enormous multi-million dollar benefits and access they are now receiving. In the space of the two years 2018-2019 the 3,000 Taungurung people alone have received in excess of \$59.5 million dollars – and for what? Who has received this money, on what basis and what are they doing with it?

In our egalitarian society, no-one particularly cares what various people identify as, if it wasn't for the fact that there are now so many benefits, especially financial ones, attached to being an 'Aborigine'. Victorians are entitled to an explanation as to how, why and where taxpayer funds are being spent in this manner.

Our current Victorian ecosystem decline, damage or degradation is not caused because of any lack of management by Aboriginal people or because of 'climate change'. The growing problems in the Victorian landscape, especially the bush, have been very evident for the last four decades, well before the trendy advent of Aboriginal traditional primacy or the grand theory of climate change.

Funding is critical, yet along with the \$59.5 million given to the Taungurung, in addition to freehold title to tracts of land and buildings, a further \$13.1 million has been given in DEWLP grants to Aboriginal organisations in the same period, a total of \$72.1 million dollars, not to mention all the bureaucratic public servant jobs associated with it all. The new 'Aboriginal industry' is costing Victorians hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, all money that is now not available for actual real work in managing and preserving ecosystems.

Indeed, the practice now of diverting funds away from proper care and management of the environment to Aboriginal organisations for staffing and administrative positions to consolidate their position is hardly going to do anything to stem ecosystem damage or promote its repair. Imagine what \$72.1 million dollars could do by way of direct environmental repair if it was spent specifically on restorative work and regenerative programs.

What is of greatest concern is that the citizens of Victoria seem to be mostly kept in the dark about what is happening, have little or no opportunity to comment on it and have no say at all in the outcomes, which will dramatically affect all of our use of Victorian land and bush. Why are we not told, asked our opinion, or allowed to have a say in this discussion?

This matter is further addressed in great detail in Appendix A and should serve as a wake-up call regarding the direction the Victorian Government is heading with these matters.

## 2) 'Climate Change'

Despite claims by many, the 'science' about climate change is definitely not 'settled'. Claims of radical changes upon the earth have failed to materialise, and many weather occurrences are well within the scope of normal ranges. Overall, the temperatures have not in fact risen, and neither have the seas. There are many falsehoods being spread about these matters and it is probably the most hotly contested and widely debunked theory on the planet. The current effects of the Covid-19 pandemic is proof of what happens when there is a real world-wide crisis, not a pretend one.

Climate Change has been blamed for the terrible 2019-2020 'Black Summer' fires, however, any claimed direct effects from 'climate change' are yet to be seen, and the recent fires have many other contributing factors than just 'climate change', most of

which have been conveniently ignored. Indeed, respected forest management and fire experts Gary Morgan and Ewan Waller recently told the Federal government’s *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (Bushfire)* that “if each of the states and territories had put into action effective land management plans, then Australia wouldn’t have had the fires that it has experienced” and “If people in each of the states and territories were able to enact the policy statement and put that into their land management plans, then we wouldn’t have the fires that we currently have now”.<sup>1</sup> This is clear evidence (amongst much more) that mismanagement of our forests and other assets (like power lines) is responsible for the fires we have seen over the last decade, not climate change.

This mismanagement, grossly absurd rules regarding local vegetation management, all combined with the ever expanding peri-urban interface and more people living in the bush has far more to do with wildfires than ‘climate change’ ever will. In addition, the part that vested interest plays in the ‘climate change’ debate also cannot be underestimated, and indeed, when discussing the alleged decline in ecosystems, ideological vested interest, especially from the idiotic Greens, runs rampant.

Prophecies of the Australian bush and landscape being catastrophically destroyed because of anthropomorphic climate change remain fanciful and without evidence. It is therefore difficult to take this matter seriously in relation to any ecosystem decline that may have occurred over the last four decades.

Lastly, this Inquiry should not be used as a Trojan Horse vehicle to further destroy the timber industry, to further remove the rights of genuine bush users, to further advance the ‘rights’, power, control and finances of the new Aboriginal industry, or to further advance the power, control and finances of the new ‘climate change’ industry either.

#### **Addressing the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference:**

- (a) The extent of the decline of Victoria’s biodiversity and the likely impact on people, particularly First Peoples, and ecosystems, if more is not done to address this, including consideration of climate change impacts;**

As noted above, is there in fact a ‘decline’ as claimed? I do not believe there is ‘decline’, but there is ‘damage’ and it is substantial in many places. The damage I have witnessed over the last 45 years is in the main due to wildfires along with weed and feral animal infestations. These three factors have been exacerbated by the poor and gradual disappearance of any real management, and increasing neglect during those same 40+ years. The cost-saving cheapskate ‘lock it up and leave it’ approach has seen no management at all of vast tracts of Victorian bush, leaving it highly susceptible to complete destruction through wildfires.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there used to be Forestry Commission Camps and Country Roads Board Depots in the High Country and other country areas where local workers were available to carry out the necessary management works on a daily basis. These camps and depots were all deserted and gone by the turn of the century, replaced by fewer workers at urban locations (spending vast amounts of paid time travelling) and a surfeit of university graduate city-based office workers with no real-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gippslandtimes.com.au/story/6861262/the-states-are-not-following-fire-management-policy/?fbclid=IwAR3C1E1tsdMzEutw0FLJ6YpCAOQXZyydZqDO2ODKAWzzVboKPITFt51dW58>

life bush work experience whatsoever. Real work and management in the bush has all but ceased, with the bush now becoming something to be studied from a distant office rather than a lived experience.

Sadly, the ongoing deterioration of bush tracks due to poor maintenance and some idiot four-wheel-drivers has meant the closure of many tracks, rather than better design, construction, maintenance, policing and education. The bush is out of mind to city-dwelling voters and politicians, so it can be the first place for cost cutting measures. The damage and decline of the bush has far more to do with poor management, neglect, defunding and over-regulation than anything else.

There has been some excessive land clearing in some areas of public land, and this should be better managed. Feral animals, being in the main cats, dogs, rabbits, foxes, and all species of deer, should be much better controlled, as should the spread of weeds, in particular, Blackberry, Scotch Thistle, Dandelion, Patterson's Curse, Ragwort and Capeweed. Management activity in these areas has all but disappeared in most areas, (it's all too hard and there's no money) with the land simply being closed off to public access.<sup>2</sup> However, I can see that on the present trajectory nothing will change and the de-facto 'lock it up and leave it' approach will continue, if for no other reason that there is no money (or desire) left in the public purse to actually undertake any effective works in relation to the above. Indeed, if nothing else, 21<sup>st</sup> century people are just too lazy to get out there and do it! A well-paid air-conditioned office job is a much easier and preferable option. Just think of how much effective pest animal and weed control could be carried out instead of the multi-millions of dollars spent on bureaucracy, or handed over to Aboriginal organisations, or wasted on 'climate change'. That is what would stop ecosystem damage and arrest ecosystem decline.

Regarding timber harvesting, eucalypts are essentially weeds and they grow back very quickly. However, the flora and fauna understory biodiversity associated with eucalypt forests is not so easy to readily regenerate, and should be better protected. Forest harvesting has become problematic, not because the concept is intrinsically wrong, but, once again, because it too is being poorly managed along bureaucratic ideological lines. So much land is now closed to timber harvesting that it has for the last few decades been concentrated into ever decreasing smaller areas, meaning that its impact is more obvious and severe. This is a bad thing, and some areas such as the Rubicon State Forest have suffered unnecessarily as a result. This is a large and complex topic for this paper, but serious steps should be taken to address the myriad issues involved with this industry's sustainability, and shutting it down is clearly NOT the solution. This is simply the business equivalent of 'lock it up and leave it' because it's all just too hard, and the Green socialist political pressures are just too great to bear. This is rank abdication and cowardice of the part of a weak government.

The impact on today's 'First Peoples' of alleged ecosystem decline and actual damage is in reality negligible to non-existent. Indeed, why are Aborigines singled out in this matter at all? This inquiry should be far more concerned about the impact of current

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<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, I note that by law private landholders are forced to undertake these works on pain of fines, even though government departments now seem somehow exempt.

Victorian government land management polices on ALL Victorians, not just Aborigines. Indeed, some Aboriginal organisations are now being given control over areas they traditionally rarely visited. Many Aboriginal Organisations get more DEWLP funding under the ‘Local Government funding’ criteria that actual local governments do. Yet what are these Aboriginal organisations doing with the millions of dollars they now receive to address the above-noted issues of fire, weeds, feral animals and track maintenance?

The real impact of the decline and damage is actually felt by others – those who live, work and recreate in the bush, mostly of which precious few are Aborigines. They are in fact thousands of ordinary Victorian country town residents, farmers, timber workers, miners, prospectors, bee keepers, hunters, four-wheel drivers, trail bike riders, horse riders, mountain bikers, skiers, bushwalkers, tour operators, etc. None of this has anything whatsoever to do with the absence of Aboriginal people in the landscape, or climate change. Indeed, in living and travelling extensively in many remote areas of Victoria, I have never in over 45 years ever come across an Aborigine (or a Green) living, working, or even camping in any of these High Country areas, yet they have never been prevented from doing so. So why are they not there?

Therefore, the so-called ‘impact’ on ‘First Peoples’ is exactly the same as the impact on everyone else, and that is the point. Today’s ‘Aboriginal’ people are little different to any of the rest of us. They live in homes, in suburbs and towns; for the most part they have jobs (now exclusively reserved for them), amounts of funding that most other community organisations can only dream about, and many are doing very nicely, and good luck to them. Yes, Aboriginal people have a traumatic history, but so do many, many others who receive no special considerations or benefits because of it.

How will DEWLP in 2018-2019 giving \$13.1 million to Aboriginal organisations do anything to arrest any decline or damage to our ecosystems? Other than creating a new bureaucracy and a multitude of mostly pointless administrative positions to create new regulations to exercise control over the rest of the population’s access to the bush, yet meanwhile creating privileged access for themselves, how will any of this help our ecosystems? The billions of dollars now being given to Aboriginal organisations could in fact be much better used to actually manage the bush and to have real workers actually get out there and do some work!

The greatest contemporary threat to biodiversity is the shutting down of public land; the ‘lock it up and leave it’ approach is what will kill it. The Law of Entropy applies – if it is not used and well managed it will decay. It is not the excluding of bee-keepers, prospectors, hunters, four-wheel drivers, trail bike riders, horse riders, that will help save the bush – indeed, on the contrary, the exclusion of these activities and the management activities usually associated with them are what will help to destroy it.

It is this new era of confected white guilt, combined with historical revisionism, mixed with socialist ideology that will ultimately be to the detriment of our ecosystems and our wider population and joint future. Under this new ideology the extension of the peri-urban interface, the poor asset maintenance of power lines, urban sprawl and overpopulation, feral animals and weeds, the ignoring of good bushfire preparedness and practice, the lack of maintenance of bush roads and tracks, all these

things barely get a mention under the combined mantras of ‘First Peoples’ and ‘Climate Change’, and of course, that’s where all the money is now going too! This will do nothing more than exacerbate and accelerate the damage to the ecosystem and contribute to its eventual and inevitable decline.

The so-called ‘climate change impacts’ are to date theoretical and based upon spurious modelling, not hard evidence. There is a basic ignorance and misunderstanding of the centuries-old drought-fire-flood cycle of Australia which has been in place for thousands of years and its specific application to Victoria. Forest fires are a complex matter of natural events, human expansion and development, and poor asset and bush management, not ‘climate change’. I am of the view that the alleged ‘impacts of climate change’ are at this point illusory and imaginary. Indeed, this is ‘Chicken Little’, the ‘Emperors New Clothes’ and ‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’ all rolled into one!

There are far more important matters to be addressed in the proper eco-management of Victoria’s biodiversity than ‘First Peoples’ or ‘Climate Change’. They are serious matters that deserve serious attention and resources, yet pale into insignificance compared to the funding allocated to Aboriginal organisations and ‘climate change’. Why are the REAL threats being ignored in favour of focusing upon funding imaginary rights and theoretical threats?

**(b) The adequacy of the legislative framework protecting Victoria’s environment, including grasslands, forests and the marine and coastal environment, and native species;**

The only comment I have about this is that any legislation must be fair and balanced. It must balance the need to preserve the environment yet at the same time accommodate reasonable and fair usage by all traditional user groups. On the whole, legislation is becoming far too prescriptive, limiting activities that essentially do no harm to forests or waterways and prevent activities that better manage and protect forests. It often appears that legislation has an ulterior ideologically based Green or racial motive and is an agenda to simply keep people out of the bush.

What has happened now with the new Aboriginal legislation is that ‘Aborigines’ will now be entitled to increased and unfettered access to public land, property, assets, land titles, the bush and waterways that will be denied to the rest of the community. This is also a complex matter that should be addressed in some detail; however, suffice it to say in this paper, the whole concept is grossly disproportionate and unfair. What irrational, illogical and convoluted thinking can ever possibly have anyone think that this arrangement is ‘equitable’ and will somehow result in ‘reconciliation’?

**(c) The adequacy and effectiveness of government programs and funding protecting and restoring Victoria’s ecosystems;**

The Government’s programs and funding are entirely inadequate and ineffective at protecting and restoring Victoria’s ecosystems – indeed, the Government’s policies, programs and funding priorities are making the situation substantially worse! As noted above, there are millions of wasted dollars given to groups who do nothing to

properly manage the ecosystems, or to address the neglect, or to repair the damage to the bush.

The matters raised in part (a) above are indicative of where the real funding should be allocated and spent, yet that is not happening, and has not happened for decades. Is it any wonder that our ecosystems are damaged and heading for decline?

How is it that generous funding is given to groups such as the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), which is nothing more than a lobbying and advocacy group concerned more about their ongoing existence than actually caring for the bush, and to push the Government's socialist Green agenda, yet there is no funding available at all to be given to conservative groups such as the Bush Users Group United (BUGU) or the Australian Environment Foundation (AEF) who are totally opposed to this Green agenda and can see the damage it is doing to our ecosystems? Where is the equity in this? Obviously Government is not serious about funding adequacy and especially effectiveness. Funding is withdrawn from bush maintenance and gates erected to keep people out so that the public will not see how overgrown and infested our ecosystems have become!

Given their comparatively minute numbers, how can the Government give so much money to Aboriginal groups and yet nothing to other groups that represent thousands of bush users? Obviously, money is allocated to groups that support the government's agenda and ideology, and not to conservative 'status quo;' groups. Further, tax deductibility and charitable status is given by the Commonwealth to advocacy groups that neither deserve it, nor qualify for it, and abuse it as well.

So much of the required activity to properly manage the land is just 'too hard' (for bureaucrats) to actually do and actually involves people getting out into the bush, working hard, and getting their hands dirty, not just sitting on the 16<sup>th</sup> floor of a city office block theorising about what should be done and making more rules and regulations, yet all the while actually doing nothing practically positive at all, and indeed, actively preventing others (like four-wheel-drive and historical interest groups) from doing volunteer work to keep bush tracks open and maintained! This has now been Government policy for decades, removing all of the hard workers from the bush and replacing them with over-paid over-qualified office workers in the city. No wonder the bush and the roads and tracks associated with it have turned to ruin.

I am further concerned that the Government has 'bought off' via grant funding community-based organisations such as Four-Wheel-Drive-Victoria who are supposed to represent the interests of all four-wheel drivers across the state, but who now seem to be a self-interested group seeking to benefit themselves and a select few of their mates. This is 'divide and conquer' at work! After observing over forty years of this neglect, mismanagement and selective funding, I am utterly appalled!

**(d) Legislative, policy, program, governance and funding solutions to facilitate ecosystem and species protection, restoration and recovery in Victoria, in the context of climate change impacts;**

The way this reference is written would imply that the entire paragraph is "in the context of climate change impacts", which is of course, more star gazing. There is no

foregone conclusion that such predicted “climate change impacts” will ever occur, and indeed, current evidence clearly suggests they are not occurring, yet government seems determined to spend (waste) more money in this area.

This is totally reminiscent of the Y2K scam at the turn of the century in 2000. Billions of dollars were spent to prevent the expected ‘Y2K bug’ meltdown but nothing happened. And nothing happened not because of the billions spent, but because nothing was ever going to happen; nevertheless, thousands of people enriched themselves on the threat of it. Seems nothing much has changed!

So if we remove the last seven words from the reference sentence, and ignore the “context of climate change impacts”, what do we have? We have exactly the same issues as described in part (a) above – this is not rocket science! Alleged fears and scare-mongering over ‘climate change’ should not be an over-arching determinant factor in this topic, nor should it be used as an excuse to further ignore the matters detailed in part (a) above. In this context, the ‘legislative, policy, program, governance and funding solutions’ and priorities should be obvious and abundantly clear!

**(e) Opportunities to restore Victoria’s environment while upholding First Peoples’ connection to country and increasing and diversifying employment opportunities in Victoria; and**

This is an absurd reference. What agenda can possibly be behind it? Given that half of Victoria’s Aborigines live in Melbourne, the alleged “First Peoples’ connection to ‘country’”<sup>3</sup> is an over-exaggerated claim, and what about everyone else’s ‘connection to country’? Why do we not matter, and why are we not only pushed aside, but pushed out in relation to our own connection to country?

Many of today’s ‘First Peoples’ (a term stolen from North America) have no more ‘connection to country’ than anyone else born and raised in (especially rural) Victoria. Sure, they have a history going back generations, and so do I and so do many other Victorians. My forebears owned land in many parts of Victoria, but I don’t get to go and claim that now, nor is it handed over to me for free.

The matter of fuel reduction burning probably falls under this category of ‘restoring Victoria’s environment’, and there are many questions to be asked here as well. For example:

- Why is the CFA no longer involved in fuel reduction burns for training purposes?
- Why has the amount of fuel reduction burning carried out been slashed to a fraction of what it was?
- Why are landholders no longer allowed to conduct their own ‘creeping burns’ as they were effectively able to do quite safely and effectively many years ago?

I note that Aboriginal cultural burning, or ‘Fire Stick Farming’, is currently the latest fad, yet in Victoria is really given nothing but lip service. It is of course completely

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Country’ now being a trendy word for ‘land’ that apparently only applies to Aboriginal people. Whitefellas are ‘on the land’ or ‘in the bush’ whereas Aboriginal people are ‘on Country’, which is somehow more spiritual and special.

impractical in many peri-urban interface areas, but nevertheless, the cool burning of bushland is possible in many areas, but is labour intensive and must be carried out at least once or twice a year to be effective. Again, Aboriginal people do not have a monopoly on this concept as many landowners were doing it for decades before it was outlawed in the late 1980's and early 1990's and a litany of new laws preventing private (or CFA) fuel reduction by fire. Today fuel reduction burns continue to be carried out 'the old way' by DEWLP, and that is by localised burns in small areas that nevertheless, by definition, become destructive patchy hot burns or ineffective cold burns. Just think of how much fuel reduction cool burning could be carried out by landowners if it were again made legal, or by Government agencies if they had the funding instead of the multi-millions of dollars handed over to Aboriginal organisations or wasted on 'climate change'.

Regarding employment, are we talking about "increasing and diversifying employment opportunities" for all Victorians, or just for this new class of citizens to be now known as our "First Peoples"? If it is the latter, where is the equity in that? Why is this funding now seemingly reserved only for 'Aborigines'? Most of these people are no different to the rest of us – so why the unbelievable special and favoured treatment? Is the funding of so many Aboriginal organisations simply now a new form of legitimate welfare, providing funding for jobs, as is now rampant in Central Australia. Of course providing employment is intrinsically beneficial for many Aboriginal (and other) people in terms of self-esteem and acknowledgement, but it does not have to be done this way, to the detriment of the rest of the community.

Contemporary Aboriginal people generally now do not have any special knowledge of the bush any more than many other country people have – indeed, many have far less knowledge. There are no mystical, mythical, spiritual secrets out there that only Aboriginal people have access to, especially in Victoria. Would the Government care to explain how the creation of all these Aboriginal bureaucracies is going to assist in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem recovery any better than any other person or agency? What is the purpose in funding all of these duplicated services under 'Aboriginal control' (many of which employ 'whitefellas' as their staff anyway). I would really like some serious answers to all these questions.

**(f) any other related matters.**

I would like to raise the following related and pertinent matters as follows:

**1. The creation of division in the community:**

The current legislation, policies and funding arrangements made by governments over the last few decades in relation to Aboriginals affairs will over time, far from promoting reconciliation and equity in the community, do just the opposite. As 'Aboriginal' power and control becomes more entrenched, so the resentment and division will grow. All policy decisions of governments have outcomes, good or bad, and these policies will simply be divisive and cause conflict. This is not what we want for Victoria.

**2. Breakdown of societal cohesiveness:**

In accordance with the above, to be successful every society must ultimately be cohesive, that is, they must all be pulling in the same direction. This means similar

beliefs, values and cultural norms. Every society can and will tolerate small cultural differences by minorities to their main homogeneity, but this only extends so far. Once one group of people, especially a minority, no matter who they are or how intrinsically valued their culture, starts to threaten the majority homogeneity and the rights of others, then trouble soon follows. Current Victorian Government policies and practices are now setting up our Victorian society for this type of societal separation and breakdown.

**3. Departure from facts and evidence:**

The present day Aboriginal and Climate Change industries are not based upon factual observation or evidence, and are in many ways simply fabrications and a distortion of both history and truth, which have been clearly manipulated to suit the new agenda. Much is based upon vested interest and access to funds. Common sense, rational and reasonable thought, and reasoned debate have departed into ideology, flights of fancy, wasted money and personal abuse. This is no way to manage society for the future, let alone an ecosystem. Indeed, it is no way to manage anything.

**4. The slow and steady erosion of rights:**

As an intrinsic part of points 1 to 3 above it is clear that an erosion of personal and collective rights and liberties is a part of the process. The rights and ability of ordinary 'white' Victorian citizens to enjoy our collective lands is being (or indeed has already been) handed over to a tiny select group in the community. Where is the protection of our rights, especially our traditional and cultural rights to be able to freely access land and do the things we have always been allowed to do in the past? Why is this changing?

**5. DEWLP funding grants:**

In the 2018-2019 Financial Year, DEWLP gave \$13.1 million dollars to Aboriginal Organisations in three categories:

- Management of Public Land and Forests – \$5,834,835.00
- Effective Water Management and Supply – \$2,938,529.00
- Local Government Grants<sup>4</sup> – \$4,330,498.00<sup>5</sup>

The citizens and taxpayers of Victoria are entitled to answers to the following questions:

1. Why are these land management activities not able to be carried out by existing organisations?
2. Why do we need new specifically 'Aboriginal' organisations to do this work?
3. What is it that these Aboriginal organisations actually do, and what will the additional benefit be?
4. What is it that these Aboriginal organisations do that is any different to what the existing organisations do?
5. What is the actual intent of the creation of all these new organisations and their funding?
6. What are the reporting protocols and accountability for all of this public funding and how is that openly reported to all Victorians?

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<sup>4</sup> Despite that fact that these are not Local Government organisations

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for more details.

7. Why has all of this been done in secrecy and hiding from the citizens of Victoria without any opportunity for their input?

When added to the already created ‘Aboriginal Parliament’ (and the fact that the Aboriginal Flag now also flies above the Victorian Parliament building) it would only appear a matter of time before the creation of separate ‘Aboriginal State’, funded by the rest of the community. This ‘rent-seeking’ racket has already created great enmity in the community and will only increase. It is a great way to actually create racism, and a new contempt for people claiming to be ‘Aboriginal’. This is especially the case when virtually all of Victoria’s ‘Aborigines’ have a substantial European heritage (like many of the rest of us) as well.

**6. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. 2006:**

What is the point of having a Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities if it: a) favours one particular racial group, (surely that’s a breach of human rights in itself) and b) can simply be overridden by the establishment of any new law (ie: “other than in accordance with law.”)

• **Freedom of Movement (Section 12):**

Every person within Victoria ‘lawfully has the right to move freely within Victoria and to enter and leave it and has the freedom to choose where to live’. One would have thought that this also applies to access to public land, but this is increasingly becoming not the case. To assist this to come into effect, more and more land that was once public is now no longer, having been re-created as freehold title and handed over to Aboriginal organisations. This is a clear beach of our human rights.

• **Freedom of expression (Section 15):**

‘Every person has the right to hold an opinion without interference’, yet this is increasingly becoming not the case. One’s opinions are regularly interfered with by vilification and abuse. Where is the real protection to hold a differing view from that of the prevailing masses?

• **Cultural rights (Section 19):**

“(1) All persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.  
 (2) Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community—  
 (a) to enjoy their identity and culture; and  
 (b) to maintain and use their language; and  
 (c) to maintain their kinship ties; and  
 (d) to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.”

These ‘cultural rights’ apply to all citizens of Victoria, in relation to the practise of their culture. Yet this is now being denied to many, especially to those of Anglo-Saxon heritage who’s activities on public (and in some cases private) land are now being prohibited. Where is the protection against this? In terms of rights, there is little difference between the diverse cultural traditions of Italians, Greeks, Macedonians, Lebanese, Chinese, indeed even the Cornish, the Welsh and the Scottish. Yet these are all to be given a back seat to the pre-eminent importance of Aboriginal culture, along with all of the money and benefits accruing. So this is the equity of human rights – to favour one small minority over a much larger majority?

Further, part (2) of Section 19 ascribes particular and additional ‘distinct rights’ to ‘Aboriginal’ people over and above the rights of all others. Surely this in itself is a breach of human rights for all others not deemed ‘Aboriginal’? Indeed, part (2) would appear a Trojan Horse to justify much of the new legislation, policy, practice, funding benefits and largesse that is currently being showered upon those fortunate enough to be able to identify as being ‘Aboriginal’.

### **What I would do – My Recommendations:**

By way of my own suggestions, based upon many years of experience and research, I would make the following recommendations:

1. Treat all Victorians equally and with fairness. Do not create a special category of ‘Aborigines’ who have special and exclusive rights over, or access to, public or other land and assets not equally available to all other Victorians.
2. Do not pass on at no cost any Freehold Title of any public land, buildings or waterways to any Aboriginal organisations or individuals. They can purchase it like anyone else when it comes up for sale, and not by using public taxpayer funds. Aboriginal organisations should be self-funded businesses just like any other, not new quasi-government departments full of taxpayer funded bureaucrats.
3. Do not allow an Aboriginal ‘rent-seeking’ culture to emerge whereby Victorians must lease-back public land from Aboriginal organisations or pay for any other considerations, fees or charges. We have only one Government.
4. Cease ‘reserved’ employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and make it a part of a more general (but non-compulsory) selection criteria.
5. Restrict funding to ‘Aboriginal’ organisations in favour of funding actual positive and practical remedial works that will benefit ecosystems such as the removal of weeds and feral animals and the undertaking of effective fuel reduction burns.
6. Do not base short or long-term land management or ecosystem decisions on the basis of as yet unproven theories on ‘climate change’.
7. Restrict funding to ‘climate change’ organisations in favour of funding actual positive and practical remedial works that will benefit ecosystems such as the removal of weeds and feral animals and the undertaking of effective fuel reduction burns.
8. Immediately disband VEAC and reform the assessment council as a competent, representative, fair, unbiased and non-ideologically driven organisation that can deliver fair, scientifically-based, rational and non-agenda based decisions for all Victorians.
9. Immediately cease the creation of any more National Parks, and indeed, return some National Parks back to public land State Forest status.
10. Do not exclude genuine and valid user groups from any areas of public land based upon ideologically and Green driven agendas or any other vested interest groups.
11. Cease the current program of further vehicular track closures and re-open many tracks that have already been closed.
12. Cease the program of herding campers into designated campsites and allow campers more freedom to camp where they like on public land, and at no cost.
13. Cease the current practice of disallowing access to various areas for various activities because of ‘cultural sensitivity’ or ‘sacred sites’ (ie: stopping the Sea Lake Rally and rock climbing in the Grampians).

14. Allow landholders to conduct their own cool fuel reduction burns on their own properties as they once did in the past.
15. Allow local CFA crews to re-commence involvement in cool fuel reduction burns on public land.
16. Encourage Aboriginal people to carry out 'fire stick farming' (in reality cool fuel reduction burns) on land they manage, and to offer their services to others who may desire it.
17. Stop the funding to so many Aboriginal organisations on the basis that they have some mythical, mystical 'extra knowledge' that no-one else possesses, or that they somehow still 'own' the land upon which we all tread. They do not.
18. Do not cease the harvesting of timber from native forests, but review it to ensure that it can be less damaging to the environment yet at the same time remain sustainable.
19. Open up more areas across the State for timber harvesting so that the present industry is not so concentrated, yet set new upper limits on overall harvesting.
20. Explore other methods of timber harvesting that do not involve clear felling of entire coupes and substantially modify the way this is carried out so that the impact on forests, especially that of widespread clear felling, can be substantially reduced.
21. Significantly increase funding and concessions for hardwood plantations on private land.
22. Significantly increase funding for active weed and feral animal control.
23. Significantly increase funding for track maintenance and improvements.
24. Cease funding to supposedly 'environment' organisations that are in fact little more than advocacy and lobby groups, like the VNPA.
25. Open up more areas of public land for feral pest hunting, especially in relation to dogs, cats, foxes and all species of deer.
26. Stop lying about and misrepresenting the historical past regarding Aborigines and the establishment and settlement of both Australia and Victoria.
27. Stop wasting huge amounts of money on 'climate change solutions' and start focussing on the real issues as outlined above.

All of that said, unfortunately this Inquiry would seem to be little more than an opportunity to shore up policy directions already embarked upon by this Government to justify and promote 'Aboriginality' and 'Climate Change' policies. There is virtually no hope that any positive change will come of it.

My concern is that extreme Green environmentalist groups and others will use this Inquiry as an opportunity to peddle their propaganda of further denying bush access and recreational-based activities, eliminating state forest based industry and perpetuating the 'lock it up and leave it' agenda, which does not serve our flora and fauna or landscape well. We instead need sensible debate and recommendations.

In summary, the ecosystems of Victoria are damaged, in places quite badly – mostly by wildfire. It would appear that nothing is being done to address this damage, other than giving vast sums of money to Aboriginal organisations and creating a 'climate change catastrophe' scare campaign. Neither of these courses of action will do anything whatsoever to benefit the current state of our ecosystems. Indeed, it is much like shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic. If we really want to do something

positive for our forests then the present policies are completely the wrong focus for expenditure. If this Inquiry retains its focus purely on ‘First Peoples’ and ‘Climate Change’ it will have contributed absolutely nothing towards the very real problems of ecosystem damage and decline. The focus should be on the real problems, not on the invented ones.

What then are the real problems? Forty-five years of work, observation, experience, research, knowledge and talking with bush users tells me that they are as follows:

- The proliferation of weeds across the landscape and in the bush, especially Blackberry, Scotch Thistles, Dandelion, Patterson’s Curse, Ragwort and Capeweed.
- The proliferation of feral pest animals across the landscape and in the bush, especially cats, dogs, rabbits, foxes, and all species of deer.<sup>6</sup>
- Ongoing underfunded poor road and track construction and maintenance.
- An ever increasing number of locked, overgrown and inaccessible areas and tracks now closed to the public.
- A steadfast refusal to admit to the real problems and to adequately address and fund them.
- The self-centred ideologically based Trojan Horse socialist Green ‘environment’ organisations overrun with hypocrisy and self-interest with no real practical concern for or involvement with the forests at all.
- A complete lack of equity in funding grants and arrangements so that conservative ‘status quo’ organisations always remain at a disadvantage and are shut out of the debate altogether.
- The horrendous bias of VEAC and the unjustified and illegitimate creation of more parks to the enormous detriment of local industry, businesses and recreation.
- The abandonment of all sensible cool fuel reduction burning on both private and public land and the lip-service paid to Aboriginal cultural burning.
- The redirection and misdirection of government funds away from practical environmental and bush management outcomes towards city-based organisations and bureaucrats. So much of this seems to just provide jobs for people and funding to perpetuate unproductive organisations.
- The destruction of the public’s ‘bush experience’ by ever increasing regulation and confinement.

The problems with ecosystem damage or decline in Victoria are NOT and NEVER HAVE BEEN the lack of ‘First Peoples’ involvement in the management of ecosystems (yet like everyone else, they have always had the option to do this if they so chose) or anthropomorphic ‘Climate Change’ (which is largely irrelevant). These are ideologically-based rationalisations and inventions that will contribute nothing towards the proper management of the Victorian landscape and contribute little towards the repair of already heavily damaged ecosystems of Victoria. It is the failure to act in terms of the matters addressed and outlined above that will eventually lead to the inexorable decline and destruction of Victorian ecosystems, and we are already well on the way!

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<sup>6</sup> Note that native animal species are not endangered from climate change, but from wildfire, cats, dogs and foxes and some careless forestry activities.

Will ‘Aboriginal’ people be a part of the solution to repairing ecosystem damage and preventing eventual decline, or will they simply become a new part of the problem, a new ‘rent-seeking’ bureaucracy syphoning away much needed vast sums of money for their own purposes leaving the forests and landscape vulnerable to suffering more neglect and mismanagement, rather than actively contributing both finances and labour to real solutions,? I suspect I already know the answer to that question, although I remain open to being wrong and surprised.

I firmly believe in one Australia and that all Australians are equal and should be treated equally, notwithstanding that the poor and needy of any persuasion should receive some special extra assistance. For the last four decades we have seen this new ‘Aboriginal’ movement (based upon lies about our origins and history) advocating for the separation of Aboriginal people (via self-determination and empowerment) now growing into a taxpayer funded de-facto discriminatory segregationist and apartheid behemoth, and as the ‘Black Lives Matter’ campaign grows in strength, to see Aboriginal people placed in a positions of superiority and preference over ‘the rest of us’. This is largely promoted by the ABC, SBS and NITV. I do not believe this is good for the homogeneity of any society (look what happened to South Africa) so if this continues in Victoria, there will be very dark times ahead for societal division.

Sadly, as the ever-increasing environmental rules and regulations grow and gather pace, and as the restrictive laws and conditions constantly change, the young people of the future will never know what they are missing out on and will never know how free things once were. If you are a bird born in a cage, or a fish born in a tank, you will not know that once upon a time birds flew freely in the air and fish swam freely as they liked in the waters. Our community is increasingly being placed in cages and tanks! Victoria’s outdoors will soon become a strictly limited and highly regulated place of national parks with limited and specified camping spaces and few drivable tracks. They will be overrun with weeds and feral pests, and regularly scorched or obliterated by fire. They will be managed by ‘Aboriginal’ people, who look and live just like us, yet they will have all the jobs and money. This highly regulated and controlled new world will be one of stifling alienated misery. Is that what we want? Well, that is precisely where we are heading!

That is of course if our neglected and locked-up ecosystems haven’t by then been utterly destroyed by repeated wildfires. We know that two or three repeated hot fires in the same area over a ten year period or less will completely kill off an area of bush so that it cannot regenerate on its own. I have no doubt we shall see more occurrences of that in years to come, just as we have seen up on the Howitt Plains. Not climate change – just mismanagement!

The emphasis on ‘First Peoples’ and ‘Climate Change’ are a monstrous and counterproductive diversion away from addressing the real and practical issues. They are also a huge waste of money, simply providing jobs for people who in reality make little or no contribution to addressing the real problems of the bush. These are all self-evident truths that many of the silent majority population of Australia know to be true – so why the pretence? Why do we lie and pretend about ‘Aborigines’? They are just like us. To create modern day Aborigines to be somehow different from us and inherently special – that is to be truly racist.

What are all these new Aboriginal organisations to do? Unlike Central Australia or other remote areas of the country with large numbers of Aboriginal people, Victorian Aborigines do not need separately established and funded community health clinics and other services. Governments are always opposed to the duplication of services, yet apparently we are now happy to do that just for Aborigines, especially now in relation to land and water management.

It would appear that Parks and Reserves which have been transferred to Aboriginal Title are no longer 'public land'. It becomes Aboriginal owned land which is then leased back to the people of Victoria through the government at considerable cost to the taxpayer, and still to be 'jointly managed' with ParksVic and DEWLP. What does this mean in reality, who will pay for it, and where is the benefit to the citizens of Victoria of this new expensive arrangement?

There seems to now be a complete disconnect between what we in the public sphere know to be factual and true, and what public 'servant' bureaucrats in their alien bubble seem to believe, think and do. This is becoming increasingly problematic as more and more bureaucrats create more regulations based upon their ideology and beliefs rather than the truth of what happens in the real world.

I know full well that the views expressed in this submission are shared by many thousands of Victorians and Australian, and would be shared by many thousands more if they only knew what was going on behind their backs and without their knowledge or agreement.

I realise that all of this is now an unstoppable runaway train – which is a great pity because all Victorians will one day regret the times that all of this was allowed to happen and one way or another, we will all have to pay for it!

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Dr David Barton.

Dr David Barton.

## Appendix A

### The Decline and Rise of the Aboriginal Population in Victoria.

Richard Broome, in his 2005 work *Aboriginal Victorians*, notes the original population of Aboriginal people in Victoria was likely around 60,000 people; nobody really knows for sure. He notes that “the Victorian Aboriginal population, which had survived for at least 40,000 years, was suddenly and dramatically reduced by colonisation.”<sup>7</sup> Yet Broome states on the very next page the Victorian Aboriginal population was reduced by 80% by Smallpox as introduced by Indonesian Macassans as early as 1720,<sup>8</sup> the Aboriginal population thereby being “possibly halved and halved again to say 10-15,000 in two Smallpox shocks before European settlers even trod Aboriginal Lands.”<sup>9</sup>

Mr Broome cannot have it both ways. His otherwise excellent work is marred throughout by anti-colonialist mantra typical of contemporary ‘histories’ of Aboriginal Australia, and herein lies the problem that must be noted from the outset. There is no doubt that European colonisation and settlement of Australia spelt the death knell for many Aboriginal communities across the continent. However, it is important that the facts are fairly and accurately told without the apparent politically motivated additional slurs, either stated or implied, against our forebears. They were very different times back then to what we know today.

Broome notes it is estimated that in 1834 at the time of the settlement of the Port Phillip district there were about 10,000 Aborigines in Victoria, yet this number fell to just 1,907 in the two decades to 1853, and to 1,067 by the time of the 1877 Census.<sup>10</sup> During the twenty year period from 1834 to 1854, and through until the turn of the century, it is estimated that up to 2,000 Aboriginal people died in violence at the hands of both whites and other blacks (in ongoing intra and inter-tribal fighting).

A further 1,500 died of natural causes and the population experienced very low birth rates. As time went by many Aboriginal people did not reproduce; they had no children often because of depression and a lack of any hope for their future. The population was further reduced by diseases (especially syphilis and gonorrhoea) and influenza, to which they had little resistance or immunity. Drunkenness, accidents, suicides, high infant mortality, infanticides, fighting, starvation and murder by colonists and other Aborigines also took their toll.

Regionally, the figures of decline are truly shocking. The Wathawurrung (Barrabools of Geelong) numbered 275 in 1837, reduced to 118 in 1842 and only 30 remaining by 1852, a 90% decline. The Dja Dja Wurrung (Loddon district) numbered 282 in 1841 but only 142 in 1852, a 50% decline. The Gunai (Gippsland district) numbered 300 in 1844 and only 32 by 1852, a decline of over 90%. The Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung of Melbourne district numbered 350 in 1836, 207 in 1839 and only 59 by 1852, an 83% decline. The depopulation of Aboriginal people in Victoria as a result of European settlement was rapid and enormous, resulting by 1852 as indicated

<sup>7</sup> Broome, R. 2005. *Aboriginal Victorians*. Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin. p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 91 & 147.

above in a total population of only 263 Aborigines.<sup>11</sup> That said, Broome’s own figures leave a gap of 1,644 people – the difference between his originally stated 1,907 people to the above listed 263 people. Where were the other 1,644? Broome later details the 1877 Census figures of 25 years later which give a clearer statement of Aboriginal numbers in Victoria at that time.<sup>12</sup> They are as follows:

<b>1877 Census:</b>		
<b>On Reserves:</b>	<b>Full Descent</b>	<b>Mixed Descent</b>
	201 adults	83 adults
	93 children	109 children
Total = 486		
<b>Off Reserves:</b>	<b>Full Descent</b>	<b>Mixed Descent</b>
	435 adults	51 adults
	45 children	50 children
Total = 581	Total: 774	Total: 293
<b>Overall Total = 1,067</b>		

By 1877 there are only 1,067 Aborigines formally recorded as living in Victoria, 293 of whom are mixed descent. It is worth noting that by 1877 there were only two Aboriginal women, one, full and one mixed descent, listed as living in Melbourne. The difficulty in making sense of the numbers shows the problems knowing accurately how many Aboriginal people remained; however, one thing is certain, the numbers were extremely low. In stark contrast, in the ten years from 1851 to 1861 the immigrant population of Victoria grew from 76,000 to 540,000<sup>13</sup> and by 1901 the population of Victoria was 1.2 million.<sup>14</sup> The low numbers of Aboriginal people became almost invisible to most Victorians. Many of these hapless first inhabitants lived lives of dreary inordinate poverty and ill health, meeting with an early death. But then again, so did many settlers.

By 1900 the statistics of the time show this remnant population had decreased to about 400, many of whom were by now mixed descent children through interbreeding with the new settlers. In 1863 Simon Wonga and William Barak had about 40 Woi Wurrung, Taungurong and Bun Wurrung in the Coranderrk district. By 1892 Ebenezer Mission had dropped to only 30 people and residents from Ramahyuck, Lake Condah and Coranderrk missions (about 60 residents in all) were moved to Lake Tyers Mission. By 1900 Framlingham Mission housed only about 90 residents and most missions already had a considerable number of mixed descent children. At the turn of the century there were a rapidly diminishing number of full-descent Aborigines remaining in Victoria.

Across all of Victoria the number of Aboriginal people apparently numbered no more than 3-400, including many of mixed descent. It is highly likely that by 2020 there are indeed no full descent Aboriginal people left in Victoria.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, by now every Victorian Aboriginal person, to a greater or lesser degree, has some European or other heritage as well. Therefore, to claim exclusive heritage as being a ‘Wathawurrung

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp. 91-92.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 147.

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria\\_\(Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_(Australia))

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3110124.nsf/24e5997b9bf2ef35ca2567fb00299c59/c4abd1fac53e3df5ca256bd8001883ec!opendocument#Table%201.%201901%20Population%20Counts%20f>

<sup>15</sup> I stand to be advised and corrected about this assumption if incorrect.

man' or a 'Gunai woman' is to be historically, factually and biologically incorrect and fancifully misleading.

In 1848, four generations ago, my maternal great, great Grandfather arrived from Cornwall, England, as an orphaned 14-year-old miner, having worked in the copper mines since the age of six. Upon arrival he travelled to Burra in South Australia where he again commenced work in the copper mines. The point I am making is that I am no more a Cornish copper miner than these people are Aborigines, and nor do I claim to be. Our distant heritage (or looks) does not make us that person today, unless we want to claim it to be so – and why would we want to do that?

In 2020 the population of Victoria is estimated to be 6.36 million people. We are told by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that in 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.6% of the population of Victoria (50% of whom live in Melbourne),<sup>16</sup> which would be 101,760 people. By simple mathematics, how can we have gone from about 400 Aboriginal people in Victoria in 1900 to 101,760 Aboriginal people in Victoria in 2020, being four to five generations<sup>17</sup> in 120 years? That's an addition of 25,440 people in every generation, which of course is a statistical and physical impossibility. Clearly, something doesn't add up. Who are these people?

In the present time it would seem to be completely politically incorrect and perhaps even seen as 'racist' to ask the question 'who or what is a real Aborigine?' Indeed, the terms 'full-blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', 'eighth-caste' and even 'sixteenth-caste' (representing five generations removed), despite being in common sense descriptive use for 200 years or more, are now likely to see a user of these terms abused and might even in the future land you in jail. However, these descriptors have always been the reality, despite their contemporary disdain in favour of the more modern-day accepted definition of who is an Aborigine. In the mid-1980's the above words and terminology were discarded in favour of the new three-part or tripartite definition, being descent, self-identification and community recognition. Although now widely accepted, this new definition is problematic from the outset and not a perfect solution, as follows:

1. Descent – no matter how small or remote a portion of biological descent, a person can still identify exclusively as an Aborigine with that descent whilst diminishing all other elements of that persons' heritage. This is of course absurd.
2. Self-identification – if a person believes themselves to be an Aborigine, that person is an Aborigine. It is entirely a subjective measure, so must be discounted as any objective test.
3. Community recognition – this too is fraught with problems. It is again an entirely subjective measure based upon one's relationship with others already within the accepted fraternity.

What this basically means is that within certain parameters, anyone who wants to be an Aborigine can be, should they be able to prove the slightest Aboriginal descent and be accepted by others (and in reality it's only a two-part measure). This has little to do

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<sup>16</sup> "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders made up 1.6% of the population of Victoria."  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Population%20-%20Victoria~10002>

<sup>17</sup> Note that a 'generation' is defined as being 30 years.

with objective fact, and indeed, no-one would particularly care what people identified as being, if it wasn't for the fact that there are now so many benefits, especially financial ones, attached to being an 'Aborigine'. This tripartite system has badly let down both ordinary Australians and Aborigines themselves. It is responsible for a new divisiveness and resentment growing every day within Australia. It is a new form of apartheid, segregation and racism. This 'self-identification' definition has proved problematic in other countries as well, and has been discarded by some indigenous nations as being insufficient to define who is truly 'one of them'.<sup>18</sup>

This new system has also given rise to pretenders, which is also problematic for many Aborigines and their organisations. It would appear that many people are now identifying as 'Aboriginal' because it is trendy, popular and cool to do so, and there is a great deal of status, benefits, job opportunities and extra funding available (to the exclusion of all others) for your good fortune as being able to 'identify' as being Aboriginal. This goes hand in hand with many publications now seeking to romanticise, mythologise and reinvent what life in pre-settlement Australia was like for Aborigines in such fanciful but demonstrably false and misleading publications like Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu*. This new tripartite definition has essentially opened the flood gates for the increase in the 'Aboriginal' population in Victoria, and indeed, right across Australia, and has created a multi-billion dollar 'Aboriginal industry', arguably established by confected guilt-ridden middle class white people on the basis of a very false version of history they have been force-fed in school, universities and the media.

So back to the statistics. The ABS further states that from the 2016 Census, the population of Aboriginal people in Victoria is actually 47,787 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.<sup>19</sup> The ABS cannot have it both ways. If the population of Victoria is 6.36 million people then 47,787 people does not make up 1.6% of the population of Victoria, which would be approximately 101,760 people. 47,787 people are only .75% of the population of Victoria. It is most unlikely that the Aboriginal population has increased by over 50,000 people in the three years from the 2016 Census to 2019. It cannot be both, so which is it? It would appear clear that the 2016 Census figure of 47,787 is most likely to be correct, so the Aboriginal population of Victoria is in fact actually .75%, being less than 1%, meaning the Aboriginal population of Victoria has grown from .03% of the overall population in 1901 to .75% of the population in 2020, again 50% of whom live in Melbourne. Yet how can we have gone from two Aboriginal women living in Melbourne in 1877 to 24,000 a mere 143 years (five generations) later? Again, it doesn't add up.

Notwithstanding the above, the point is simply this – why is one particular interest group who are in reality very little different to the rest of Victorians, and consisting of only about 48,000 people, or .75% of the population of Victoria, now being given

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<sup>18</sup> There are 8 tribes of US American Indians that now require a 1/2 blood quantum for recognition and membership, 48 tribes that require a 1/4 blood quantum, 23 that require 1/8 blood quantum, 7 tribes that require 1/16 blood quantum, 29 tribes with no blood quantum requirement, and 5 tribes that have a requirement of both blood quantum and lineal descent for recognition and membership. See the 'blood quantum' requirements of many American Indian tribes in:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood\\_quantum\\_laws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_quantum_laws)

<sup>19</sup> "For the 2016 Census in Victoria, there were 47,787 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Of these, 49.4% were male and 50.6% were female."  
[https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/IQS2#:~:text=For%20the%202016%20Census%20in,male%20and%2050.6%25%20were%20female.](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/IQS2#:~:text=For%20the%202016%20Census%20in,male%20and%2050.6%25%20were%20female.)

millions and millions of dollars along with freehold title and control over vast tracts of Victoria's public land, not to mention privilege, status, funding and benefits denied to the rest of Victorians, on the basis of their partial and however small Aboriginal ancestry and so-called 'Aboriginality'?

In 2014 the ABS noted "The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is projected to be the fastest growing of the states and territories, with an average growth rate of between 2.8% and 3.1% per year, followed by Victoria (between 2.5% and 2.8%)."<sup>20</sup> The predicted growth rate for Aboriginal people in Victoria is an additional 20,046 people between 2011 and 2026, or 1,600 babies per year.<sup>21</sup> How can the ACT have the fastest growth rate of Aboriginal people, yet by contrast the Northern Territory with the greatest concentration of Aboriginal people, has the lowest growth rate? How can this be if not explained by the rapidly rising rate of 'self-identifications'?

In the 10 years from 1991 to 2001 the recorded number of Aboriginal people in Australia rose 65% from 265,500 in 1991 to 410,000 in 2001.<sup>22</sup> These figures far exceed any likely birth rate, so can only be attributed to people now 'identifying as Aboriginal'. There is no doubt that such identification is because of the increased status and acceptance of Aboriginal people in the wider community, and because of the generous opportunities and widespread benefits now made available to them as well. That said, perhaps what began as a reasonable program with good intent to address Aboriginal inequity, poverty and ill-health is now getting rather completely out of hand?

With current programs and extra benefits for newly identifying Aborigines, many of whom who do not need any extra public assistance, this represents an additional cost to the taxpayer purse. The Aboriginal industry in Victoria<sup>23</sup> is costing State taxpayers multi-millions, if not now billions of dollars a year, and for what real benefit? This is a highly discriminatory and unfair regime.

What happened to the original inhabitants of Australia was deeply unfortunate, yet given the circumstances of expansionism across the globe at that time, it was inevitable. If it wasn't the English, it would have been the French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch or perhaps even the Germans or eventually the Japanese, any of whom may have been much less merciful to the indigenous population than the English. It is a pointless exercise to maintain that Australia and its indigenous population should have been left alone by the rest of the world – that was never going to happen, and even if it had, what would Australia look like today anyway?

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<sup>20</sup>3238.0 - Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026.  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/02D95BFBCDD976FBCA257CC900143A5B?opendocument>

<sup>21</sup> The question should also be asked as to after how many years or generations of interbreeding does a person cease to be 'Aboriginal'? In the year 2120 will a person with an Aboriginal ancestor from 1880 (240 years, or 8 generations earlier) still be recognised as exclusively an Aboriginal person?

<sup>22</sup><https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2>

<sup>23</sup> It is likely that many of these people are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from other parts of Australia, but these people are not Victorian Aborigines. Are they too entitled to the largess offered by Victoria by way of employment, etc, or should it be reserved for Victorian Aborigines only?

As noted earlier, Broome concludes that 80% of Victorian Aborigines had already died from Smallpox, even before any Europeans set foot in Victoria, in an epidemic introduced by Macassans via the north of Australia as early as 1720, spreading over time all the way down to Victoria.<sup>24</sup> This of course is an uncomfortable and inconvenient truth for those who would rather attribute blame for the demise of Aboriginal people, indeed, their genocide, on the murderous invading white male colonists.

Further, to claim that it was wrong for Australia to be settled without a 'treaty' with the original inhabitants is to fundamentally misrepresent, misunderstand and ignore the legal basis upon which Australia was settled at that time. Whilst it is a large and technical legal argument too detailed to recount here, it nevertheless ranks at the same level of falsehood as the claims to 'Terra Nullius' (a term only first mentioned in 1975), or that Aborigines were included in the 'Flora and Fauna Act' (no such Act ever existed), or that Aborigines were not counted in the Census (clearly not the case as shown by the 1877 Census), and that Aborigines did not have the vote before 1962 (they had Commonwealth enfranchisement from Federation and in many States well prior to that). Then there is the myth that most Victorian Aborigines were massacred in the so-called 'frontier wars', which in fact rarely ever took place (most violent deaths met by Aboriginal people were from other Aboriginal people). These falsehoods all contribute towards blaming evil colonists for racism and genocide, and to advance the newly established Aboriginal industry. Indeed, these myths, more properly referred to as lies, are still taught in Australian schools and universities today and should be rejected by all Australians.

What is now occurring in Victoria seems to be misguided reparations towards descendents of Aboriginal people – a means for some Europeans to assuage their collective emotive confected guilt they have been brought to believe, without the slightest reliance on historical fact. These myths, created by universities and the legal profession, have been enthusiastically swallowed by education, media (especially the ABC, SBS and NITV), and public and legal sector bureaucracies resulting in what we see today as the open-ended handing over of status, power, control, resources, property, assets and vast sums of money to a very small select group of people with however small a biological connection to their Aboriginal ancestors. This is not making amends to our original inhabitants – this is stupidity motivated by myths and confected guilt that has already created wide division within the community, and will doubtless create much more in the years to come.

As a person of principally Cornish, Irish and English descent, I do not get to make any claims in relation to the land previously owned by my forebears in those locations. I cannot claim any reparations about my great, great grandfather being sent to work in a copper mine at age six. Nor do I receive any special benefits from the British Government because of my heritage and neither does any other British subject. To establish such a precedent in Australia is both divisive and absurd.

To base such vast reparations on fundamental ignorance and a new factually incorrect revisionist history, combined with a great deal of white blame, makes the situation immeasurably worse and unjust for all Victorians. An almost comical example of what has been happening for the last few decades is the new 'Welcome to Country'

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<sup>24</sup> See also: Broome, R. 2019. *Aboriginal Australians - the vast sweeping story of Aboriginal Australia from 1788*. (5<sup>th</sup> Edn.). Sydney NSW: Allen & Unwin. p. 13.

and ‘Smoking Ceremony’ which is inflicted upon us (often at great smoky discomfort) at almost every formal Government event. Allegedly, the ‘smoking ceremony’ was a “traditional belief that the smoke could ward off bad spirits” or “to cleanse an area ... and shows a sign of respect for people past and present and also the passing over of elders.”<sup>25</sup> This wording smacks of modern day language and invention; and is our modern day enlightened and secular society really in need of the ‘warding off of bad spirits’? Aboriginal people in Central Australia laugh at the gullibility of ‘whitefella southerners’ in being fooled by this charade.

Thomas notes that “The supposedly ancient ‘welcome’ tradition goes back 30-40 years. ... (*and one story recounts that*) ... Indigenous entertainers Ernie Dingo and Richard Whalley, of the Middar Aboriginal Theatre, claim to have invented the “welcome to country” in 1976 because two pairs of Maori visitors from NZ and the Cook Islands wanted an equivalent of their own traditional ceremony before they would dance at the Perth International Arts Festival.”<sup>26</sup> Thomas further notes that “Anthropologists and early settlers failed to record anything much resembling ‘welcome to country’ ceremonies. Bess Price, CLP Aboriginal member of the Northern Territory Parliament and Minister for Community Services, has described ‘welcomes’ as ‘not particularly meaningful to traditional people anyway. We don’t do that in communities. It’s just a recent thing. It’s just people who are trying to grapple at something that they believe should be traditional.’”<sup>27</sup> The Ernie Dingo story is one of many pertaining to be the origins of ‘welcome to country’; however, the one thing they all share in common is that it’s a recent invention of no more than four to five decades old. Why are we living a lie?

Performances arranged by individuals or Aboriginal organisations can cost anywhere from \$250 up to \$6-11,000 depending upon the number of ‘performers’ required; having a didgeridoo is extra. Many would simply call this a money-making racket, one enthusiastically endorsed by ever-increasingly politically correct governments and autocratic prescriptive bureaucrats. Has this mystical ceremony just been rediscovered after being lost for more than a century, or is it a modern day mythical invention? I suspect the latter. It is highly likely that the contemporary ‘welcome to country’ and ‘smoking ceremony’ is nothing more than a lucrative modern day scam. Why do we fall for it, and why do we put up with it?

Further, adding to the Government’s (or rather, their bureaucrats and academics) obsession with all things Aboriginal, I note for example the sort of thing that is now rampant in Government publications. The Department of Environment, Water, Lands and Planning (DEWLP) Annual Report 2018-19 notes on page 2 (numeration added):

**Acknowledgment**

1. We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.
2. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas, T. 2019. ‘A Nice Little Earner’. *Quadrant Online*. (4 April).  
<https://quadrant.org.au/opinion/opinion-post/a-nice-little-traditional-earner-invented-yesterday/>

<sup>26</sup> Thomas, T. 2016. ‘Brand New Timeless Traditions’. *Quadrant Online*. (22 April).  
<https://quadrant.org.au/opinion/qed/2016/04/brand-new-timeless-traditions/>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

3. We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Surely this is a statement that many other Victorians, especially landholders, will find deeply offensive.

1. Today's Aboriginal people do not have a "unique ability to care for Country"<sup>28</sup>, no more than anyone else does. Further, whilst some, or many, people who identify as Aboriginal may have a "deep spiritual connection" to the land, so do many others.
2. Why do we "honour" these Elders and what "knowledge and wisdom" are we referring to exactly that contemporary Aboriginal people have that the rest of the community does not also have? Most "culture and traditional practices" have long been lost, thankfully, as many were harmful and violent, and many others are in fact recent inventions.
3. Why only "Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country" and rather not by treating the wider community all the same? This is a statement that should apply to all Victorians, not just a select self-appointed few.

Another example comes from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Annual Report 2018-19 as found on page 1 (numeration added):

1. The department proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present.
2. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.
3. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us.
4. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

1. What 'rich culture'? Does the author of this statement know anything about pre-European Aboriginal culture at all? If that person did then they surely cannot claim it to be 'rich'. The harsh subsistence survival of Aboriginal tribes was anything but 'rich'. This is an absurd statement based upon the myth of the 'noble savage'. Much alleged Aboriginal culture is an invention, some borrowed from other tribes, cultures and indigenous peoples overseas. Some of it could be called copy-cat culture. Indeed, the Aboriginal Arts movement was started by a whitefella in the NT at Yuendumu in the 1970's to give Aboriginal people something positive to do. Why do we "pay respect to their Elders past and present"? On what basis do we do this, and why are Aboriginal Elders any more deserving of our enforced 'respect' than any other older members of our community?
2. The term "Traditional Owners" is and always has been a misnomer. Land 'ownership' was never countenanced by original Aboriginal people. There was no

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<sup>28</sup> 'Country' now being a trendy word for 'land' that apparently only applies to Aboriginal people. Whitefellas are 'on the land' or 'in the bush' whereas Aboriginal people are 'on Country', which is somehow more spiritual and special.

concept of land ownership, the land owned them. There were merely physical boundaries between tribes who at times variously fought and traded with each other. It is of great concern that the term ‘water’ has been recently added to the claims made by Aboriginal organisations, having serious and specific implications for the future control and management of all waterways.

3. What does the “ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life” actually consist of, and why do we value it (more than any other) and how does it “enrich us”? What contribution is especially distinct and different to any other culture’s contribution? These are just hollow and meaningless words.
4. This statement is of course completely false and is the exact opposite of what is actually occurring. There is no “equality of outcomes” or “an equal voice” because the vast majority of Victorians, firstly, have no idea what is going on behind the scenes, and secondly, absolutely no say in it whatsoever. None of this is likely to result in “reconciliation” but can only end in further division, resentment and enmity.

These ‘acknowledgements’ are largely confected, mythologised, fanciful, divisive nonsense and virtually everyone knows it, so why do we tolerate it? Today’s Aboriginal people do not have some mystical and spiritual knowledge embedded in their DNA that makes them better land managers than anyone else. Yes, let’s of course celebrate positive real and original Aboriginal culture; yes, of course let’s re-establish Aboriginal links with the past; yes, let’s honestly do a lot of that, BUT – just how far should this all go, and how much of it should be funded by the taxpayer, and on what basis? I have a deep spiritual connection to my forbear’s country in Cornwall, and have visited there, which was very moving for me, and a deep personal spiritual connection to the Victorian High Country, where I visit often. But I don’t get to own these places, or manage them, or derive any public income from them, or have exclusive access to them, or have any say over them any more than anyone else does.

In reality, who are these Aboriginal people we are now lauding, funding, celebrating and paying homage to? Are they not just like us – ordinary citizens of our community? What has all of a sudden made them so special, deserving of control of vast tracts of land and water, and the allocation of billions of taxpayer dollars? This sham would appear complete lunacy. Government policy in this area is an irrational nonsense that will ultimately infuriate most Victorians.

In December of 2019 it was announced that the Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Clans Corporation received a \$1.82 million Federal Government grant to research over four years the viability of growing native Kangaroo Grass to help the agriculture industry adapt to climate change. The work will be carried out with La Trobe University, Goulburn Murray Water, and Federation University.<sup>29</sup> It would be fair to ask what the role of the Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Clans Corporation will be in this research work, and are they skilled to carry it out?

By 1852 the Dja Dja Wurrung numbered no more than 142 people. By 1900 they were less than half that number, perhaps no more than 50 at most. By 2020, what research expertise do the Dja Dja Wurrung have by way of traditional, cultural and

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<sup>29</sup> Cosoleto, T. 2019. *Bendigo Advertiser*. (13 December).  
[https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/6541827/dja-dja-wurrung-leading-research-on-adapting-to-climate-change/?cs=80&fbclid=IwAR3aHIIaST7IVOnLtwMOHBe6MmJXn-wPyhFxHu8H8pGpO\\_RX9pwpZeiUqkc](https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/6541827/dja-dja-wurrung-leading-research-on-adapting-to-climate-change/?cs=80&fbclid=IwAR3aHIIaST7IVOnLtwMOHBe6MmJXn-wPyhFxHu8H8pGpO_RX9pwpZeiUqkc)

scientific knowledge to gain a \$1.82 million grant to carry out this work? Where will all this money go and what will be produced of direct benefit to the taxpayers from this grant? What sort of reporting and accountability will be required for the funds so expended? Perhaps this work, as so often seen in Central Australia, is simply a new form of welfare. Rather than being on unemployment benefits, Aboriginal people can now have jobs at the expense of the public purse. This in itself is not a bad thing, but what is the actual productivity and contribution of these new jobs? In addition, the implications for the rest of the community are also significant, but too complex to discuss in this brief paper.

Another example, again from the Dja Dja Wurrung, where the Corporation hopes to “hear the language reinstated, as a form of chosen language to be spoken in central Victoria.” The language will need to be “reconstructed and de-colonised” in an attempt to learn and understand it.<sup>30</sup> It is now four generations since there were any fluent speakers of the language. Yes, this may well be a laudable aim, but it should retain historical interest status only, and not be re-invented and forced into schools or paid for by the public purse. As has been seen in Central Australia, only being able to speak an Aboriginal language, and not English, prevents any person from being able to actively engage in employment or society, proving counterproductive to full societal participation thereby being detrimental to that person.

How is giving a self-appointed and select group of people multi-million dollars of taxpayer funding and control over our collective lands and waterways possibly ever going to ‘promote a spirit of reconciliation’, ‘work towards an equality of outcomes’ or ‘ensure an equal voice’? Is this intended to ‘right the wrongs of the past’? No, it can never do that, and if people think it will, that is nothing more than an absurd delusion. This will simply become a ‘rent-seeking-free-for-all’, with ‘Aboriginal’ people gaining multiple millions of dollars in revenue while actually contributing little or nothing back to the land or the community. The 2018-2019 DEWLP Annual Report lists \$13.1 million dollars that have been given in grants (for one year) to Victorian Aboriginal Organisations to ‘manage lands and waterways’ in Victoria. Who is it that is actually receiving this money, and what are they doing with it?

It would appear bizarre that a person can now place exclusive emphasis on their distant Aboriginal heritage, to the exclusion of their European or other heritage, thereby taking advantage of their newly found recognition, status, celebrity, benefits and advantages as an ‘Aborigine’. Sadly, what is happening now seems to reflect an inherent contemporary directionless emptiness in Australian and western society. Being recognised as an ‘Aborigine’ may now give a person an identity, a career, and their life new meaning, but should the rest of us now have to pay for that?

We now have a situation here in Victoria where the 48,000 self-identifying descendants of a remnant Aboriginal population that 120 years ago likely numbered no more than 400 people, already including many mixed descent children, are now in receipt of billions of dollars of taxpayer funds and are now claiming ownership to the lands and waterways of most of Victoria for which all the rest of us guilty citizens must feel bad about and ‘pay the rent’ – forever. What is of course ironic is that many of these intra and inter-tribal ‘Aborigines’ often don’t get along with, or agree with

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<sup>30</sup> Kernebone, E. 2019. *Bendigo Advertiser*. (13 July).  
<https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/6268973/it-felt-right-reviving-the-dja-dja-wurrung-language/>

each other and continue their squabbling and infighting today, much as they have done for thousands of years. Unlike the myth of the noble savage, they are nothing like a homogenous spiritual group – indeed, they are just like the rest of us.

The recently announced ‘Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement’<sup>31</sup> claims that it will “promote reconciliation” yet this is the exact opposite to what it will do. This misleading and perhaps deceitful document and arrangement will in fact promote huge anger and resentment, especially over time as ‘Aboriginal’ control and privileges become more firmly established, along with new limits on whitefella activities and with new fees and charges imposed.

On top of the \$33 million awarded in 2018 to the 3,000 Taungurung people for ‘land and water rights’<sup>32</sup> the Taungurung have now been given a further \$26 million as a part of the latest ‘traditional owner settlement’<sup>33</sup>, plus a further \$390,776 annual grant from DEWLP. That’s \$59,390,779 dollars in less than two years, being \$19,796 for every Taungurung person, plus interest, plus additional grants and benefits, plus freehold title to land and buildings. Most Australians do not believe that a very small group of select people should be given so much power, control, land, buildings and money all for nothing based upon a small part of their genetic heritage. This is the exact opposite of what most Australians believe as being fair and equitable. For example, how can the old Woods Point Police Station, an important historic building in the town, now simply be given for free to the Taungurung, who have never had any previous connection or involvement in the town whatsoever, rather than it being given to the long running Woods Point Progress Association who could make excellent use of it?

It is further clear that laws applying to all other Victorians will now in many cases no longer apply to the Taungurung. These government policies are taking Victoria in completely the opposite direction to that in which we should be going, that of cooperative equality and harmony, and we will all one day live to regret it. How will any of this ‘benefit all Victorians’?

This is nothing more than a grand scale scam – an ‘Emperors New Clothes’ form of delusion, for which we shall all have to pay. How can the remote partial descendents of 400 people 120 years ago now essentially own much of the state, gain billions of dollars in taxpayer funding, produce little by way of value for money, and tell the rest of the population where they can and cannot go, and what they can and cannot do on the land, all the while now being given exclusive access themselves? How did this happen? This is not about being a racist – it’s about the facts of history, about genuine and real equity and above all, about common sense and fairness.

Indeed, today’s Victorian ‘Aborigines’ now have highly paid employment in the bureaucracy reserved for them, as is also increasingly occurring (and enforced by law) in the corporate sector. This inequity is highlighted by the fact that many ‘Aboriginal’ families are now financially very well off yet still receive many benefits, whereas many other European and ethnic immigrant families are very poor, yet are entitled to fewer benefits than middle-class aborigines. Is this the ‘new equity’?

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement#factsheet>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.watercareer.com.au/archived-news/giant-title-claim-secured>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.pressreader.com/australia/wangaratta-chronicle/20200824/281483573758180>

As shown by the appallingly misleading lies of the Australian version of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement, the politics and policies of division create an ‘us-and-them’ resentment that inevitably leads to conflict, as opposed to the ‘we’re all in this together’ approach as one collective humanity. When we start to favour one group over another, resentment by the group not favoured is a certainty. In Victoria (as distinct from many areas of the NT, WA, Qld and NSW) being an ‘Aborigine’ is now to become a member and heir to an exclusive race-based club with huge financial benefits. Why have we created and funded a special privileged class of people who are in reality just like all the rest of us?

Most of the 48,000 Aborigines in Victoria today are predominantly ‘white’, originating from European or other ancestors and only from a remnant 400 Aboriginal individuals and small families as described in detail above. These are the historical facts which seem to be conveniently ignored (indeed derided) in the new world order of Aboriginal revisionism, mythology and invention – not based upon historical fact or reality at all. This is a great dishonesty and disservice to the whole community, and above all, why are we not even allowed to have an honest discussion about it?

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**NB:** All internet web addresses are correct at the time of writing. Some may have been later deleted or archived.

## Appendix B

### Funding to Aboriginal Organisations:

#### DEWLP 2018-2019 Annual Report

##### Management of Public Land and Forests - grant recipients

(Pp 284-287)

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	\$1,795,134.00
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation	\$903,194.00
Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board	\$690,000.00
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	\$490,448.00
Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations	\$389,126.00
Dhelkunya Dja (A sub-set of the Dja Dja Wurrung)	\$380,000.00
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	\$264,660.00
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	\$245,000.00
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	\$170,000.00
Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation	\$120,000.00
Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	\$120,000.00
Wurundjeri Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corp	\$120,000.00
Djandak (Another sub-set of the Dja Dja Wurrung)	\$77,273.00
Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation	\$50,000.00
Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Inc	\$20,000.00
	<b>\$5,834,835.00</b>

##### Effective Water Management and Supply - grant recipients

(Pp-276-279)

Djandak (Another sub-set of the Dja Dja Wurrung)	\$804,591
Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	\$422,582
Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation	\$330,090
Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	\$289,615
Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	\$270,776
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation	\$247,666
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	\$185,803
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	\$184,393
Wurundjeri Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corp	\$94,286
Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Inc	\$75,000
Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation	\$33,727
	<b>\$2,938,529</b>

##### Local Government Grant Recipients

(Pp 299 – 302)

Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-operative Inc	\$800,000.00
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	\$600,000.00
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation	\$598,367.00
Aboriginal Community Elders Services Inc	\$494,236.00
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Co-operative Ltd	\$287,744.00

Aboriginal Housing Victoria	\$287,652.00
Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corp	\$150,000.00
Worawa Aboriginal College Ltd	\$121,750.00
Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation	\$119,911.00
Dhauwurd-Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Service Inc	\$115,563.00
Aborigines Advancement League Inc	\$103,299.00
Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association Inc	\$90,020.00
Healesville Belonging Place	\$50,000.00
Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative	\$41,044.00
Baluk Arts	\$40,000.00
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	\$40,000.00
Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service Inc	\$40,000.00
Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	\$40,000.00
Moogji Aboriginal Council	\$40,000.00
Victorian Aboriginal Community Services	\$40,000.00
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service	\$40,000.00
Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	\$38,463.00
Njernda Aboriginal Corporation	\$38,304.00
Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations	\$36,000.00
Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation	\$33,096.00
Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	\$32,000.00
Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation (p288)	\$13,049.00
	<b>\$4,330,498.00</b>

**Totals:**

<b>Management of Public Land and Forests</b>	\$5,834,835.00
<b>Effective Water Management and Supply</b>	\$2,938,529.00
<b>Local Government Grant Recipients</b>	\$4,330,498.00
<b>2018-2019 Total:</b>	<b>\$13,103,862.00</b>