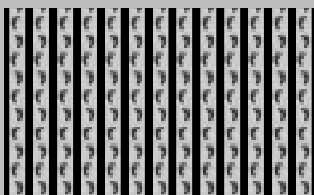


Millennium Dreaming:



Indigenous Peoples in Australia
in the Era of Reconciliation –
How Far Have we Come –
How Far Have we to Go?

SENATOR ADEN RIDGEWAY

Murdoch Memorial Lecture
17 November, 1999



MURDOCH
UNIVERSITY
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Introduction to Senator Aden Ridgeway
given by The Hon Fred Chaney AO, Chancellor, Murdoch University



This is the University's premier Lecture, inaugurated in 1974, to mark the centenary of the birth of Sir Walter Murdoch, after whom the University was named. Sir Walter was the foundation Professor of English at the University of Western Australia from 1913 to 1939, and a prolific journalist whose newspaper columns were known for their shrewdness, for their clarity of thought and writing, and their propensity to deflate pomposity and humbug. He was a man who eschewed cant, a man of immense principle, and I think he would have been proud of tonight's speaker.

In the past few months, Senator Aden Ridgeway's name has become one of the best-known in the nation. It has been said to me that he had burst onto the national political scene like a comet. But he won't be ephemeral like a comet. There is too much substance, too much determination and commitment for him to fade away.

It is given to very few Parliamentarians to play a pivotal role in a matter as weighty as reconciliation within weeks of being entering the Parliament, and to even fewer to achieve this from the upper house as a member of a minority party.

But the style and strength of purpose which Senator Ridgeway displayed in persuading the Prime Minister to a point which few thought could be reached, speaks clearly for his ability and bodes well for his longevity in politics.

And although the constitutional preamble and its thrust for reconciliation failed, nothing is more certain than that Aden Ridgeway will keep working to bring our two peoples together, and asking those of good will to join him.

Let me tell you some things you may not know about Aden Ridgeway. Born in Macksville in northern New South Wales in 1962 and a proud member of the Gumbayngirr people, his energy and determination have taken him from growing up in poverty on an Aboriginal reserve to election to the Senate of Australia.

He developed his formidable knowledge and negotiation skills working in a variety of New South Wales governmental departments and in organisations addressing issues such as environmental management, accountability, organisation reform and regional development.

His commitment to serving the community has given him experience in an extraordinary variety of positions, including as a Trustee of the Australian Museum and Chairperson of the Indigenous Issues Committee, Chairperson of the Aboriginal Catholic Council, Diocese of Sydney and in cultural positions such as Chair of the Bangarra Dance Company.

As Executive Director with the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council he initiated and implemented reform within the Land Council network and played a key role in the National Indigenous Working Group. He also is a family man who is devoted to his children and wife Stephanie, who unfortunately was unable to join us tonight. His large extended family, too, are most important to him and contribute to the stability which marks his life.

However, it is since he became Australian Democrats Senator for NSW on 1 July that he has become widely known on the national stage as a man who is guided by his own clear vision of what needs to be done, and who does it without fear or favour.

He challenges people of all views to reconsider those views, to think again, and it is this which makes him such a strong force for reconciliation, a much-needed bridge between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia. **I** have been privileged to do some work with Senator Ridgeway and have been struck by his preparedness to find the best in us all – a pretty good formula for reconciliation.

I am absolutely delighted that he has honoured Murdoch University tonight because we have always taken a very strong line on issues of tolerance and equity, and have fought racism wherever possible. We have students from more than 40 countries and many religious and social backgrounds, and we make every effort to ensure they feel at home.

You may not be aware, for example, that during orientation week when new students are getting to know the campus, staff wear an orange ribbon to demonstrate our abhorrence of racism. And, we have built a multi-faith Worship Centre which is used by people from Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Ba’Hai, Jewish and other faiths.

Consistent with the university’s respect for our first nations, there is now to be a formal Aboriginal welcome to Nyoongar country for Senator Ridgeway, by two Aboriginal members of our staff and children from the Aboriginal community.

It gives me great pleasure to ask Senator Ridgeway to come forward while Mr Len Collard plays the didgeridoo and Mr Fred Collard welcomes him in the Nyoongar language.

Introduction

I would like to start by acknowledging the Wadjuk people of Waylyulup Boordja on whose traditional lands we meet this evening, and by paying my respect to the Elders of the community.

I would also like to thank Murdoch University for the invitation to present the Murdoch Memorial Lecture for 1999. It is a great honour for me, particularly when I think of the many eminent Australians who have spoken in previous years on a great variety of subjects.

I do not expect that what I speak about tonight will rival the literary excellence and acclaim of Sir Walter Murdoch, but I know that his spirit is with us and serves as an inspiration to us all. On another matter, I was heartened to see at the recent Fox Studios that another relative thought fit that it was entirely appropriate to begin that opening by acknowledging the traditional owners of that land, the Eora people.

In time, this is something I would wish to see adopted as part of official National protocol for all ceremonies and functions.

As this millennium draws to a close, we find ourselves reflecting on a past that seems uncomfortable and unfamiliar – it is for many Australians, not at all like the Australia we learnt about at school. In a kind of national social cleansing, Australians are now confronted with all sorts of skeletons in the closet we had for too long left untouched. But as we enter the 21st century, there is a lot of unfinished business that we will not leave behind.

Only a few weeks ago, I still held great hope that Australians would choose to become a Republic and to adopt a Preamble to our Constitution, which for the first time in Australia's history, would have provided Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders.

But it seems my hopes were premature, I continue to hope that in my lifetime, things will change. It will be up to the opinion-makers to properly inform the community so that we all feel ready for this long-overdue reform.

There are two other matters that continue to have an impact on Australia's collective conscience as we move into the next millennium. The emerging generation will be much better informed in relation to the reality of the first 200 hundred years of history between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. They will be much better placed than previous generations to make decisions on fact, conscience and integrity but there will remain a need to properly address the matters of:

- consideration of Indigenous rights and National reconciliation.

A few months ago at a reconciliation conference in Wollongong, NSW, I heard Faith Bandler address the participants on the first morning. She followed a collection of speakers who described what reconciliation meant to them and how they thought it could be achieved. They had all spoken with great enthusiasm and in positive terms about what they were going to do, and how wonderful it would be when the goal of reconciliation is achieved.

Then Faith came to the microphone. As a woman who has fought against the most amazing odds and at a time when Aboriginal people in Australia have so little, Faith commands enormous respect. It is she, more than anyone else, that most Australians credit with the overwhelmingly successful 'Yes' campaign in 1967 to enable the Commonwealth Government to have paramount responsibility for the making of laws for Indigenous Australians – a change that paved the way for the Native Title Act.

Her speech was one that literally took the wind out of the audience's sails with a wisdom and clarity of analysis that were quite penetrating.

She spoke of the "willing blindness" of so many Australians to the sufferings of their Indigenous countrymen.

For Faith, the high point of reconciliation was long past – many people in the audience had not even been born to see it, because 1967 was some thirty years ago.

In short, Faith Bandler brought a reality check to the conference.

I interpreted her speech as a reminder that although a Commonwealth power was created to enact legislation for Aboriginal people, there has been no Commonwealth legislative response which has satisfied Indigenous demands for the recognition and protection of our fundamental human rights.

I am the first to acknowledge that it is very difficult to approach the topics of reconciliation and native title from an objective viewpoint. Just about every Australian has their own opinion about whether native title is a good or bad thing, and there are countless definitions of what reconciliation could be, if given full support.

I consider that it is one of my roles, equally with each of you here, to advance the process of reconciliation through the development of greater understanding and knowledge of our complex histories.

I do not propose that we will arrive at a definitive answer tonight on either issue – I hope, although, to have you leave tonight stimulated to ask more questions as the first step towards answers.

Story



Rather than ‘lecture’ you tonight, I would like to share with you a story that belongs to my people, the Gumbaynggir People of the north coast of NSW.

It is a story that is called Muurrbay – The Tree of Life, and through the struggle between two groups of Aboriginal people for possession of the tree, the story provides some explanation of the meaning of Indigenous connection to country.

This a phrase that is often used, but its fundamental meaning and significance to Indigenous Australian identity is overlooked, disregarded or invalidated by the actions of some politicians.

The tree itself existed supernaturally in three places bringing together the coastal Gumbaynggir, the inland Gumbaynggir, and the Dhunghutti peoples, for the sharing of the figs.

Trouble began one time when the three groups gathered from the east, the west and the south for a ceremonial feast.

Those from the west came early and when the others arrived, they quickly noticed that the inlanders were sitting on one side of the fig tree eating all of the big ones, leaving the small figs for the rest.

This caused an immediate rift leading to accusations of stealing all the fruit, leaving no big ones and becoming evil towards the others.

At this point, Birrugan, a great ancestor hero and spiritual being, came down amongst the fighting and it was he who was given ownership of the tree for the Gumbaynggir and the Dhungutti people together as one.

Many people were still unhappy with this, and so the tree was lifted up towards the sky, to be removed for all time.

While this was happening, some of the young warriors of the two tribes threw vines up and over the tree to tie it down to the earth, and another warrior used a small axe to chop pieces off the tree.

What was left after the struggle was the creation of three resting places for the sacred tree which also gave birth to the 'weeping fig' and the now small 'white fig' tree.

Muurrbay – the Tree of Life was to be shared and it was to unite the tribes. To this day there is a very close bond between all the Gumbaynggir and Dhungutti peoples.

It is indeed a story of connection to land, but it also asks: How do we embrace the creative opportunities that life presents us? How do we foster mutual respect between two groups that sometimes feel that their interests are in competition with one another? In other words, how do we reconcile for reconciliation?

For Australia, it begins with an understanding of our people, our stories, our histories and our connections to land and sea. It is in this context that we need to approach the issue of cultural rights and equality of opportunity if Australia is to engage in a meaningful and fruitful public debate.

Why Protecting Country is so Important for Indigenous Peoples



Perhaps the most critical common thread among Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders is that we have always regarded ourselves as the traditional owners and not much of that view has changed today.

Our ties to our lands remain unbroken despite over 200 years of dispossession and genocide. And this ongoing relationship with our lands is based on the same spirituality, the same conviction of belief, and the same passion, regardless of whether we are talking about a Yolngu person from the Northern Territory or a member of the Gumbaynggir people in NSW.

All peoples regard their relationship with their lands as one that can be likened to a spiritual connection to country, and a feeling of oneness with the Earth.

It is a strong feeling of being related to the land, of being born of the land and sharing with it a deep and intimate relationship. It is a blood and spiritual relationship, one that is timeless, but also one able to evolve and develop as our relationships with our land undergo change. But it is a relationship that has no equivalent in Western languages or law.

It is not appropriate to categorise it simply as a property right, an ownership right, because rights to country are not exclusively held by individuals. They are both communal and individual, and every right comes with responsibility. Nor is it appropriate to think of Indigenous Peoples as just 'inhabitants' or 'custodians'. We are not simply holding or occupying the land. We live with it in kinship. It is the people, customs and lore which define relationship.

This is the relationship that lies at the heart of the legal term 'native title' and the very identity of Indigenous Peoples. And this is the relationship that I believe was recognised by the High Court in the Mabo decision.

Overview



The Mabo decision should never have been a cause for outrage at Indigenous success it was simply the victory of belated success over others discontent and it should have given us the opportunity for talk on the higher ideal of justice rather than the mere question of property.

In any examination of native title and reconciliation, however, it is important to reflect on how the Australian legal system recognised native title and what the Mabo decision means in terms of the common law and what it means to Indigenous Australians.

Native title, as recognised by the High Court, is an inherent right.

The Native Title Act gave us a means by which native title could be recognised and the further means by which activities of future land users could be negotiated with Indigenous peoples. But it is a cumbersome and overly bureaucratic process that delivers no justice to one, and slow outcomes to the other.

I want to look at the way in which these legal rights have since been treated by the political and social processes operating in Australia. In particular, I intend to look at the 1998 amendments to the Native Title Act commonly known as the Ten Point Plan – amendments that have been deemed racially discriminatory by the United Nations Committee on Human Rights and in breach of accepted international standards

I believe that there is a need to examine creative, lateral alternatives to this legal labyrinth which, I consider would deliver a better, fairer, more workable and more secure outcome for all involved.

After all, it is not only the farmers and the miners who want security – Indigenous peoples do as well - it's just that we talk about our concerns in different terms. But the point of difference is where reconciliation starts and it is about moving towards mutual understanding and agreement based on that understanding.

While as a Senator, I have a role in the making of laws, the perspective I give tonight is that of an Indigenous person and as a member of the Gumbaynggir People. I have had the opportunity to see first hand the processes that led to the enactment of the Native Title Act in 1993 and the subsequent amendments that followed later.

Seventeen years prior to the now famous High Court 'Mabo' decision, the Australian Parliament passed the Racial Discrimination Act. That Act guaranteed every Australian the right to equal treatment before the law.

It was the Racial Discrimination Act which prevented the Queensland Government from legislating to extinguish Eddie Mabo's rights in 1985, on the basis that to treat the native title rights of an Indigenous person in a different fashion to the rights and interests held as a result of a Crown grant, would be discriminatory.

Accordingly, at the time the High Court handed down its 1992 decision, the main source of protection for native title was the Racial Discrimination Act. Contrary to popular belief, the Native Title Act 1993 was not introduced to protect the rights of Indigenous people so much as to remove many of the obstacles placed in the path of developers by the Racial Discrimination Act.

In other words, the Racial Discrimination Act provided sufficient protection for native title on its own. This was confirmed by the fact that, in declaring Western Australia's native title legislation invalid in 1995, the High Court based its reasoning primarily on the inconsistency between the Western Australian legislation and the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act, not the Native Title Act.

The issue of validity of title was of particular concern to the mining industry. The approach of that industry in 1992 and 1993 had the hallmarks of its campaign to oppose national land rights in 1984 and 85. In particular, there were many within the peak industry bodies who were pressing the Commonwealth to use its legislative power to extinguish native title or, alternatively, to repeal the Racial Discrimination Act so as to allow the States and Territories to do so.

The immediate dilemma for the Keating Government was to find a means of validating titles which were potentially invalid while at the same time maintaining the fiction that such a validation, which required the government to override the Racial Discrimination Act, was not in itself, a clear act of racial discrimination.

Throughout 1993, Indigenous leaders from the major land councils and Indigenous organisations around the country met to formulate a position on the government's intention to legislate in response to the Mabo decision. After an agonising debate within the leadership, the decision was taken to offer the government a compromise on validation.

Under that compromise (known as the Peace Plan), Indigenous Peoples through their representative organisations, would consent to the government overriding the Racial Discrimination Act in order to validate non-Indigenous interests which had been created prior to the Mabo decision. This was done at the expense of our own interests.

The enormity of this concession and its historic significance is something, which non-Indigenous Australians have never appeared to grasp. In return for this concession, the leadership sought a right of consent over what happened on native title lands in the future.

If agreed, the right of consent would have seen the introduction of an obligation that required persons to seek and obtain the consent of the traditional owners before entering onto or using traditional lands or waters. The idea of consent is central to traditional laws and customs relating to place.

It was a right, which despite the offer of validation under the Peace Plan, the Keating government was not prepared to recognise. Instead, it offered what became known as the right to negotiate.

With considerable reluctance, Indigenous leaders accepted the compromise and gave their endorsement to the rolling back of the Racial Discrimination Act to allow the validation of previous invalid acts which affected native title. With the consent of Indigenous Peoples, the Keating Government's Native Title legislation was enacted.

Understanding this is important if people are to understand why Aboriginal people felt so betrayed by the 1998 amendments and why that suspicion continues to remain. Having obtained the benefit of the validation of invalid non-Indigenous interests, the Parliament refused to honour the obligations, which it had accepted in 1993 as the quid quo pro for that validation.

The human rights of Indigenous people, including their traditional rights in land, are clearly an issue of national concern. The standards which govern the protection of those rights are also a matter of international concern as the country's reputation will be judged closely on this issue.

It is important that there be a level of consistency across the country in the rights afforded Indigenous people in the protection of their lands. While I am personally uncomfortable with the idea of separate regimes for States and Territories, I recognise that some States and Territories may be willing to go well beyond the minimum required by the legislation. Given the potentially wide scope to recognise regimes offering very different standards, the minimum benchmark would need to be ascertained by careful consideration of Australia's international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

It is now over seven years since the High Court handed down the Mabo decision. In that time, there has been enormous national anguish over the process by which the ancient rights of Indigenous people to their traditional lands should be recognised and protected.

The labyrinth of laws and procedures which have emerged, many of them conflicting or irrational, is the cause of some despair amongst many Indigenous and non indigenous people alike. There are some who believe that the issues raised by the High Court can be resolved with simple solutions. Invariably these solutions involve the denial of the rights of Indigenous people and when considered from an historical perspective truly represent no solution at all.

At the same time, I do not believe that it is beyond us to devise a much more practical, economic and equitable system for according Indigenous people the proper recognition of their traditional interests in their land and waters but the response of governments still remains to be seen by the Australian Senate.

Finally on this matter, governments ought see the opportunity before them as a challenge to understanding the real meaning of reconciliation rather than yet another means of marginalising the legitimate interests of Indigenous Australians. For Indigenous Australians, the Nation's response should not shamefully suggest that if we wish to move forward in our recognition then we can only do so by ceasing to be a threat to the majority. It would be unreal to expect that we would give up those demands even if those demands constitute that very threat.

Reconciliation and the 1967 Referendum



Despite the well-intended efforts of some during recent debates, we must view the outcome in the context of the past two centuries within this Nation.

Our first 100 hundred years as six colonies was an era of dispossession, displacement, conversion and assimilation. It was indeed, a century of shame.

Dispossession was removal from land; displacement was the stolen generations and the creation of reserves; conversion was the role played by the missions; and assimilation was the creation of restricted citizenship under the now repugnant, 'White Australia' policy.

It was a dark period of wardship governed by laws of separateness where every aspect of the life of a native was supervised and dealt with as the authorities saw fit.

The second 100 hundred years was a century of enlightened shame. Other Australians became more aware of the plight of the Aborigines; 'assimilation' was abandoned and replaced with 'integration' and people for the first time in the history of this great country were asked to decide on a proposed new deal:

"Should Aborigines be counted in the census, and should the Commonwealth Government have responsibility for the Aborigines."

The 'new deal' was in essence to step away from the policy of intensive supervision by government and, where possible, progressively lay the foundation for full citizenship and integration for the Aborigines into wider society.

Perhaps Faith Bandler understood this very well in her recent comments but I believe that the three decades since the referendum has been the 30 years of relevance for Indigenous Australians. A new order in Aboriginal affairs had arrived with a clear intent to:

- strengthen indigenous communities,
- lessen control and create a more favourable environment for the development of healthy communities,
- continue to step away from the surrogate role performed by the government, particularly if it undermines the achievement of self-sufficiency.

In these years of relevance it must be acknowledged that there has been marked improvement in policy direction and commitment in Aboriginal affairs:

- the Commonwealth had officially accepted its mandate of 'national responsibility' from the 1967 Referendum,
- the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was created as a 'life-raft' for struggling indigenous communities,
- later, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was introduced to provide a more secure bridge for the provision of primary services to indigenous people by the government,
- there was dramatic improvement in the standards of Indigenous living, particularly housing, education and health generally, and most importantly,
 - there was a resurgence in cultural identity and improved levels of community self-esteem.

Despite all of these good years, what continues to plague indigenous communities is a complete under-estimation of:

- racism and prejudice,
 - the nature and cost of the problems to be fixed,
- the difficulties in defining who has responsibility for matters between governments,
 - the clouds of inferiority hanging over black heads,
 - a paralysis of human ability to acknowledge the past in order to get on with the future,
 - and simple blind ignorance.

These are the structural and attitudinal obstacles which cause an affront to reconciliation, and which also endangers the common good of Australian society.

In cultural terms, 'reconciliation' was here before the 'white man came'. Like 'native title', it is a word with ancient meanings steeped in a human history of compassion, understanding, wisdom, spirituality and humanity.

The challenge for the Nation in reconciliation is to take sides. In this case there is only room for one-side.

The message of all political parties in this country must be a vibrant appeal for a new order in “Reconciliation in Indigenous – Australian affairs”.

In this regard, we should seek to overcome prejudice and basic fear in order to achieve fundamental equality for Indigenous Australians and we should speak out against the introduction of new policies that have no regard for the maintenance of cultural identity.

For Indigenous people, we require the tools to climb out of ‘black poverty’ so that there is human recognition of the need for land, and social and political organisation to preserve most of all, cultural identity.

Our struggle to achieve ‘just reconciliation’ is our own need and desire to overcome the status of second class citizen and to cure ourselves of the problems associated with education, housing, employment, health and wider public services.

Fundamentally, the Australian people must understand and respect that the solution must provide us with the capacity to cure our own ills, it must require that you also learn from us in how the cure is found and done, and most importantly through reconciliation, it will require you to need us more than we need you.

Reflection and conclusion



Since being elected to Federal Parliament, I have learnt much about how cynical the political processes can be and the low concern that indigenous affairs is given unless there is an opportunity for political ‘point-scoring’.

I am the first to acknowledge that a lot has been done since the 1967 Referendum but much remains to be accomplished.

Getting things done is the sense of things possible and we should not always be too hasty in condemning all acts of mutual concession as bad morals. Politics and legislation is not the arena for inflexible principles or unattainable ideals but in saying that, no one should misunderstand that politics should be void of principle and ideal completely.

On the contrary, principles and ideals are the guardians of morality and our saviour from complete tyranny.

In my maiden speech, I made comment that the biggest challenge I would face would arise in being Aboriginal and Australian. Accordingly, my role in Parliament will increasingly require me to show impartial leadership that combines the attributes of being Aboriginal and Australian.

But I am always mindful that after two centuries this Nation has been less than perfect in its dealings with Indigenous people and there continues a feeling amongst my people to resist full 'Australian socialisation' without dealing with unfinished business. It is the absence of settlement which continues to cause resistance.

We cannot turn a 'blind eye' to the Nation's faults, or be deaf to what we do not want to hear, or even continue to deny that wrongs continue to be done. The beauty and splendor of this great Nation conceals the legacies of past policies and the symptoms of rotteness, decay and idleness.

But in politics, if I say to my constituents that I can do nothing, then I am unsympathetic. If I try and fail, they say that I am like all of the rest of the politicians, and having been recently been married, I now go home and snarl at the wife.

Politics is a very unforgiving business and everyone likes to pretend that the angels are all on one side. The only thing certain is that the critics always stand on the sidelines never brave enough to engage in the game – when it is most difficult and when it is most required.

In Australia, the traditional agenda for Indigenous affairs has become tiresomely predictable and this gives call for an ever increasing need to adopt a more practical style in our search for reconciliation. Even if some of the actions are misconstrued, outrageous or divisive, the issue is much more about being able to engage and finding a genuine way of moving forward.

It is fundamentally about achieving a reasonable political discourse and opportunity for negotiation.

The preamble could have been the successful breakthrough so badly needed to provide a positive rallying point for the Nation on Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. Its outcome, is indicative of referenda history in this country where nothing succeeds without full and active cross-party support.

Nevertheless, I do not regard the preamble's outcome as a total failure and I am heartened by the fact that more than (1) in (3) Australians voted 'YES' for the preamble. This is five times more Australians than the other good people who signed the "Sorry" books – this augurs well for reconciliation and next years launch of the 'Document for Reconciliation'.

It is also important to note that the outcome of the preamble question has placed enormous expectation upon reconciliation as the new rallying point for Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

The challenge for the Indigenous people and particularly the leadership, is in moving forward and taking the Nation with us. We should not concern ourselves with trying to change the past but in transforming its present manifestations rather than replacing it.

This, of course, will require a change in tactic to understand that moving forward is incremental and we should adopt the attitude of "something or nothing" rather than "all or nothing".

Most of all, it is our duty to show patience, restraint, our own generosity, wisdom, strength and courage, in the struggle for solutions which are so rarely found.

The Australian people also have a duty. They must provide a trusting, understanding and compassionate view of Indigenous Australians. To do so, would mean that we can all hand to our children new visions and attitudes for the future.

In closing, progress has been made since the 1967 Referendum but it is also the time when the 'clock started ticking'. We should now all understand that reconciliation is a pathway to 'putting to bed our ghosts of the past' and for the next two decades – by the year 2020 – we should accomplish a covenant with Australia's Indigenous people.

Before next year, each of us has time to commit and more importantly, we give ourselves the time to work through the hard issues.

Next years launch of the Document of Reconciliation could quite easily become the prescription which allows us to transform the present day manifestations of a poor past and give younger Australians a greater opportunity to live with cultural dignity and self-respect.

Thank you.

Aden Ridgeway

SENATOR FOR NSW

