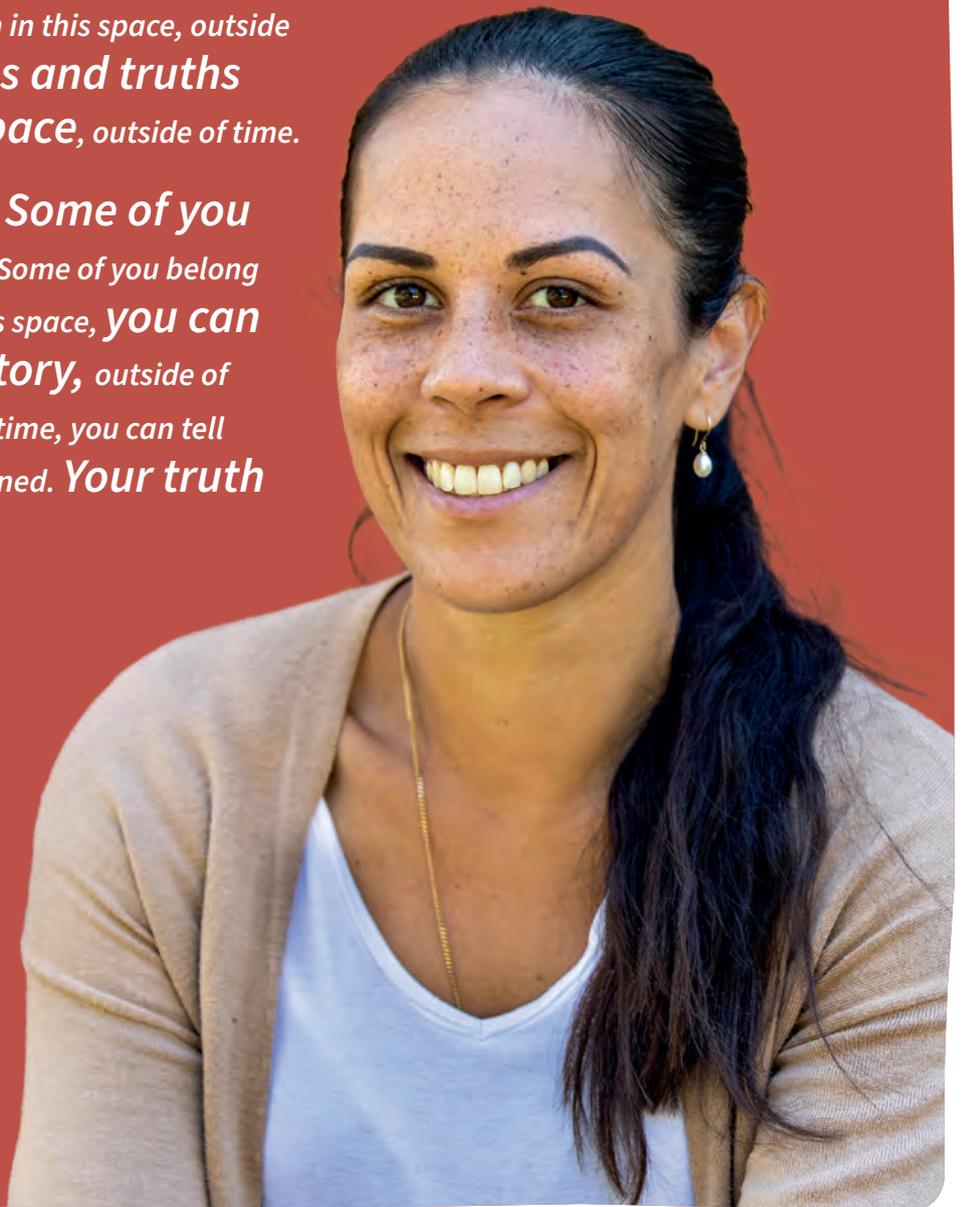


Truth: from the heart

This is a space outside of time.

Unusual meetings can happen in this space, outside of time. Unusual stories and truths can be told in this space, outside of time.

Some of you belong here now. Some of you belong here before. Some of you belong here a long time before. In this space, you can meet and tell your story, outside of time. In this space, outside of time, you can tell your truth, whenever it happened. Your truth belongs here...



**ABORIGINAL
CATHOLIC
MINISTRY**
SYDNEY



**catholic
mission**

Reach out. Give life.

Acknowledgement of Country & First Nations Peoples

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations Peoples of Australia and their continuing connections to and responsibilities for country and water over thousands of generations as the oldest living cultures in the world. We recognise their diverse identities, knowledges systems and spiritualities.

We honour Elders past and present, and emerging for they hold the histories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Welcome to Truth: from the heart

The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* is an invitation to the Australian people from First Nations Australians. It asks Australians to walk together to build a better future by establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for the purpose of treaty making and truth telling. (Source: ulurustatement.org/the-statement)

Truth: from the heart, a joint initiative of Catholic Mission and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, is a response to the Uluru Statement's invitation to walk together into the future. It is a resource to support adult and senior student groups to explore the truth of the shared histories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and the historical and ongoing consequences of these histories, as our nation considers constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples.

Aim

Truth: from the heart aims to:

- immerse participants in a relevant, problematic situation
- affect the whole person: their empathy, imagination, will, creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility
- prompt participants to critically analyse complex, interconnected problems and make connections to their own lives
- help participants to seek solutions, based on a common humanity, knowledge of the Gospel, or faith experience
- challenge participants to take action

Outcomes

Having taken part in a ***Truth: from the heart*** event, participants will:

- be able to listen to competing narratives in a fair and equitable way and appreciate the complexity of reconciling these competing stories
- be able to identify and discuss events that resulted in dispossession of land and the consequent changes in wellbeing and sense of agency for First Nations peoples
- be able to identify and discuss actions of solidarity with First Nations peoples and action for justice as ways of participating in the mission of Jesus
- recognise the need for all people to have a voice, and understand the call for First Nations peoples to have a 'Voice to Parliament'
- make informed decisions about recognising the first peoples of this land, in a spirit of reconciliation



Getting your head around it

What is a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling?

Getting your head around what a ***Truth: from the heart*** truth telling actually IS, is one of the crucial elements of running a ***Truth: from the heart*** truth telling.

As the Aim and Outcomes suggest, the purpose of a ***Truth: from the heart*** truth telling is to be a **transformational, experiential activity** that enables participants to engage in a truth telling regarding Australia's history, from multiple perspectives, that deeply resonates with them. In this truth telling the Catholic Church's role has been highlighted. This experience will allow participants to better understand the significance of the ***Uluru Statement from the Heart*** and assess their own position in relation to the 2023 referendum, and other important moments on the journey of reconciliation. So, that's the purpose. But still, what IS a ***Truth: from the heart*** truth telling?

In a nutshell

Picture a big table with lots of people around it. Who are they all? Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from different times in Australia's modern history, who have come together to tell the truth of their own experience and look for a way forward together.

Participants work in small teams to take on the role of an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal character (a real person who lived between 1788 and today), whose story is important and will be shared at a 'truth telling'. What is unusual is that this truth telling event occurs 'outside of time', enabling people from the five epochs of modern Australian history to sit together, share, listen, and interact.

Although the truth telling involves taking on a role, participants don't need to be actors as such – they just need to be prepared to adopt the point of view of their character during the truth telling. The more the participants embody their adopted persona, feel the challenge of this character's position and respond from this space, the more powerful the truth telling becomes.

Characters can be represented by multiple participants – one will be the 'speaker' during the truth telling; the others the 'brains trust' who think as the character and advise the speaker. Together, the speaker and brains trust will reflect on the character's biography, decide on what the speaker will say, and determine how the speaker will act to achieve that character's goals.

A ***Truth: from the heart*** truth telling is introduced, explained and guided by a facilitator. This resource contains agendas, scripts, character profiles and more to help the process along, a debriefing guide to assist the facilitator with the all-important post truth telling discussion, and a guide to help participants plan action in response to the truth telling. All three elements – the experience, reflecting on the experience, and responding to the experience – are crucial for achieving the Aim and Outcomes of ***Truth: from the heart***.

The five epochs

- colonialisation and the Frontier Wars
- 'protection' and segregation (including the Stolen Generations)
- assimilation
- self-determination
- reconciliation

After moving through the five epochs, a multitude of perspectives will have been heard. The question of why the ***Uluru Statement from the Heart*** is significant will be better understood and a solid historical context will have been laid out regarding issues relevant to the referendum.

The philosophy behind the truth telling is influenced by Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. This learning process immerses participants in a real-world scenario and empowers them to learn from this place. In this model, learning is more than cognitive; it happens at an embodied level, engaging participants' empathy, imagination, will, creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

- immerses participants in a real, problematic situation
- affects the whole person: their empathy, imagination, will, creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility
- allows the participant to see how she/he is implicated in the suffering of another; participants critically analyse complex and interconnected problems, causes and their own lives
- helps participants seek solutions, based on a common humanity
- challenges participants to take action



Laying the groundwork

Planning for a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling

Planning is one of the crucial elements of running a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling. This truth telling engages participants' empathy, imagination, will, creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility – so it is important to spend time assembling the right team and laying the groundwork to be able to make this happen. Excellent planning gives your *Truth: from the heart* truth telling the best chance of achieving the desired outcomes and spurring participants to further action.

Planning tips

- get to know the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*
- get to know the Aim and Outcomes of a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling
- get to know what a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling actually is (see the 'Getting your head around it' section of this resource)
- get to know the major narratives around 'voice' and 'Makarrata' in recent popular media
- get to know the characteristics and context of your likely participants

Following is a suggested 4-6 week planning guide for a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling. If you are familiar with event planning, feel free to follow your own established processes.

4-6 weeks before the truth telling

- identify the coordinating team and review this resource together
- appoint a Coordinator to keep track of the 'big picture' and support each person involved to be on track and on time
- allocate planning roles and responsibilities and establish a timeline including dates and time to meet
- determine how the event will be funded, what the budget is and how expenditure will be approved and monitored
- establish how the team will communicate between meetings e.g. email, Google Docs, a What's App group
- identify a facilitator for the event and, if they are not part of the coordinating team, provide them with this resource for preparation
- identify and confirm a suitable venue for the truth telling; consider accessibility, seating, lighting, bathroom facilities, kitchen facilities, cultural appropriateness
- consider who will attend and how you will invite participants; determine how participants will register and then invite them to register
- consider the most appropriate way to inform traditional custodians about your event
- start communicating about your *Truth: from the heart* truth telling (see the 'Getting the word out' section of this resource)
- inform Catholic Mission and/or Aboriginal Catholic Ministry about your event and reach out for any assistance you need

3-4 weeks before the truth telling

- continue weekly planning/progress meetings and check the timeline
- keep promoting your event publicly through social media, websites, meetings, newsletters, media releases and phone calls
- check-in with the facilitator – do they need any further help preparing?
- work with the facilitator to determine the layout for the venue; consider access, seating, lighting, sound, any specific needs of your group of participants
- confirm registration/participation with participants
- have members of the coordinating team contact potential participants
- if you are feeding participants, plan and order the menu
- if you are providing support or counselling services, book them

1-2 weeks before the truth telling

- continue weekly planning/progress meetings and check the timeline
- keep promoting your event publicly through social media, websites, meetings, newsletters, media releases and phone calls
- check-in with the facilitator – do they need any further help preparing?
- confirm event details with participants
- confirm catering, venue and support services
- update Catholic Mission and/or Aboriginal Catholic Ministry about your event and reach out for any assistance you need

The week of the truth telling

- continue weekly planning/progress meetings and check the timeline
- keep promoting your event publicly through social media, websites, meetings, newsletters, media releases and phone calls
- send a final reminder to participants confirming details
- confirm catering, venue and support services

- arrange parking for guests including media; inform them
- prepare name tags, stationery, COVID safe supplies including sanitiser, sound amplification if required
- print agendas, scripts and character profiles props for each character (see the '*Making it happen*' section of this resource) and check you have each character's prop
- check all registrations are complete

The day of the truth telling

- keep promoting your event publicly through social media, websites, meetings, newsletters, media releases and phone calls
- set up the venue
- coordinate catering
- greet participants
- greet media and brief them on the schedule and Aims and Outcomes of the event

After the truth telling

- keep promoting your event publicly through social media, websites, meetings, newsletters, media releases and phone calls
- communicate with participants about the actions they might take in response to the truth telling
- send 'thank you' messages; organise a thank you morning tea/lunch for those who helped out
- if participants needed additional support services, follow up to see how they are going
- if additional materials are being shared with participants (e.g. links, notes, ideas for action, information about Catholic Mission and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry) send these
- hold a final meeting of the coordinating team and evaluate the truth telling against the event's Outcomes
- send a description of your event and some images to Catholic Mission and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

Getting the word out

Communicating about a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling

Communicating about your event is one of the crucial elements of running a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling. Achieving the Aim and Outcomes is transformative for participants, but good communication can amplify the impact of a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling and contribute to the broader community narrative about a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission.

Make an effective media list

- think local: think about what you read, watch and view, what people around you read, watch and view, and where your potential audience could be
- think connectedness: what is the social media reach of the members of the coordinating team and the groups they each belong to?
- select the main forms of media that will help you reach your audience; ring the editorial team, tell them what you are planning, and find out who is the best person to send the media release to or to organise an interview

Ask for:

Newspaper – news desk, chief of staff or a specific reporter such as community affairs or religious reporter

Community/suburban newspaper – editor

Commercial AM and FM Radio, DAB Radio – news director or editor, community service coordinator or producer of a specific program

Community FM Radio – the manager

Television – news desk, chief of staff, producer of a specific program

Church newspapers – the editor

School and parish newsletters – the secretary or administration officer

Distribute the media release

- start promoting your truth telling event through your chosen social media channels
- send your media release to the recommended person in each media agency
- follow up with a phone call to confirm that the media release was received and whether they are interested in covering your story
- invite a few media to cover the event on-site and to write their own story
- the week before the event, make phone calls to those who agreed to run the story; confirm with them if they are going to send someone to cover the event and if so do they need parking, do they wish to interview any particular person and do they need any materials to help them
- if some media are unable to attend the event but would like to cover the story arrange times before or after the event to do interviews and plan to send all relevant materials with quality, captioned photographs of the event

Supporting media on the day of the truth telling

- provide media agencies with a copy of this guide
- allow them good access to the areas where the event will take place and brief them on the format of the event and how and where things will occur; point out any special 'photo' opportunities for newspaper photographers and TV cameras
- give participants the chance to notify media agencies if they do not wish to be photographed or filmed
- allow time at the end of the event for individual interviews with relevant spokespeople

Sample media release

Catholic Church's Truth: from the Heart told by St Matthew's Community Members

Community members from St Matthew's will take part in a truth telling experience on Wednesday 27 October as part of Catholic Mission and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Sydney's truth telling project **Truth: from the heart**, a response to the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**.

Ten characters from the Catholic Church and Sydney's history will help participants understand the Church's relationship with Aboriginal people throughout various historical epochs. Beginning with colonisation and frontier wars and moving through protection and segregation; assimilation; self-determination; and reconciliation.

Participants will take on the characters using role play and symbolic costumes to help them more deeply identify with their character and then proceed to tell their story at a special truth telling.

The activity enables participants to experience the past, see events in context and weigh up the often unjust decisions that were made and where these led. The consequences of choices are played out and the group witnesses some courageous life stories from the past and the present.

Participants are encouraged to think about Australia's future and the choices they will make. By using some analytical tools such as the Border Crossing theory they will be asked to consider whether or not they will be part of building new opportunities for all of us, together.

"It should be interesting to see how different people play their characters," said Jo Brown, a community member. *"Hopefully this exercise will deepen our understanding of Australia's history and its impact today, plus open a window on the part the Church played for better or worse. It's our turn now to make good decisions moving forward."* (Include your own quotes from your participants.)

For more information, or to get involved contact the **Truth: from the heart** event Coordinator at St Matthew's on 9999 9999.

To support Catholic Mission's work, visit catholicmission.org.au.

For more information about Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Sydney, visit aboriginal.sydneycatholic.org.



Making it happen

Running a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling

Overview of roles

Facilitator

The person running the event. They can intervene in the truth telling and questioning to pause, prompt, explain or redirect, but have no story to share in the truth telling.

Elder

The person who leads the truth telling, reading from a script. Typically, this role is offered to the eldest participant. They embody those who came before: ‘the ancestors of your stories, the ancestors of your cultures, the ancestors of your faith;...the communion of saints’. They have no story to share in the truth telling.

Epoch	Characters	Props
Colonialisation & Frontier Wars	Barangaroo One of the most important and well-known Aboriginal women of the Sydney region at the time of colonisation	Shell necklace and message stick
	John Bede Polding The first Catholic bishop in Australia	Zuchetto (round bishop’s cap) and cross
‘Protection’ & Segregation	William Cooper An Aboriginal man, political activist, community leader and early pioneer of using democratic processes to effect change for Aboriginal people	Shirt, tie and waistcoat
	Richard Campbell Aboriginal man and representative of the Stolen Generations.	Straw hat or similar light, summer hat
Assimilation	Charlie Perkins An Aboriginal man, senior public servant and civil rights activist	A 60s style shirt, a soccer ball
	Elsie Heiss An Aboriginal woman, community, church and organisational leader	A 50s style scarf
Self-determination	Mum Shirl An Aboriginal woman, carer, community organiser and social justice and political activist	A 70s style floral dress or scarf
	Tess Ward A Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and esteemed teacher/teacher linguist	A book to represent language and the emblem of Sr Tess’s religious congregation on a lanyard
Reconciliation	Patrick Dodson An Aboriginal man, former Catholic priest, ‘Father of Reconciliation’ and federal Senator	Black felt Akubra style hat
	John Howard The 25th Prime Minister of Australia and the second longest serving Prime Minister to date	Glasses and jacket

Further readings to learn more about the characters are available in the appendix (pages 44-45).

Individual character profiles

Barangaroo

Barangaroo was a Cammeraygal woman of the Eora language group who became an important and powerful figure in the early interactions between the colonisers and the Aboriginal people of the area now known as Sydney. She was likely born around 1750, as she was described in 1790 as being in her early 40s, worldly, wise and freer of spirit than the colonisers expected of a woman.

Barangaroo had a husband and two children, all of whom perished in the disastrous smallpox epidemic that devastated the Aboriginal population around Sydney in the earliest years of the colony, killing up to half of the Aboriginal people of the region, particularly women and elders. Barangaroo later married an Aboriginal man of the Wangal people, Bennelong, who was to become one of the most prominent Aboriginal people of early colonial times.

Prior to first contact, Barangaroo was already a highly skilled fisherwoman. Eora fisherwomen were responsible for providing fish, the staple food, for their people, and they navigated the harbour in bark canoes in which they nurtured fires for warmth and cooking as well as their infants, in seas that were often challenging, while they sang their people's songs. Eora women's skills on and in the water – swimming, diving, fishing and canoeing – were highly developed and greatly admired by the newcomers.

Barangaroo had considerable influence over Bennelong, himself a strong character, and

remonstrated with him for consorting with the colonisers, to the extent of breaking his fishing spear in anger. At times she refused to accompany him to visit the British, refused him permission to accompany them on expeditions, and was seen to hit him back when he hit her. All this was a great surprise to the newcomers. She is known to have intervened when a convict was being flogged for stealing Aboriginal fishing gear – in her law, a disproportionate punishment – and consistently refused food and drink from the British, as well as refusing to wear European clothes. She was only ever described as wearing a slim bone through a nose piercing.

Most likely, the impressive status Barangaroo enjoyed was closely linked to her leadership and efficacy as a provider for her people. She was deeply troubled and angered by an event in November 1790 in which the colonisers took hundreds of kilograms of fish from the harbour in fishing nets, sending almost a hundred kilograms as a gift to her and her clan. This was far more than could possibly be needed, a wasteful gift that undermined the role and stewardship of the Eora women.

Barangaroo gave birth to a baby girl in 1791. Although Bennelong tried to persuade her to give birth at the first Government House, she refused and found a suitable place in the bush to welcome her daughter according to tradition. Not long afterwards, for reasons not known, Barangaroo passed away. She was cremated with her fishing gear beside her and was buried by Bennelong in the grounds of the first Government House.

YOU ARE...

You are Barangaroo, one of the most important and well-known Aboriginal women of the Sydney region at the time of colonisation.

YOU DID...

You held important knowledge of laws, teachings and women's rituals. You were the foremost of the impressive Eora fisherwomen who provided the staple food source of your people, fish. You were considered striking and somewhat frightening; you engaged with the colonisers, but always on your own terms, holding your culture and traditions strongly.

YOU WANT...

You want your people and their way of life to survive and thrive on Country, and for those who come to your Country to show respect for culture, laws and traditions.

John Bede Polding

John Bede Polding OSB was an English cleric who became the first Catholic bishop and archbishop in the colony of New South Wales. He was born in the north of England in 1794. His parents died when he was 8 and he was cared for by his uncle, a senior Benedictine monk. He was educated in Benedictine schools and entered Benedictine religious life around the age of 16, taking the name Bede in honour of St Bede and his uncle. He was ordained a priest aged 24 and worked in a number of ministries including parish priest, prefect, novice-master, and sub-prior in his monastery.

Around the age of 40, Polding was appointed bishop and became 'Vicar Apostolic of New Holland, Van Diemen's Land and the adjoining islands'. He departed England, arriving in Sydney via Hobart in 1835. His work immediately made an impression on the colonial authorities, and he was respected by Catholics and Protestants alike. Consequently, upon the arrival of each shipload of convicts, the Catholics among them were placed at his disposal. Polding and his assistants saw each convict personally and ministered to them before they were sent to their various destinations. A committed missionary, he travelled extensively throughout the colony and established numerous schools and churches.

In April 1842 Polding was appointed the first Bishop of the new Catholic diocese of Sydney; soon afterwards he was made Archbishop. He desired to create an Australian Benedictine monastery to train priests and bring culture and learning to colonial society, and also

desired that the new diocese should be Benedictine. Both pursuits were ultimately unsuccessful, due partly to the number of Irish amongst the Catholic clergy and population, and the political and social impact of the end of convict transportation.

In 1843 Polding established the first Catholic mission for Aboriginal people in the colony, on Stradbroke Island. He returned to Sydney with three Aboriginal children with the intention of educating them; their families demanded their return, threatening to kill the missionaries, and the children were returned after several weeks' absence.

Polding was quite concerned about the impact of colonial settlement on First Nations peoples. In 1845 he gave evidence to a NSW Legislative Council Select Committee: *"I am making myself a black, putting myself in that position, and taking away all that I know except that this is my country, that my father lived by pursuing the emu, and the kangaroo, that I am driven away from my hunting grounds, that my children and tribe are subjected to the grossest barbarities... The Aborigine will demand, 'What right have you to come here? We have not asked you to come, and you take away our lands, you drive away our means of subsistence.'"*

In an 1849 pastoral letter to the Catholic population, he wrote: *"The wretched unfortunate Aborigines of the country – the first occupants of the lands over which your flocks and herds now roam – have a very strong claim upon you. Nor will the Lord hold you innocent if you have not used your best endeavours to promote their temporal and eternal well-being".*

Polding passed away in Darlinghurst, Sydney in 1877.

YOU ARE...

You are John Bede Polding, the first Catholic bishop in Australia.

YOU DID...

You worked tirelessly throughout your life to establish the Catholic Church in the colony and promote your Benedictine values. You were respected by colonial authorities and advocated with them on behalf of Aboriginal peoples, as well as being responsible for removing Aboriginal children from family and country.

YOU WANT...

You want to see the Catholic Church established and thriving in this land. You want those in power and those under your care to be aware of the impact of colonisation on First Nations peoples.

William Cooper

William Cooper was a Yorta Yorta man born around 1861. In his early years he lived on missions and state-funded reserves in New South Wales and Victoria, including the Maloga Mission and the Cummeragunja Mission.

Cooper worked a variety of farm jobs as a shearer, handyman and coachman; despite his limited schooling, he became highly literate in English later in life. He joined the Australian Workers' Union and represented Aboriginal workers in western New South Wales and central Victoria, advocating for people affected by droughts. During this time Aboriginal people were not eligible for the support made available for citizens during the droughts of the 1920s and the depression of the 1930s.

It seems likely that Cooper was influenced in his beliefs and advocacy by his Christian formation – that all people, including black people, are children of God. The Exodus story, promising salvation to the persecuted and suffering Israelites, had clear parallels for Cooper to the experience of the Yorta Yorta.

In his 70s, William Cooper moved to Melbourne as he was ineligible for an aged pension while living on a reserve like Cummeragunja. By 1935, he had helped found the Australian Aboriginies' League. This group aimed, among other objectives, for Aboriginal peoples to have a voice in parliament. By October 1937, a petition to the King of over 1800 signatures was presented to the federal government; by March 1938, the federal government had declined to pass the petition on to the monarch.

Disappointed by the impact of democratic processes, Cooper and others including Jack Patten and Bill Ferguson inaugurated a protest on the 150th

anniversary of colonisation, 26 January 1938. This was called 'an Aboriginal day of mourning'. This drew attention to the devastation and decimation of Aboriginal communities since first contact. Patten's speech stated:

"We refuse to be pushed into the background. We have decided to make ourselves heard... We do not wish to be left behind in Australia's march to progress. We ask for full citizen rights including old-age pensions, maternity bonus, relief work when unemployed, and the right to a full Australian education for our children... We must do something ourselves to draw public attention to our plight. This is why this Conference is held, to discuss ways and means of arousing the conscience of White Australians, who have us in their power, but have hitherto refused to help us."

Furthermore, Cooper specifically requested that Christian communities observe 'Aborigines Day', calling for sermons that included and ministered to First Nations peoples. Later, the observance of this day of mourning grew into what is now known as NAIDOC Week.

Cooper was committed to justice not only for his own people, but for other marginalised peoples. He led one of the most prominent public protests globally against the Nazi persecution of Jews in response to Kristallnacht, leading a march to the German Consulate in Melbourne where the group's petition was rebuffed by officials. He was also interested in how New Zealand and Canada had made treaties with First Nations peoples and how this could influence progress in Australia.

William Cooper passed away in 1961 and is buried at Cummeragunja.

YOU ARE...

You are William Cooper, an Aboriginal man, political activist, community leader and early pioneer of using democratic processes to effect change for Aboriginal people.

YOU DID...

After years of advocacy, late in life, you founded the Australian Aboriginies' League. You lobbied Australian governments, petitioned the King for Indigenous recognition, and organised a Day of Mourning on January 26.

YOU WANT...

You want the Crown and the Government to recognise that First Nations peoples' need and that they deserve to have a voice in parliament, and hope that the sympathy of white Australians will result in justice and recompense.

Richard Campbell

(Warning: the following description deals with the issue of abuse. A counselling service supporting people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence is available 24 hours, 7 days per week on 1800 737 732)

Richard Campbell is a Gumbaynggirr/Dhungutti man born in Bowraville in 1969. When Richard was a young boy he would help his father make tools like boomerangs and shields for sale. Richard would sketch pictures for his dad who would burn them into the wood then Richard would put the paint in the design for his father.

Richard's family moved frequently when he was young, very aware that their 11 children could be taken at any time by government authorities. This fear became a reality when Richard was nine years old. He and some of his siblings were taken and charged with neglect. He and his older brother were placed in Kempsey's state-run Kinchela Boys Home. His three younger siblings went to other homes; it would be twelve years before he was reunited with his parents. During the years he was separated from his family, Richard clung to his faith and what he had been taught by them about God, the Gospel and Christ's all-embracing love and compassion.

Richard describes Kinchela as a harsh, cruel environment. The boys were abused, had to work for their food and were treated inhumanely. Disconnected from their families and communities, their very identities were stolen as they were given numbers and referred to by that number. Richard was NUMBER 28 and says Kinchela was "like hell". Commonly, boys were stripped and chained naked to a tree as punishment. Richard found the only way he could ease the pain of his removal and abuse was through art. He would sketch on the floorboards, drawing animals, people

and anything he saw. Officials were aware that one way to punish Richard was to confiscate his pencils.

Richard left Kinchela at the age of sixteen and began work as a manual labourer, then for Telecom as a linesman. Drawing continued to be an outlet and eventually he enrolled in TAFE, beginning an art class where his talent was quickly recognised. He also began to realise he had an instinctual knowledge about Aboriginal ways of painting. Gaining further confidence, he completed a three year degree in visual arts.

It was through Richard's sister Louise, who had also been taken from the family, that Richard was first asked to paint a work that connected his Aboriginal spirituality with Gospel stories. Through painting this work Richard felt his own spirituality "flooding back" as he remembered again the stories of his people and noticed the similarities between Aboriginal and Christian stories.

This first artistic commission sparked a career expressing faith and Gospel stories through the lens of Aboriginal spirituality. Among his body of work are depictions of the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, Black Madonnas, the Last Supper, and the Stations of the Cross for the Reconciliation Church at La Perouse. Richard's representation of the Stations are a retelling of his own story of being stolen, which breathes contemporary life into an ancient story: *"The Stations are based on my story, my cross...when Jesus stands accused, I stand with him as a nine year old boy charged with neglect, judged by the colour of my skin, who we were and what we were"*.

Richard notes that one important outcome of his work is that Aboriginal Catholics are acknowledged as an integral part of the Australian Church. He wants people to realise that "we all have a spiritual connection, we're all brothers and sisters with the animals, the trees, rivers and rocks we all belong to one big God - call it Christ, we call it Birrigun, we are all one in God".

YOU ARE...

You are Richard Campbell, an Aboriginal man, artist, and survivor of the Stolen Generations.

YOU DID...

You created artworks that synthesised Aboriginal wisdom and spirituality with traditional western Christian traditions.

YOU WANT...

You want truth telling and healing. You want it to be acknowledged that the government policies that resulted in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being 'stolen' were wrong and have caused trauma to generations of families. You want Australians to understand that we all need to take responsibility for the part we played, including the Catholic Church.

Charles (Charlie) Perkins

Dr Charles (Charlie) Perkins AO was an Arrernte and Kalkadoon man born in 1936 near Alice Springs. He spent his early years outside Alice Springs, as it was illegal for Aboriginal people to live in town. He attended a segregated church school before moving to Adelaide to attend a school for mixed race boys, where he began to understand the extent of discrimination against Aboriginal people. He struggled to fit in but found solace in playing sport.

Following school, Perkins qualified as a fitter and turner and travelled to the UK where he made a living playing soccer professionally. He continued to play upon his return to Australia which enabled him to finance his studies at the University of Sydney.

While a student at the university, Perkins was influenced by the civil rights movement in the United States. In 1965 he organised a student bus tour of Walgett, Moree, Bowraville and Kempsey in rural NSW called the Freedom Ride, protesting the discrimination and disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people especially in health, education and housing. It was intended to inspire action and gained a large amount of media attention, particularly at the public pool in Moree. The Freedom Ride is recognised as one of Australia's most significant civil rights events. Perkins graduated in 1966, the first Aboriginal man to earn a university degree.

Perkins was a strong and active advocate for the 'yes' case in the successful 1967 referendum. The change to the constitution enabled the Commonwealth to legislate regarding Aboriginal affairs, and by 1969

Perkins had begun working for the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, later the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. He suffered renal failure and was the recipient of a kidney transplant which sustained him for almost 30 years.

Perkins often courted controversy thanks to his passionately held views, sometimes forceful style of communication, and actions such as sitting with the Aboriginal Tent Embassy for a week in 1975. This resulted in him taking a year's leave from the Department, during which time he received a literature grant to write his autobiography. He returned to the Department and was gradually promoted and held senior positions in other organisations.

After a change of government in 1983, Perkins became the first Aboriginal person to be appointed Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. He continued to be controversial; Prime Minister Hawke observed that Perkins *"sometimes found it difficult to observe the constraints usually imposed on permanent heads of departments because he had a burning passion for advancing the interests of his people"*. In 1987 Perkins was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for his services to Aboriginal welfare.

In later years, Perkins served on the Arrernte Council of Central Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and the Australian Sports Commission. He was awarded honorary doctorates by two universities and was named by the National Trust as one of Australia's National Living Treasures.

Perkins passed away in Sydney in 2000. Since his death several prizes, orations, scholarships and buildings have been named in his honour.

YOU ARE...

You are Charles Perkins AO, an Aboriginal man, senior public servant and civil rights activist.

YOU DID...

You were the first Aboriginal man to earn a university degree. You were a key organiser of the Freedom Ride. You served in several senior roles in organisations and government departments.

YOU WANT...

You want to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in decision making, enable them to elect their own representatives and have a strong voice in democratic debate. You want to use the institutions of government to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage, especially in health, education and housing.

Elsie (Aunty Elsie) Heiss

Elsie 'Aunty Elsie' Heiss is a Wiradjuri woman who was born in 1937 on Erambie Mission, near Cowra, NSW, and grew up around Cowra and Griffith. Her Aboriginal heritage, history and identity, along with the Catholic faith, were prominent influences from her early life and have remained so throughout her career and later years.

While on the school bus in Griffith around the age of nine, a white child spat on Elsie and called her derogatory names. This abusive incident affected Elsie deeply, and her father gave her advice to respond as Jesus would. Elsie responded *"Daddy, I'm not Jesus. Jesus turned the other cheek, I want to hit 'em in the cheek"*. Elsie's father led her to understand that a violent response would have her thrown out of school, and that education was key to the survival of Aboriginal peoples in Australia: *"You've got to educate those white fellas what racism's about, and the only way you're going to do it is through the church, because that's the only place you're going to be accepted"*.

Practicing the Catholic faith was not always easy in Elsie's early years. Mass was conducted behind closed doors with curtains drawn, as the manager of the mission was not Catholic and expected the Aboriginal people to follow his version of Christianity. But her Catholic identity grew in strength and remained strong when she moved to Sydney in her late teens, becoming part of the vibrant parish of St Vincent de Paul at Redfern.

Elsie met an Austrian carpenter named Joe who had migrated to Australia in the late 1950s, and they married in 1960. Initially each of their families had some difficulty welcoming the new in-law into the fold due to the differences in cultures. Eventually Elsie and Joe could boast of five children and seven grandchildren, and were married for 45 years, until Joe's passing.

Elsie was involved in community advocacy and activism, working with Aboriginal Health regarding diabetes, with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC), with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Ecumenical Council of NSW, and with Catholic Earthcare Australia. In the late 1980s she worked with Fr Frank Fletcher MSC to found Aboriginal Catholic Church Ministries (later Aboriginal Catholic Ministry). After ten years of this work Elsie worked with Fr Pat Hurley to enable the ongoing use of a church (Our Lady of Good Counsel, La Perouse), as a Reconciliation Church for the ministry's central place of worship, fellowship and learning. She has educated countless individuals, groups and schools about Aboriginal spirituality, the Stolen Generations, truth telling, reconciliation and justice.

The work of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry led Aunty Elsie to engagement with the highest levels of the Catholic church's hierarchy. In 1995 she was a key person in the smoking ceremony for Pope John Paul II, and in 1998 was the only Aboriginal representative at the Synod of Oceania in Rome. At World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008 Aunty Elsie played a major welcoming role and surprised Pope Benedict XVI when she greeted him in German. She continues to be regarded as an influential elder and church leader.

YOU ARE...

You are Elsie Heiss, an Aboriginal Woman, community, church and organisational leader.

YOU DID...

You were a key person in the founding of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Reconciliation Church. You have had a huge influence on the Catholic Church's understanding of Aboriginal cultures and spirituality.

YOU WANT...

You want to educate the wider Australian community about Aboriginal people, culture and history. You want to mentor young people to become the leaders and elders of tomorrow.

Shirley (Mum Shirl) Smith

Shirley ‘Mum Shirl’ Smith AM MBE was a Wiradjuri woman born in 1924. In her early days she lived on Erambie Mission, near Cowra, NSW. From an early age she lived with epilepsy and the stigma that accompanied her ‘fits’. Consequently, she did not attend regular school and was largely taught by her grandfather, becoming proficient in 16 Aboriginal languages. Shirley was always grateful to those who cared for her in her condition, and feels their care inspired her to support others in need.

Shirley moved to Sydney at a young age, marrying Darcy Smith, a traveling boxer. They were devastated when their first child was stillborn, as Shirley experienced an epileptic fit during childbirth and the baby did not survive. During her second pregnancy, Shirley moved to Kempsey to be near Darcy’s family, but returned to Sydney when she realised the local hospital was segregated. Shirley raised Beatrice as a single mother until she was around three, at which time Beatrice went to live with family in Kempsey.

A turning point in life arrived when Shirley’s brother Laurie was imprisoned. She visited him regularly and it soon became apparent that her visits had beneficial outcomes for other inmates, too. Even after Laurie’s release, she continued visiting inmates, and when asked by authorities what relation she was, she would invariably answer “I’m his Mum”, leading to the name by which she was widely known. Her work in prisons eventually resulted in her being the only woman ever granted unlimited access to NSW prisons.

Mum Shirl was a committed Catholic, though she left the Church for 14 years after experiencing discrimination from a priest during Mass. By the late 1960s she was an adviser to the Cardinal of the Archdiocese of Sydney, and from the 1970s until her passing was a prominent member of the Redfern parish that was particularly accessible and welcoming to Aboriginal people, led by Fr Ted Kennedy. She helped to found the Aboriginal Housing Company in Redfern, along with the Aboriginal Medical Service, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and Aboriginal Children’s Services.

Mum Shirl attended court with Aboriginal people to assist them and explain processes to them, helped reunite displaced children with their families, and helped find homes for children whose families could not care for them; she raised over 60 children herself. She was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1977, and a member of the Order of Australia in 1985, while the National Trust named her a National Living Treasure in 1998. These honours troubled her; after her OBE she reflected:

“As it was getting close to my turn, it was flashing into my mind the numbers of places where I couldn’t get served; how I had had to sit on the ground at the front of the picture theatre as a child in the roped off section that Blacks had to sit in, white kids in Cowra running after us yelling, ‘Nigger, nigger pull the trigger’, the camps and shacks that Blacks were having to live in all over this country that was, after all, ours – and here I was, standing up here with all these well-dressed and fashionable people, waiting in turn to collect this medal which would make me a Member of the British Empire.”

YOU ARE...

You are Mum Shirl, an Aboriginal woman, carer, community organiser and social justice and political activist.

YOU DID...

You visited innumerable Indigenous inmates in NSW prisons, raised around 60 foster children, and helped to found numerous community organisations in support of Aboriginal people. You were a stalwart of the Redfern parish and advised the Sydney Catholic church hierarchy on matters concerning Aboriginal peoples.

YOU WANT...

You want Aboriginal people to be able to enjoy the opportunities and sense of belonging non-Aboriginal people find in Australia. You want for government systems and processes to support rather than disempower Aboriginal people.

Teresa Ward

Sr Teresa (Tess) Ward FDNsc was born in 1945. She joined the missionary order the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and began teaching in northern Australian schools in 1968. Since 1971 Ward has worked in cross-cultural educational contexts, developing proficiency in numerous Indigenous languages and working with local communities on locally identified needs and priorities.

In 1968, Ward began teaching at a Darwin Catholic Primary School. From 1971, she worked as a teacher/teacher linguist on Bathurst Island, developing Tiwi language educational programs and materials. In 1978 Ward began work in Port Keats, around the time it was renamed Wadeye. She began the literacy in vernacular part of the bilingual program in 1978 and founded the Literature Production Centre in 1979, developing educational materials in the Murrinh Patha language, in conjunction with the Indigenous community. From 1984 Ward worked as a teacher on Nauru, and from 1986 returned to work on Bathurst Island until 1991.

Between 1997 and 2008, Ward worked in collaboration with the Mary MacKillop Institute for East Timorese Studies, Dili, East Timor (now Timor-Leste) developing educational materials to promote Tetun language literacy, as well as in-service programs for teachers. On her return from Timor-Leste, Ward returned to Wadeye to work as a teacher/teacher linguist once more at the request of the Indigenous leadership of the school in Wadeye.

Ward has met some barriers within the Church to the enculturation of the Gospel in northern Australian Indigenous communities. As a linguist with deep

cultural knowledge, she has encountered the nuances of translating the Catholic liturgy, with the specific vocabulary and language requirements of the Roman Missal, into language, for peoples she describes as 'deeply ceremonial' in their very way of being, but for whom some liturgical concepts are culturally unfamiliar.

In 2012, the Northern Territory Council for Human Rights recognised Ward's 40 years of service to promoting human rights through education, awarding her a Human Rights Award 'for women who have promoted and advocated the right to education and been involved in the community service in the area of education'. In 2016, Ward was awarded a medal of the Order of Australia 'for service to Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, particularly as a linguist and educator'. With characteristic humility, Ward accepted the honours while directing the accolades to the people with whom she works: *"My passion and my energy is going into working with Indigenous people who want to keep their culture and language strong... I feel I should be congratulating [the community] because they've held their language, they hold their culture dearly, they honour their land."*

Ward has reflected that the work she has been involved in has come about by being with the people, listening to local needs, and responding in partnership with local people in ways that are culturally appropriate. In the communities she has worked in, this has resulted in the Catholic Church being regarded well by local people, but this is almost always due to the positive relationships enjoyed by local people with those seen to represent the church, such as Sr Tess and other enculturated leaders including Parish Priests. For Sr Tess, being embedded in community enables her to respond to the call of her order's founder to 'show the heart of God on this earth'.

YOU ARE...

You are Sr Tess Ward OAM, a Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and esteemed teacher/teacher linguist.

YOU DID...

You have worked in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Timor-Leste and Nauru, providing culturally appropriate education and educational resources in local languages, in partnership with local peoples.

YOU WANT...

You want governments and the Catholic Church to listen to and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. You want Indigenous Australians to be heard, to have agency in their own lives and communities, and so be able to flourish. Looking back you were disappointed that the Church only agreed to support the 1967 referendum, one month before it was held.

Patrick Dodson

Patrick Dodson is a Yawuru man born in Broome in 1948. In his early years his Irish Australian father and Aboriginal mother moved Patrick and their family to the Northern Territory to escape Western Australian laws that prohibited mixed-race families, both parents having been previously imprisoned for disobeying these laws. Dodson and his six siblings were orphaned in 1960 when Patrick was 13, and despite the efforts of extended family, Patrick and three siblings were made wards of the state.

Patrick and his brother Mick moved to Victoria as boarding students in the early 60s on scholarships arranged by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSCs). The Dodsons were the only Indigenous students at the time. Patrick showed great leadership potential, achieved excellent academic results, represented the school in AFL, and was elected as College Captain.

After completing schooling, Dodson studied to become a priest of the MSC order. He was ordained a priest in 1975, the first Aboriginal person to be ordained a Catholic priest in Australia. Commencing his ministry, Dodson attempted to integrate long repressed Indigenous practices with Catholic traditions and rituals. His 'radical' reforms at Wadeye were controversial and resulted in the bishop transferring him to Alice Springs. Dodson was not silenced by the move, but knew he was isolated. He recognised that though there were Irish clergy who should have some empathy for Indigenous Australians based on their own cultural experience of dispossession, this was not necessarily the case. There were no black bishops and it was likely he would be moved to Papua New Guinea or a ministry in an outer suburb.

When he realised he could effect change for his people outside the Catholic Church Dodson left the priesthood and the Catholic Church in the early 1980s.

In the 1980s, Dodson worked tirelessly for Indigenous rights and for reconciliation. He was appointed to both the Central and Kimberley Land Councils, eventually becoming director of each. A major achievement was negotiating the return of Uluru to its traditional owners, the Anangu people. In 1989 he was appointed as a royal commissioner to investigate the deaths of Aboriginal persons in custody.

Dodson was a founding chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) from 1991 to 1997, this work leading to the title of 'Father of Reconciliation'. He also served as co-chair of the Expert Panel for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians (2010–16). Mutual respect and dialogue characterised Dodson's work towards reconciliation, and in 2008 he was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize. He was recognised by the National Trust as one of Australia's National Living Treasures.

In 2016 Dodson entered the Australian Parliament as a Senator for Western Australia, representing the Australian Labour Party. He soon became the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders later serving as Shadow Assistant Minister for Reconciliation and Shadow Assistant Minister for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians.

He currently serves as Special Envoy for Reconciliation and Implementation of the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**, and Chair of Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

YOU ARE...

You are Patrick Dodson, an Aboriginal man, former Catholic priest, 'Father of Reconciliation' and federal Senator.

YOU DID...

You were the first Aboriginal person ordained as a Catholic priest; in your ministry sought to build bridges between Catholic and Indigenous spiritualities, and later left the priesthood. Since then, you have held many roles and, through your work, have earned the title 'Father of Reconciliation'.

YOU WANT...

You want to build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. You want constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and full implementation of the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**.

John Howard

John Howard AC was born in 1939 in Earlwood NSW. He studied law at the University of Sydney and became a solicitor upon graduation. Howard joined the Liberal Party in 1954 and was elected to federal Parliament in 1974. He was Federal Treasurer from 1977 until the party lost government in 1983. He was Leader of the Opposition from 1985-1989, then again from 1995 until he became Prime Minister in 1996.

Soon after the 1996 election, the Port Arthur massacre led to a national debate about gun laws, resulting in significant reform under Howard's leadership.

In 1997, Howard convened the Australian Reconciliation Convention. His remarks in the opening address were controversial: *"In facing the realities of the past... we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism... such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history."* Describing centuries of dispossession and frontier and systemic violence as 'blemishes' prompted many delegates to stand and turn their backs on the Prime Minister. He also controversially stated, *"Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control."*

After the High Court's Wik native title decision in 1998, Howard's government legislated to limit the impacts of the decision. In 1999, together with Aboriginal Democrat Senator Aden Ridgeway, Howard drafted a Motion of Reconciliation that was passed by the parliament. The motion committed the parliament to the cause of reconciliation, recognised the importance of understanding shared histories, acknowledged the mistreatment of many Indigenous Australians over

time, and expressed 'deep and sincere regret that Indigenous Australians suffered injustices under the practices of past generations'. The motion was passed but was controversial for not being an actual apology. Howard's commitment to not apologising for past wrongdoings was again evident when he was the only living former Prime Minister to not attend the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in 2008.

Also in 1999, Howard's government passed legislation to insert a preamble to the Australian Constitution, that would honour *"...Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the nation's first people, for their deep kinship with their lands and for their ancient and continuing cultures which enrich the life of our country..."*. The proposed preamble was rejected by voters at a referendum, with less than 40% of voters endorsing the proposal.

In 2004, after allegations of corruption within ATSIC (the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), the Howard government resolved to abolish ATSIC, with Howard stating: *"the experiment in elected representation for Indigenous people has been a failure"*. Subsequently, a Parliamentary Committee expressed serious concerns about the disempowerment of Indigenous voices and recommended the government *"give active support and funding to the formation of a national Indigenous elected representative body, and provide it with ongoing funding"*, which did not occur.

In 2007 the Howard government legislated what became known as the Northern Territory Intervention, in response to alarming reports of child abuse that emerged from a Royal Commission. Criticism of this response centred around lack of consultation with Indigenous communities about the measures introduced. Also in 2007, under the Howard government, Australia was one of only four nations who rejected the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

John Howard's term as Prime Minister ended in 2007.

YOU ARE...

You are John Howard AC, the 25th Prime Minister of Australia and the second longest serving Prime Minister to date.

YOU DID...

You made major reforms to Australia's gun laws and taxation systems, convened a constitutional convention and referendum on becoming a republic, committed Australia to peacekeeping in Indonesia and to combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, attempted major reforms in industrial relations, took a strong stance on asylum seekers, and commenced the Northern Territory Intervention.

YOU WANT...

You want to improve practical outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. You want for the blemishes in Australia's modern history to be acknowledged and for them to be seen in the context of the broader achievements of the nation.

Facilitator's agenda

Before the truth telling

1. Introduction
2. Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country
3. Purpose, overview, aim and outcomes
4. Introduce handouts – visualising time
5. Historical, political and religious context
6. Introduction to characters and handout – taking on a role
7. Researching and developing characters
8. Calling together and moving into the truth telling

During the truth telling

9. Assisting the Elder

After the truth telling

10. De-role reading and exercises
11. Debrief using the *Making sense of it* section of this guide
12. Plan next steps using the *Planning for action* section of this guide
13. Concluding statement

Facilitator's script

1.

The closing words of the **Uluru Statement from the Heart** are:

“In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”.

We are here today because each of you, individually and perhaps also collectively, has made a choice to respond to the Uluru Statement's invitation to walk together. The very thing you are doing today – participating in a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling – is a response to this invitation.

Truth: from the heart is a joint initiative of Catholic Mission and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. It is intended to support small groups, like this, to explore the truth of our shared histories and the historical and ongoing consequences of these histories, as our nation considers constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2.

As we gather for this purpose, I welcome you to Country...

OR

As we gather for this purpose, I invite (name) to welcome you to Country...

OR

As we gather for this purpose, let us acknowledge Country...

3.

Let's try to understand the purpose and overview, aims and outcomes of a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling.

The PURPOSE of a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling is to be a transformational, experiential activity that enables participants to engage in a truth telling regarding Australia's history, from multiple perspectives, that deeply resonates with them. Such a truth telling will allow participants to better understand the significance of the **Uluru Statement from the Heart** and assess their own position in relation to the 2023 referendum. So, that's the purpose. But still, what IS a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling?

As an OVERVIEW: in a nutshell... picture a big table with lots of people around it. Who are they all? Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from different times in Australia's modern history, who have come together to tell the truth of their own experience and look for a way forward together.

Participants work in small teams to take on the role of an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal character (a real person who lived between 1788 and today), whose story is important and will be shared at a 'truth telling'. What is unusual is that this truth telling event occurs 'outside of time', enabling people from the five epochs of modern Australian history to sit together, share, listen, and interact.

Although the truth telling involves taking on a role, you don't need to be actors as such – you just need to be prepared to adopt the point of view of our character during the truth telling. The more you embody your adopted persona, feel the challenge of this character's position and respond from this space, the more powerful the truth telling becomes.

Characters can be represented by multiple participants – one will be the 'speaker' during the truth telling; the others the 'brains trust' who think as the character and advise the speaker. Together, the speaker and brains trust will reflect on the character's biography, decide on what the speaker will say, and determine how the speaker will act to achieve that character's goals.

The AIMS of a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling are to:

- immerse participants in a relevant, problematic situation
- affect the whole person: their empathy, imagination, will, creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility
- prompt participants to critically analyse complex, interconnected problems and make connections to their own lives

- help participants to seek solutions, based on a common humanity, knowledge of the Gospel, or faith experience
- challenge participants to take action

The OUTCOMES of having taken part in a **Truth: from the heart** event are that participants will:

- be able to listen to competing narratives in a fair and equitable way and appreciate the complexity of reconciling these competing stories
- be able to identify and discuss events that resulted in dispossession of land and the consequent changes in wellbeing and sense of agency for First Nations peoples
- be able to identify and discuss actions of solidarity with First Nations peoples and action for justice as ways of participating in the mission of Jesus
- recognise the need for all people to have a voice, and understand the call for First Nations peoples to have a 'Voice to Parliament'
- make informed decisions about recognising the first peoples of this land, in a spirit of reconciliation

4.

The stories and truths that will be shared today unfolded over different periods of Australia's modern history. To help us have a clearer understanding of whose story fits where, we will use two Visualising Time handouts.

(distribute the handouts)

(facilitate a brief discussion about the timelines)

It can be interesting to visualise time by placing some key dates on the timelines. For example:

- The 1938 first 'Day of Mourning'
- The 1967 referendum
- The 1972 founding of the Tent Embassy in Canberra
- The 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- The 1992 Mabo High Court decision
- The 1997 Bringing Them Home report
- The 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations

5.

To place this truth telling in more of a historical, political and religious context, in addition to the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**, we shall briefly consider two other important statements, and some thoughts on ‘truth’ from Scripture.

(distribute the handouts)

In late 1992, then Prime Minister Paul Keating gave a speech in Redfern Park that has become known as the Redfern Speech or the Redfern Address. It was given to launch the United Nations’ International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in 1993. The speech is considered significant because it is the first time the Commonwealth Government acknowledged responsibility for the dispossession of First Nations Australians. Prime Minister Keating stated:

“The starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us, the non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with an act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing.

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.

We brought the diseases and the alcohol.

We committed the murders.

We took the children from their mothers.

We practised discrimination and exclusion.

It was our ignorance and our prejudice.

And our failure to imagine these things could be done to us.

With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds.

We failed to ask – how would I feel if this was done to me?

As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded us all.”

The Redfern Address is regarded as an important turning point in the national journey of truth telling, reconciliation, and coming together after a struggle.

Six years earlier, another significant statement was made in Alice Springs by Pope St John Paul II. In it, he acknowledged the presence of God in the cultures and ways of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from time immemorial, as well as acknowledging the deep and enduring wounds caused by dispossession and discrimination. He stated:

“Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgment of the land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination. Certainly, what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow...

The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognized agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past. The greatest value to be achieved by such agreements, which must be implemented without causing new injustices, is respect for the dignity and growth of the human person...

Past hurts cannot be healed by violence, nor are present injustices removed by resentment. Your Christian faith calls you to become the best kind of Aboriginal people you can be. This is possible only if reconciliation and forgiveness are part of your lives. Only then will you find happiness. Only then will you make your best contribution to all your brothers and sisters in this great nation. You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.”

The Alice Springs speech, like the Redfern speech, is considered an important moment in the national journey of truth telling, reconciliation, and coming together after a struggle.

To move on from these two important statements, it is worth considering the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, which can guide us in our economic, political, personal and spiritual lives. The principles are:

- preferential option for the poor
- dignity of the human person
- care for our common home
- subsidiarity and participation
- the common good
- solidarity

(socktober.org.au/socktober-challenge)

These principles can be excellent lenses through which to view the events of the truth telling today. If you are already familiar with them, it is good to keep them in mind throughout the truth telling, and refer to them in the debriefing.

Finally, some reflections on the idea of 'truth' from the Jewish and Christian scriptures. A concordance (a book which lists every word and where it appears in the Bible) of the NRSV translation of the Bible reveals that 'truth' appears 187 times!

In Psalm 15 (1-2), those who speak the truth from their heart are welcome in God's house:

*O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?
Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart. . .*

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians (4:15), he states that it is through speaking the truth in love that we are able to grow together into the body of Christ:

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

In Paul's famous reflection on love in 1 Corinthians (13:4-7), he makes a clear connection between love and truth:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

In 1 John (1:8-9) the importance of truth for healing past wrongdoing is revealed:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The complexity of 'truth' and its sometimes-contested nature is not hidden in scripture. For example, in the tense exchange in John's Gospel (18:37-38) while Jesus is on trial before Pontius Pilate, we hear the following:

Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

Powerfully, also in John's Gospel (14:6), Jesus himself identifies as 'truth':

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

6.

Now it is time for us to start exploring how you will become one of the characters at today's truth telling. For this we will use the Overview of roles and the Getting into (and out of) character handouts.

(distribute the handouts)

(give participants time to read each section; facilitate a brief discussion about the each section if required)

7.

Now, it is time to get to work getting to know your character!

Each participant will receive a character profile. This contains the information that will help you take on your role, whether you are a speaker or a member of a brains trust. You can feel free to highlight, underline, draw on, and scribble notes or questions on your character profile.

As a team, work through the information to form your picture of who you are, how you will behave, what you will contribute and what you want to get out of today's truth telling.

(distribute the handouts)

(form participants into teams and give twenty minutes for character development)

8.

It is now time to step out of time, put on the prop of your character, step into the truth telling space, and prepare your character to be part of this **Truth: from the heart** truth telling.

(instruct participants to take on their character and be 'in character')

At this point in time, I invite you to step 'out of time', and I hand over to our esteemed Elder, who will guide us through this truth telling.

9.

(during the truth telling, your job is to support the Elder character and keep the event flowing; you can intervene in the truth telling and questioning to pause, prompt, explain or redirect, but have no story to share in the truth telling)

(at item 5 of the Elder script, you will assist the Elder by managing the questioning and responding)

(at item 6 of the Elder script, you will assist the Elder by directing character teams to spend some time discussing what should come next; and by deciding and indicating to the Elder when to proceed to the next section)

(at item 7 of the Elder script, you will assist the Elder by indicating when to proceed to the First Nations characters' responses, by managing these responses, and by deciding and indicating to the Elder when to proceed to the next section)

(at item 8 of the Elder script, you will assist the Elder by indicating when to proceed to the non-First Nations characters' responses, by managing these responses, and by deciding and indicating to the Elder when to proceed to the next section)

10.

Now that the truth telling has concluded, let's return to the Getting into (and out of) character handout.

(give participants time to re-read the section on how to 'de-role'; facilitate a brief discussion and exercises to de-role if required)

11.

*(debrief participants using the **Making sense of it** section of this guide)*

12.

*(plan next steps using the **Planning for action** section of this guide)*

13.

That brings us to the end of today's **Truth: from the heart** truth telling event. I thank you all for your presence, your participation, and your openness to responding to the Uluru Statement's invitation to walk together. Together, we have sought to explore the truth of the shared histories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and the historical and ongoing consequences of these histories, as our nation considers constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples. Our challenge now, as we leave this event, is to take action in response to what we have heard and explored here today.

As the last word today, let us turn again to the closing words of the **Uluru Statement from the Heart**:

"In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future".

Elder's agenda

1. Welcome participants/characters
2. Invite characters to introduce themselves
3. Read the script to introduce each character to speak
4. Read the script to acknowledge each character's contribution; introduce the next character to speak or, after the final character, proceed to the questioning
5. Invite characters to ask questions of each other
6. Invite character teams to discuss and discern what should come next
7. Invite First Nations characters to suggest what should come next
8. Invite other characters to respond to First Nations characters, and suggest what should come next
9. Read the script to conclude the truth telling
10. Read the script to send participants from the truth telling and de-role

Elder's script

1.

Warami!

In one of the languages of this land, here in Sydney on Gadigal and Darug country, this is how you say hello. *(pause)*

Peace be with you. *(pause)*

Welcome to this space here. *(pause)*

Understand that you are welcome. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(pause)*

You belong here. Your story belongs here. *(pause)*

To be here in this space is an extraordinary thing. You will soon understand that this is a space outside of time. Unusual meetings can happen in this space, outside of time. Unusual stories and truths can be told in this space, outside of time. *(pause)*

Some of you belong here now. Some of you belong here before. Some of you belong here a long time before. In this space, you can meet and tell your story, outside of time. In this space, outside of time, you can tell your truth, whenever it happened. Your truth belongs here, outside of time. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(pause)*

The reason we come here is to tell stories. We all have a story. Everyone comes to this space to share their story – their true story. This is a space for truth telling. *(pause)*

To respect this space, all you must do is bring your truth, and listen to the truth of others. *(pause)*

You are going to share the truth of your story here. Your truth will sit here and listen to the truth of every other person here. That's what this space is for; that's why this space is special. You should listen too, like this space does. *(pause)*

All your stories will meet here; although they come from different times, they all come from here, and they're all going to sit together here, outside of time. Your stories belong here, like you belong here. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(pause)*

This space is big enough for your stories – (gesture to all characters) all of your stories. Open your ears, your mind, your heart, to hold all these stories, like this space does. In this space, outside of time, make yourself big enough for all these stories. *(pause)*

You should know that you storytellers are not alone here. We are here with you. We are the elders: the ancestors of your stories, the ancestors of your cultures, the ancestors of your faith; we are the communion of saints. We witnessed your stories as they unfolded in your lifetimes. *(pause)*

And we witness your truth telling in this space. *(pause)*

We are here with you. We hear your stories and your truth. You and your stories belong with us. They belong in this space. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(extended pause)*

2.

Before you tell your story here, everyone should know who you are – your name, why you are here, where you come from and who your people are.

We are ready to welcome your stories. Open your ears, your mind, your heart. May you listen with every part of your person.

(gesture to each character when it is their turn to introduce themselves)

(if needed, the facilitator can remind characters to introduce themselves in 30 seconds or less)

3.

(before each character begins)

Let us welcome name to this space for truth telling – welcome name. *(bow to acknowledge the character)*

We gather here, outside of time, that our stories and truths may meet. We are all here to witness your truth, your story.

Believe it; feel it.

(pause; bow and gesture to the character to indicate they should begin)

4.

(after each character concludes)

Name, your story belongs here. We thank you and acknowledge your story and your truth. **Believe it; feel it.** *(pause)*

Let us be still and silent, that your story may dwell in our ears, our minds, and our hearts.

(hold the silence for a moment; then introduce the next character or move on to the next section)

5.

(after the final character, proceed to the questioning)

We are here with you. We heard your stories and your truth. You and your stories belong with us. They belong in this space. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(extended pause)*

We welcomed your stories. Now, we welcome your questions to each other. Open your ears, your mind, your heart. May you listen with every part of your person.

(invite characters to put questions to each other and respond; the facilitator may assist to manage the questioning and responding)

6.

(the facilitator will direct character teams to spend some time discussing what should come next; the facilitator will decide and indicate to you when to proceed to the next section)

7.

(when the facilitator indicates, proceed to the First Nations characters' responses)

We are here with you. We heard your questions and your answers. You and your questions and answers belong with us. They belong in this space. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(extended pause)*

We welcomed your questions. Now, we welcome the ideas of First Nations peoples. Open your ears, your mind, your heart. May you listen with every part of your person.

(invite First Nations characters to suggest what they think the next steps should be after this truth telling)

(the facilitator may assist to manage these responses; the facilitator will decide and indicate to you when to proceed to the next section)

8.

(when the facilitator indicates, proceed to the other characters' responses)

We are here with you. We heard your ideas. You and your ideas and suggestions belong with us. They belong in this space. *(pause)*

Believe it; feel it. *(extended pause)*

We welcomed your ideas. Now, we welcome the responses and ideas of people who are not First Nations peoples. Open your ears, your mind, your heart. May you listen with every part of your person.

(invite characters who are not First Nations people to respond to what has been said, and suggest what they think the next steps should be after this truth telling)

(the facilitator may assist to manage these responses; the facilitator will decide and indicate to you when to proceed to the next section)

9.

We were all here. Outside of time, we all heard these stories. *(pause)*

We were all here. Outside of time, we all heard these truths. *(pause)*

We were all here. Outside of time, we listened with our ears, with our minds, with our hearts. We listened with every part of our person. *(pause)*

Outside of time, this space holds these stories and these truths. *(extended pause)*

But now you must step back into time. Now you must step out of this space, into your own time. *(pause)*

As you leave this space, carry these stories and these truths with you. *(pause)*

Remember that we were, and are, here with you. We are the elders: the ancestors of your stories, the ancestors of your cultures, the ancestors of your faith; we are the communion of saints. We witnessed your stories as they unfolded, and we witnessed your truth telling in this space. We witnessed the doing and the telling. *(pause)*

Thank you for telling these stories here, all together. These stories are the stories of our struggle. Reckoning with these truths is the way towards our shared future.

In one of the languages of this land, Yolgnu, this is called 'Makarrata'. This means facing the facts of wrongs and living again in peace. It means treaty and agreement making. Reckoning with these is the way towards our shared future. These are proper challenges, truth-tellers.

You must walk together now, taking these stories and truths forward, towards Makarrata. *(pause)*

10.

Go with our blessings. Carry these stories and truths with our blessings. We are your witnesses. **Peace be with you.**

(gesture to characters to remove their prop and character's name tag, leave the truth telling space and return to the briefing space)

Making sense of it

Unpacking a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling – a debriefing guide

Debriefing is one of the crucial elements of running a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling. This truth telling engages participants' empathy, imagination, will, creativity, initiative and sense of responsibility – so it is important to spend time unpacking the complex issues, feelings and ideas that are brought up.

The debriefing is built around effective questioning and active listening. Naturally, participants will respond from wherever they are 'at' – the same questions put to different people will elicit different responses at different times – and that's okay! This debriefing is a time when effective questioning and active listening enable the skillful facilitator to tailor the debriefing and discussion to the needs and perspectives of each unique group.

Every debriefing will be different, because every individual participant and group of participants is different. This guide provides some question stems and prompts to help you draw-out responses from participants. The stems are suggestions – don't limit yourself to these, feel free to come up with your own!

All participants deserve to have a voice and be heard. With your knowledge of the specific context of your group of participants, create an atmosphere in which participants can safely share their feelings, ideas and questions. It is okay for participants to respond to and disagree with another's comments; it is your job to ensure this happens in a way that is respectful and safe. Be invitational, positive and reassuring. Thank participants for their contributions.



Debriefing tips #1

- know the intended Aim and Outcomes of ***Truth: from the heart***
- be familiar with the major narratives around this issue in recent popular media
- formulate and pose effective questions on-the-go
- be flexible, according to the needs of the group
- have a prepared response in case extreme and fringe perspectives arise – these can be acknowledged, then engaged with outside the session, so the participant is heard and feels respected, but does not derail the shared dialogue

Debriefing tips #2

- get comfortable with silence – don't rush to fill a void, leave 'think time' for participants
- the 'think/pair/share' strategy enables thinking time, chat with a partner, and group sharing with another pair, which can then be reported back by a confident group member
- ask follow-up questions – Why? Can you say more about that? Can you give an example?
- encourage speakers to summarise the previous speaker's point before adding onto or disagreeing with it
- ask the group – thumbs up/down/sideways up if you agree/disagree/are on the fence about...

Debriefing tips #3

- if participants are not confident to share their own thoughts, invite them to share a thought they have heard from another participant
- play devil's advocate – ask participants to defend their perspectives against other points of view in the group
- have participants nominate a fellow participant to respond to their idea
- ask participants to talk through how they came to their conclusion
- invite participants to develop and pose their own questions

Following is a suggested outline for a debriefing that moves from emotional to cognitive and spiritual responses to a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling, then offers the chance to go deeper.

Emotional

Participating in a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling can be a confronting experience. Participants commonly experience feelings of discomfort, anger, sadness, guilt, dehumanisation and many others. That's okay! That is the way the experience is designed. The important point is that the facilitator helps participants explore their feelings and their meaning.

Some question stems:

- how did the truth telling make you feel?
- when...happened, what were you feeling then?
- how do you feel about what...just said?
- how did...make you like...?

Sometimes participants need more structured questions to help identify their feelings e.g.:

- when...was happening, were you comfortable? Did it make you happy? Explain.
- can you remember how you were feeling when...?

Cognitive

Once you have talked about the feelings evoked by the *Truth: from the heart* truth telling, it is time to engage intellectually with what happened and what it meant. The input for this should come from the participants – the facilitator's job is to ask questions to draw out these responses.

The following question stems and prompts begin with 'lower order' thinking skills such as remembering and progress to 'higher order' thinking skills such as analysing, evaluating and creating based on *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Anderson & Krathwohl eds., 2001). Higher order thinking is built upon the lower order skills; the facilitator can move between 'levels', enabling participants to explore, as deeply as they can, the issues raised.

Remember – identification and recall of information

- who, what, when, where, how...?

Understand – comprehending information and ideas

- explain...in your own words
- summarise...
- what do you think is the main idea of...?

Apply – using information and ideas in context

- how is...an example of...?
- how is...related to...?
- why is...important?

Analyse – separate a whole into parts, recognise hidden meanings

- how does...compare/contrast with...?
- connect...to...
- classify...according to...
- infer what...means for...

Evaluate – develop opinion, judgements or decisions

- do you agree that/with...?
- what is the most important...?
- what does...mean for you?
- how do your decisions affect...?
- what are you going to do about...?

Create – combine ideas to form a new idea

- what if...?
- what ideas can you add to...?
- how could you change...?
- what solutions do you suggest for...?
- what might happen if you combined...with...?



Spiritual

A **Truth: from the heart** truth telling has implications for us in spiritual terms. Our Catholic tradition demands positive action for the poor and oppressed, in which all who claim to belong to this tradition have a responsibility to participate. The example and teachings of Jesus are our model in this action.

Some question stems:

- how does being a Christian/Catholic affect...?
- what responsibility do I have, as a Christian, to...?
- what do you think Jesus would think about...?
- what do you think Jesus would do about...?
- how does...relate to the mission of Jesus?

Go deeper

Use the Crossing borders handout for a deeper spiritual and theological exploration of today's truth telling.

Give participants time to read each section of the handout, then facilitate a discussion about how a theology of border crossing, and the idea of Jesus, the border crosser, can illuminate aspects of the call to walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

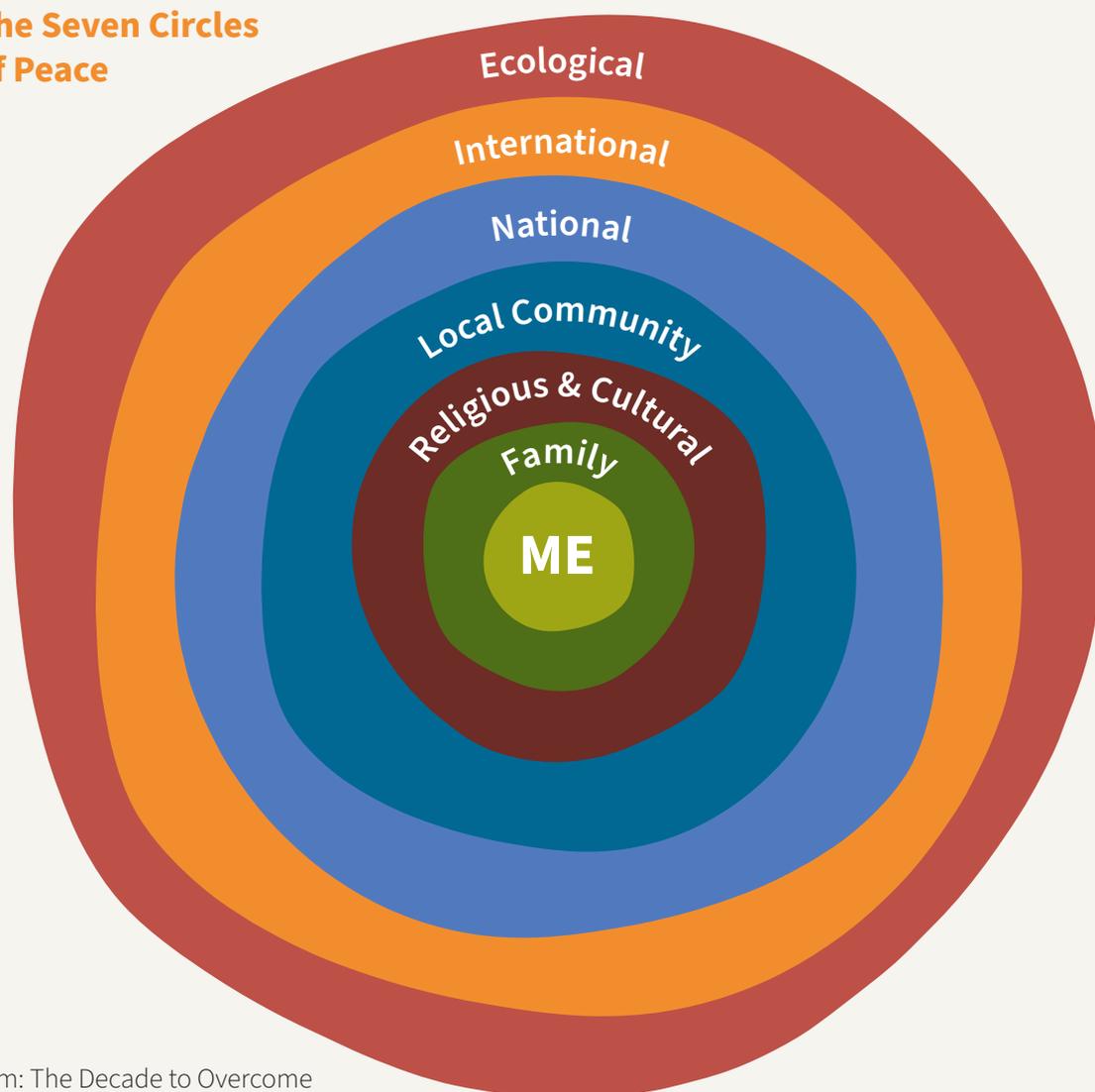
Planning for action

What comes next after a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling?

Taking action to explore and promote an understanding of a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission is one of the crucial elements of running a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling. It is important that participants leave with clear ideas about how their own voice can contribute to the broader community narrative and how their own actions can be a response to the *Uluru Statement from the Heart's* invitation to walk together to build a better future.

Actions in responses to a *Truth: from the heart* truth telling can be small or large, as suggested by the Seven Circles of Peace, created by the World Council of Churches for the *Decade to Overcome Violence Program*.

The Seven Circles of Peace



From: The Decade to Overcome
Violence Program 2001-2010 World Council

For example, a ‘me’ action could be to open your mind and heart to investigating more of the truth of our shared history. Another could be to choose to vote YES to amend the Constitution to recognise the first peoples of this land. A ‘religious & cultural’ action could be to ‘train-up’ and organize a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling with your local community group. A ‘national’ response could be to lobby those in elected office.

Many actions in response can, and should, flow from a **Truth: from the heart** truth telling. Be inspired to take many actions! Use the acronym T.R.U.T.H. to guide your actions.

Take this resource and use it as far and wide as possible to enhance the impact of the truth telling for Australia’s future. It is step by step and easy to use. Think about the circles you belong to: your family, religious and cultural groups, schools, universities, clubs. These groups often have a leadership group; you could ask if they will participate in what is essentially an educational activity that is creative and interactive, rather than more traditional modes of education. Noting that this resource brings a Catholic Church perspective, if you are using it in an ‘out of Church’ context, you can remove some of the characters to emphasise different aspects of the truth telling.

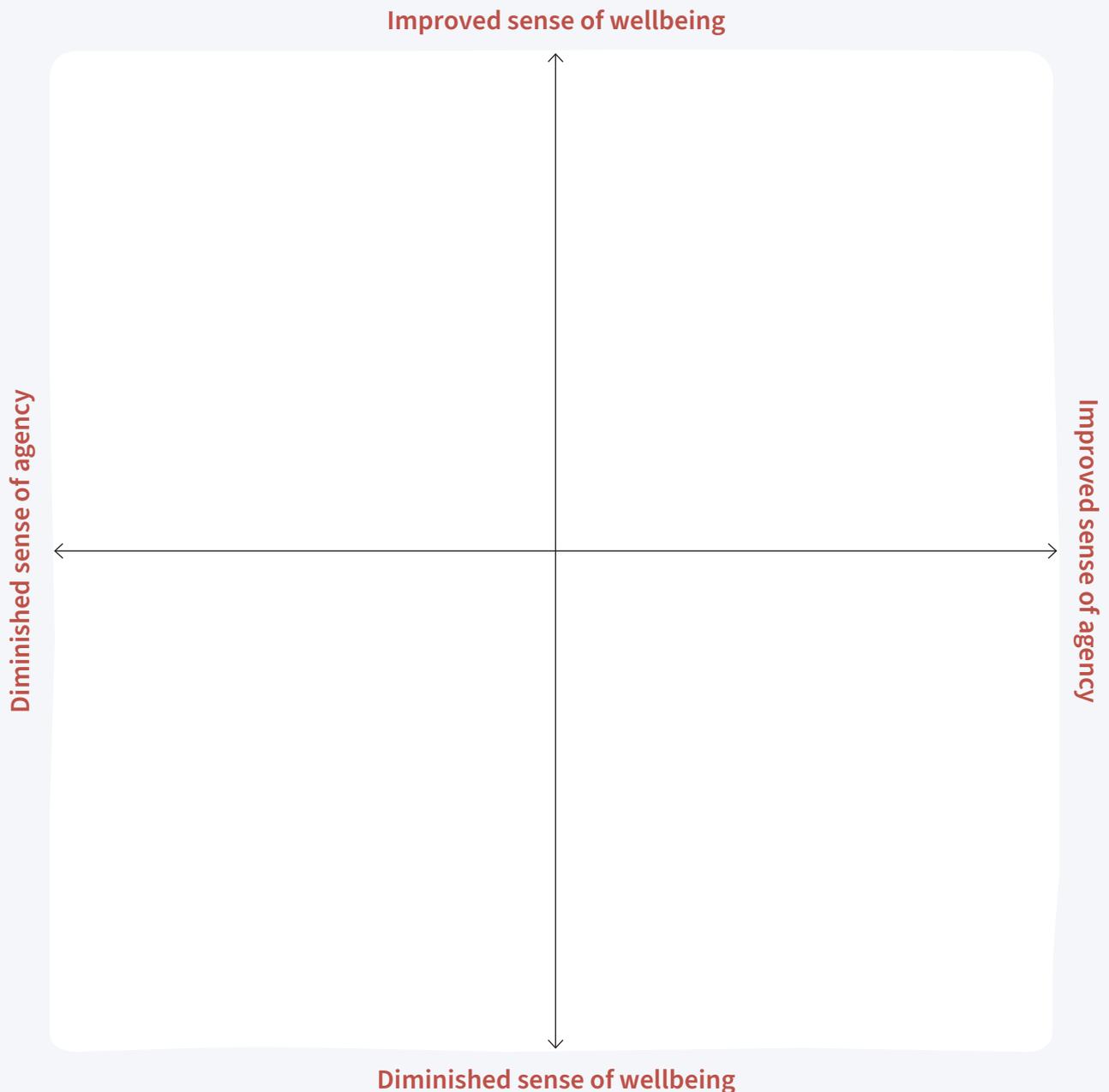
Recognise the importance of the stories told here as true stories, possibly perspectives that you may not have yet known. Many of these stories have not been told in mainstream media; they are the ‘other’ voices we need to hear. Recognise that the stories that are known are usually from high-profile personalities. Some of those are included here, however there are also voices you will not yet know who bring an important perspective to this truth telling exercise. We also need to **Recognise**, as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders remind us, that Reconciliation is not an ‘end point. Rather, it’s an ongoing process, something that each community and generation must decide upon’ (Inala Cooper, Sydney Morning Herald 2 July 2022).

U – it starts with you. Each one of us is called to play our part in enabling these stories to be told; we have the power to use our circles of peace to influence the next steps, and those of us over the age of 18 have the opportunity to vote at the referendum. Although we often feel that we can’t ‘make a difference’, if we reflect that we are in the middle of many circles of influence, we realise we do in fact have an opportunity to shape the conversation if we’re prepared to act intentionally. Our perspective can be discussed with family and friends, and that ripples out to the religious and cultural groups we belong to. This conversation then influences the local community. Discussions by local communities influence the state and national dialogue and have the potential to influence what is happening internationally. The Seven Circles of Peace can help us to understand our empowerment and inspire us to personal action.

Train the trainer – undertake the training provided by Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and Catholic Mission using this resource as the foundation. Invite others to this unique storytelling from the Catholic Church’s perspective. This resource is freely available to groups online and can be printed copyright free. This is an especially innovative way to engage young people on this issue. For more information contact adultformation@catholicmission.org.au.

Heart – engage your heart. Having approached this experience with an open will, open mind and open heart, if you allowed yourself to truly embody the character you were given, you would have experienced that new learning and depth of understanding regarding this issue is possible. The next step from understanding truth and story is to understand the constitutional ‘ask’, and the reasons for it, and allow yourself to feel from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are many materials that explore the issue of truth telling, the Uluru Statement, the Voice to Parliament, and Makarrata. A good place to start is the From the Heart campaign fromtheheart.com.au.

Visualising impact



Instructions

- After considering each scenario, mark a point on the graph that shows the sense of **wellbeing** and **agency** your character would experience once the consequences of that scenario have played out
- Mark each scenario on the graph using the code given by the facilitator

Notes

- The mid point on the graph represents a state you would call 'neutral' (neither well nor unwell, neither empowered nor disempowered)
- **Wellbeing** can be defined as 'balance in all aspects in life. It encompasses the health of the whole person – physical, mental, social and emotional'¹
- **Agency** can be defined as 'the feeling of control over actions and their consequences'²

1 Source: beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/wellbeing

2 Source: [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5002400/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PMC5002400/)

Crossing borders

Crossing borders

In the past, those engaged in mission experienced borders as visible and geographical. One could be certain of having crossed them. Crossing borders remains a characteristic of mission, but the act of crossing borders has become complex, as borders are:

- **porous** – crossing geographical borders is no longer an issue with air travel; Eastern and Western influences sit side by side in most countries
- **multiple & changing** – definitions have changed e.g. what is a ‘heathen’, the goal of mission work as ‘conversion’ and ‘church planting’ has changed
- **between peoples** – followers of other religions, as well as people with no religious affiliation; religious pluralism exists in most societies
- **between groups** – especially those that live in large urban centres, young people, immigrants and refugees, and the poor; the borders within these groups may be social, economic, ethnic and psychological
- **between socio-cultural contexts** – communications and mass media, justice and peace, scientific research, international organisations, and religious revival

Pope St John Paul II identified these last three areas as the context in which the work of mission is carried out now – the “new frontiers”. It is these areas where the values inherent in the Reign of God need to be brought to life (*Redemptoris Missio*, 1990). We live within these contexts and on either side of these borders. The choice about crossing the borders is ours.

The work of mission is about crossing borders. We all have our own personal borders. They are those boundaries which separate us from all those we call “the Other”.

How to be a border-crosser

Borders/boundaries perform 3 distinct functions:

- they mark individual and communal identity
- they fence out ‘other’ people different from oneself
- they act as frontiers from which to venture out to new horizons, to expand one’s knowledge and one’s circle of relationships

To effectively cross a border is to:

- respect and promote the distinctive identity of the ‘other’, not erasing it under the pretext of a common human nature, nor absolutising it in an ideology of ethnocentrism and nationalism
- dismantle the unjust fences that powerful interest groups put up to protect their privileges and to keep the marginalised out, denying them a decent human life
- transcend differences of all kinds and open up new frontiers in order to build a “civilisation of love” which is not merely a confirmation of old identities but a forging of a new, common identity in which the worst of each group is overcome and the best are combined together to produce truly intercultural human beings, in the image of the Triune God

Theologian Virgilio P. Elizondo puts it this way:

“...borders will not disappear, differences will not fade away, but they need not divide and keep peoples apart...Rather than seeing them as the ultimate dividing line between you and me, between us and them, we can see borders as the privileged meeting places where different persons and peoples will come together to form a new and most inclusive humanity”.

Crossing borders

Jesus, the Border-Crosser

The spirituality of mission is rooted in Jesus, the Border-Crosser.

He crossed from the divine to the human

The border is no longer a barrier preventing God and humanity from joining together; it is now a frontier from which a new reality is created: in Jesus of Nazareth, the divine and the human are reconciled and harmonised with each other into one single reality.

He crossed the borders of 'civil society' to dwell with those at the margins

John 4 tells us his message about the Kingdom of God was that there was no longer: Jews and non-Jews, men and women, clean and impure, righteous and sinners, old and young, rich and poor, powerful and weak, healthy and sick.

He crossed the border of death to resurrection

Jesus' violent death on the cross was a direct result of his border-crossing and ministry at the margins, which posed a serious threat to the interests of those occupying the economic, political and religious centre. Symbolically, hung between heaven and earth, at the margins of both worlds, Jesus acted as the mediator and intercessor between God and humanity. But even in death Jesus did not remain within the boundaries of what death typically means: failure, defeat, destruction. By his resurrection he crossed the borders of death into a new life, thus bringing hope where there was despair; victory where there was vanquishment, freedom where there was slavery. In this way the borders of death become frontiers to life in abundance

Statements, CST & scripture

From the Redfern Statement

“The starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us, the non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with an act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing.

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.

We brought the diseases and the alcohol.

We committed the murders.

We took the children from their mothers.

We practised discrimination and exclusion.

It was our ignorance and our prejudice.

And our failure to imagine these things could be done to us.

With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds.

We failed to ask – how would I feel if this was done to me?

As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded us all.”

Prime Minister Paul Keating

From the Alice Springs Statement

“Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgment of the land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination. Certainly, what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow...

The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognized agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past. The greatest value to be achieved by such agreements, which must be implemented without causing new injustices, is respect for the dignity and growth of the human person. ...

Past hurts cannot be healed by violence, nor are present injustices removed by resentment. Your Christian faith calls you to become the best kind of Aboriginal people you can be. This is possible only if reconciliation and forgiveness are part of your lives. Only then will you find happiness. Only then will you make your best contribution to all your brothers and sisters in this great nation. You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.”

Pope St John Paul II

Statements, CST & scripture

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

- preferential option for the poor
- dignity of the human person
- care for our common home
- subsidiarity and participation
- the common good
- solidarity

'Truth' in scripture

O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?
Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart...

Psalms 15:1-2

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:15

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:8-9

Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

John 18:37-38

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

John 14:6

Getting into (and out of) character

Each person here today will take part in the truth telling by taking on a 'role'. During the truth telling, each person will be 'in-role'.

A character can be represented by multiple participants – one will be the 'speaker' during the truth telling; the others the 'brains trust' who think as the character and advise the speaker. Together, the speaker and brains trust will reflect on the character's biography, decide on what the speaker will say, and determine how the speaker will act to achieve that character's goals.

Speakers will wear name tags and one simple prop to identify them as their character. When the speaker wears the prop, they and their brains trust are 'in-role'. Removing the prop signifies 'de-rolling' or stepping out of the role.

You are here today to share your character's story and tell their truth, to listen to the stories and truths of other characters, and to decide how you will be part of what comes next.

Using the information about your character, work through the following questions to form a picture of your character and how you will act as that character.

Getting into (and out of) character

How will you 'become' your character?

Taking on the role of your character is important for both the person who will speak as your character, and for the 'brains trust' person or people.

It is important to adopt the point of view of your character. You do not need to, for example, speak with an accent to become your character, but rather take on what you believe their attitude would be, to speak and behave as you think your character would speak and behave (*adapted from Ewing & Simons, 2004*).

For your character, consider:

What facial expressions do they often use?

How are their backs as they are standing?

Where are their hands?

What body shapes do they take when they are listening to someone?

Does this change from person to person?

How do they move?

What do they like to do?

(*adapted from Millar Grant, 1995*).

What prop transforms you into your character? What is the significance of your prop? How does this prop remind you to adopt the attitude and behaviour of your character?

Reflection prompts #1

How have you contributed to and/or been affected by colonialisation and dispossession?

- What has been/was your experience on this country?
- What is/was important to you during your lifetime?
- How do/did your attitudes and behaviour affect First Nations peoples during your lifetime?

Reflection prompts #2

What are your hopes for this process of truth telling and Makarrata?

- What truths do you need to share through this process?
- How will you act today to ensure your truth is spoken and your voice is heard?
- How will you act today to come together with others after the struggle?
- What sort of questions will you ask? To whom?
- How will you interact with others present?

Reflection prompts #3

For you, what is the ideal outcome of this coming together?

- Predict what will happen at this coming together.
- What do you have to contribute to the process of Makarrata?

After the truth telling it will be time for you 'de-role' or step out of the character, back into yourself. Consider:

- consciously taking off the character's prop and name tag and consciously placing them on the table as you leave the truth telling space
- engaging in large physical movements – shake your arms, legs, hands, feet – to shake-off the character
- washing your face and hands, imagining you are washing the character off
- consciously putting an item of your own clothing, or your own name tag, back on

(*adapted from the Arts Wellbeing Collective*).

Overview of roles

Facilitator

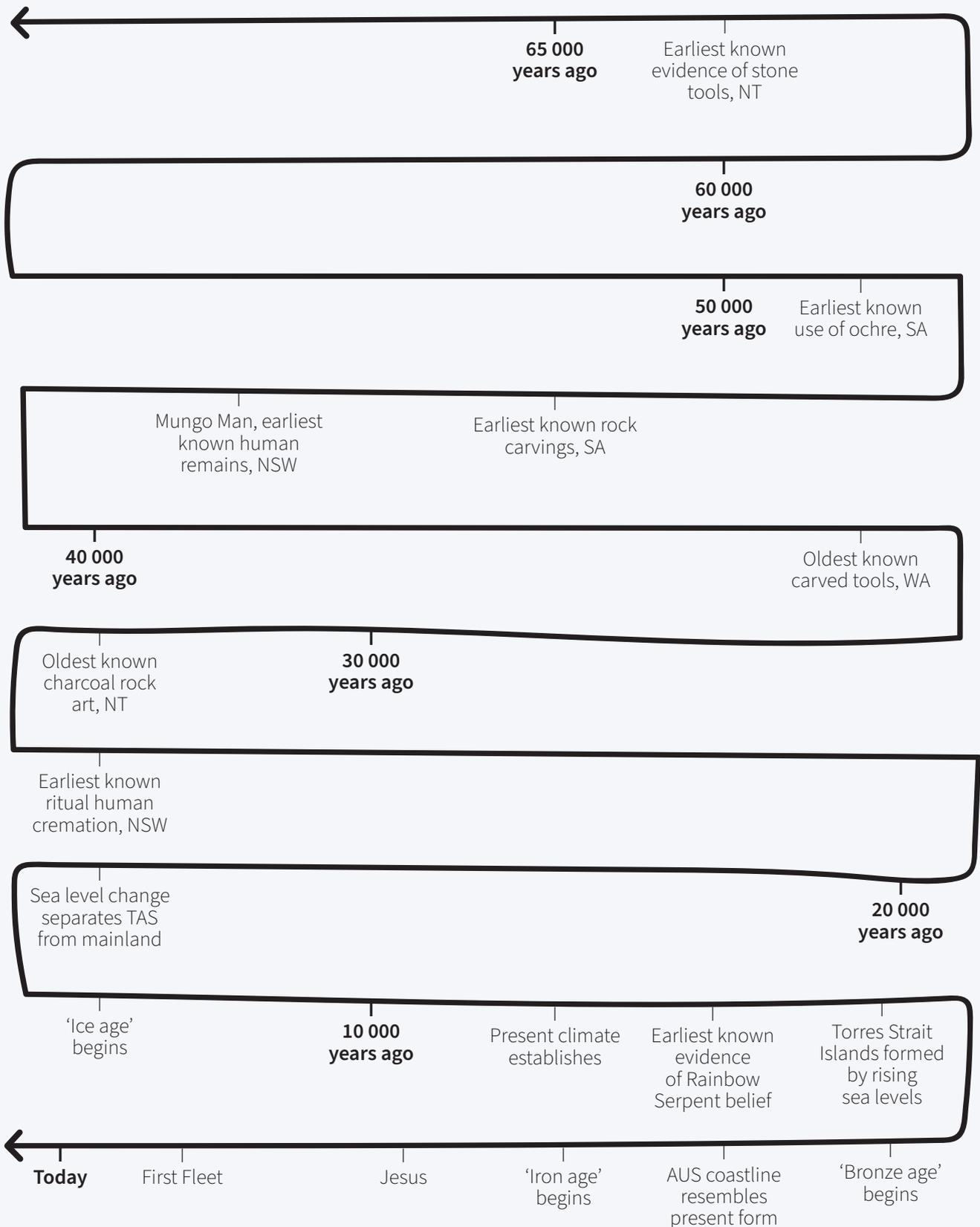
The person running the event. They can intervene in the truth telling and questioning to pause, prompt, explain or redirect, but have no story to share in the truth telling.

Elder

The person who leads the truth telling, reading from a script. Typically, this role is offered to the eldest participant. They embody those who came before: 'the ancestors of your stories, the ancestors of your cultures, the ancestors of your faith;...the communion of saints'. They have no story to share in the truth telling.

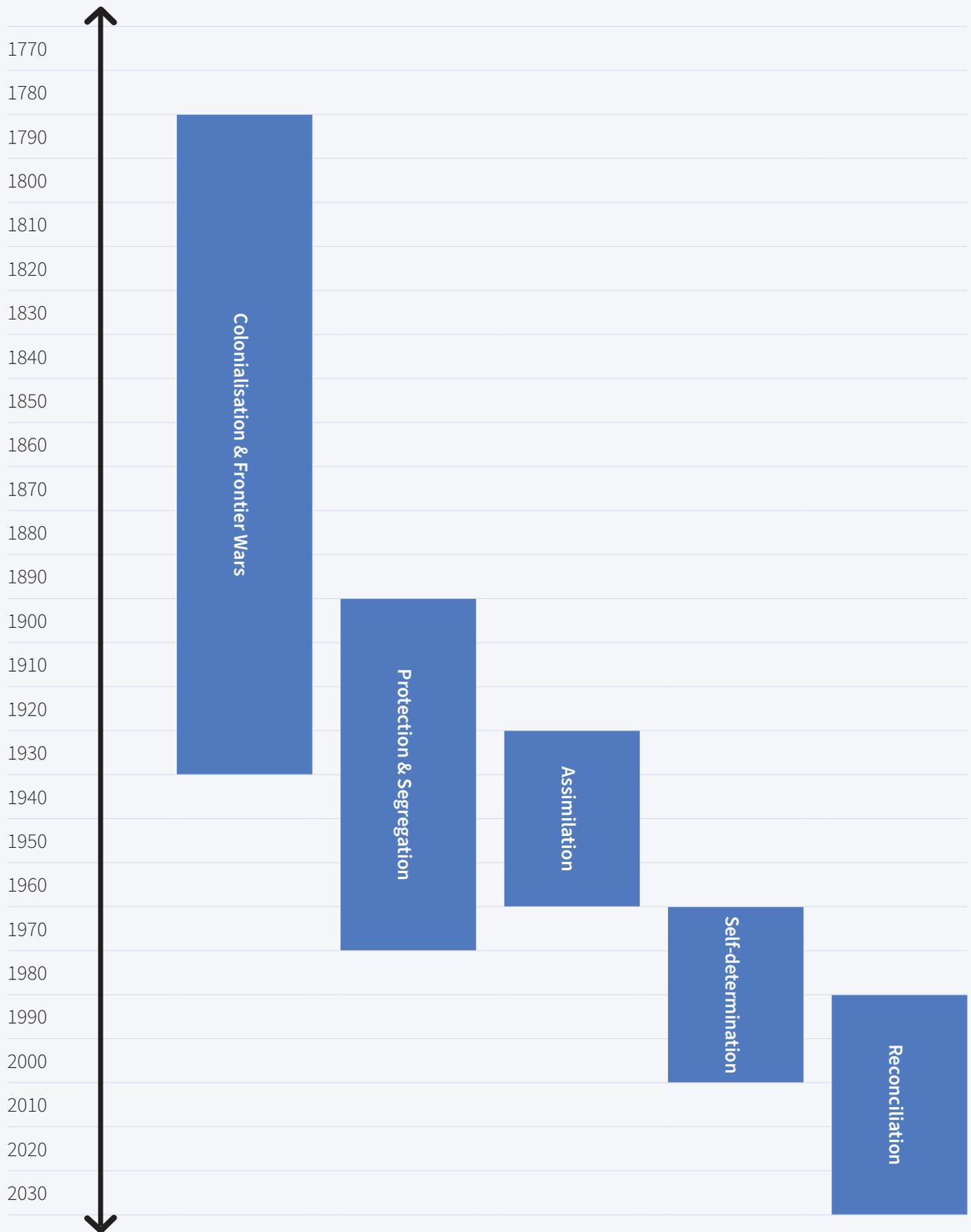
Epoch	Characters	Props
Colonialisation & Frontier Wars	Barangaroo One of the most important and well-known Aboriginal women of the Sydney region at the time of colonisation	Shell necklace and message stick
	John Bede Polding The first Catholic bishop in Australia	Zuchetto (round bishop's cap) and cross
'Protection' & Segregation	William Cooper An Aboriginal man, political activist, community leader and early pioneer of using democratic processes to effect change for Aboriginal people	Shirt, tie and waistcoat
	Richard Campbell Aboriginal man and representative of the Stolen Generations.	Straw hat or similar light, summer hat
Assimilation	Charlie Perkins An Aboriginal man, senior public servant and civil rights activist	A 60s style shirt, a soccer ball
	Elsie Heiss An Aboriginal woman, community, church and organisational leader	A 50s style scarf
Self-determination	Mum Shirl An Aboriginal woman, carer, community organiser and social justice and political activist	A 70s style floral dress or scarf
	Tess Ward A Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and esteemed teacher/teacher linguist	A book to represent language and the emblem of Sr Tess's religious congregation on a lanyard
Reconciliation	Patrick Dodson An Aboriginal man, former Catholic priest, 'Father of Reconciliation' and federal Senator	Black felt Akubra style hat
	John Howard The 25th Prime Minister of Australia and the second longest serving Prime Minister to date	Glasses and jacket

Visualising time



Scale is approximate
Adapted from: tinyurl.com/2zbp9zun

Visualising time



Scale is approximate
Source: Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

Links for further reading about characters

Barangaroo

barangaroo.com/about/the-place/history/barangaroo-the-woman

barangaroo.com/about/the-place/history/aboriginal-culture

dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/barangaroo_and_the_eora_fisherwomen

historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/research-topics/aboriginal/significant-aboriginal-women-barangaroo

dictionaryofsydney.org/blog/barangaroo

William Cooper

adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cooper-william-5773

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Cooper_\(Aboriginal_Australian\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Cooper_(Aboriginal_Australian))

nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/william-cooper-protests

firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/william-cooper

naa.gov.au/learn/learning-resources/learning-resource-themes/first-australians/politics-and-advocacy/william-cooper-day-mourning-letter-1938

theconversation.com/william-cooper-the-Indigenous-leader-who-petitioned-the-king-demanding-a-voice-to-parliament-in-the-1930s-140056

speakola.com/ideas/jack-patton-day-of-mourning-1938

naidoc.org.au/about/history

Pat Dodson

aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian?MPID=SR5

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Dodson

alp.org.au/our-people/our-people/patrick-dodson/

britannica.com/biography/Patrick-Dodson

cms.australianoftheyear.org.au/recipients/patrick-dodson

referendumcouncil.org.au/council/patrick-dodson.html

smh.com.au/national/from-the-archives-1985-australia-s-first-aboriginal-bishop-20201008-p563bu.html

smh.com.au/opinion/catholic-leaders-george-pell-and-patrick-dodson-display-contrasting-faces-of-faith-20160303-gn9c8r.html

Elsie Heiss

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsie_Heiss

naidoc.org.au/awards/winner-profiles/elsie-heiss

leadership4mission.com.au/documents/sydney/43-sydney-elsie-heiss/file

monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/religion/display/103891-elsie-heiss

australiancatholics.com.au/article/elsie-s-lessons

catholicweekly.com.au/go-forth-and-be-leaders-archbishop-fisher-tells-auntie-elsie-scholars/

John Howard

britannica.com/biography/John-Winston-Howard

aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian?MPID=ZD4

naa.gov.au/explore-collection/australias-prime-ministers/john-howard

nma.gov.au/explore/features/prime-ministers/john-howard

ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/explore-history/fight-rights/Indigenous-rights/reconciliation-convention-1997

ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/explore-history/fight-rights/Indigenous-rights/apology-aborigines

sbs.com.au/nitv/the-point/article/7-legacies-of-john-howards-government/qj915w31j

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Howard

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_of_Reconciliation

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_Commission

Charlie Perkins

sydney.edu.au/charles-perkins-centre/about/who-is-charles-perkins.html

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Perkins_\(Aboriginal_activist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Perkins_(Aboriginal_activist))

ia.anu.edu.au/biography/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie-810

naa.gov.au/explore-collection/first-australians/other-resources-about-first-australians/charles-nelson-perkins

oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/perkins-charles-nelson-charlie-810/text811

John Bede Polding

goodsams.org.au/article/175-years-ago-black-lives-mattered-to-john-bede-polding/

goodsams.org.au/article/heeding-poldings-call-about-our-first-peoples/

missionaries.griffith.edu.au/qld-mission/test-stradbroke-island-mission-1843-1847

adb.anu.edu.au/biography/polding-john-bede-2557

Mum Shirl

ia.anu.edu.au/biography/smith-shirley-coleen--mum-shirl-17817

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mum_Shirl

monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/people/Indigenous/display/107864-%22mum-shirl%22

civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/smiths,34823.html

historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/research-topics/aboriginal/significant-aboriginal-women-shirley-colleen-smith

rahs.org.au/shirley-coleen-smith-1921-1998/

womenustralia.info/biogs/IMP0092b.htm

sydneybarani.com.au/sites/aboriginal-involvement-with-the-church/

Tess Ward

misacor.org.au/item/1930-tess-ward-olsh-investiture-oam-at-wadeye#!

misacor.org.au/item/539-sr-tess-ward-fdnsc-human-rights-education

abc.net.au/news/2016-06-08/bilingual-educator-sister-tess-ward-receives-oam/7488430

olshaustralia.org.au/item/142-reflection-on-investiture-of-sr-tess-ward-s-order-of-australia-medal.html

linkedin.com/in/tess-ward-a9866973/

Richard Campbell

coolamon.org.au/artist/richard-p-campbell/

acmlismore.org/about-the-artist-richard-campbell/

deadlyvibe.com.au/2013/04/richard-campbells-unique-paintings

catholicnewsworld.com/2013/03/australia-aboriginal-artist-campbell.html

The Kinchela Boys /We Were Just Little Boys (animated short film by Richard Campbell); kinchelaboyshome.org.au/what-we-do/animations/

Links to other readings used in or related to *Truth: from the heart*

The Alice Springs Speech

vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861129_aborigeni-alice-springs-australia.html

Blooms Revised Taxonomy

Anderson LW, Krathwohl DR, Bloom BS, Bloom BS (Benjamin S. A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing : a Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives / Editors, Lorin W. Anderson, David Krathwohl ; Contributors, Peter W. Airasian...[et Al.]. Complete ed. Longman; 2001.

Catholic Social Teaching Toolkit

socktober.org.au/socktober-challenge

Language

[linkedin.com/pulse/walk-talk-learning-your-local-language-tara-toohill/](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/walk-talk-learning-your-local-language-tara-toohill/)

Makarrata

ulurustatement.org/our-story/makarrata/

tfhc.nt.gov.au/heritage,-libraries-and-archives/library-and-archives-nt/cabinet-records/1981-records/makarrata-agreement

Reconciliation

smh.com.au/national/we-need-to-have-a-talk-about-reconciliation-and-what-it-means-20220622-p5avph.html

The Redfern Speech

pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00008765.pdf

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redfern_Park_Speech#cite_note-syddict-2

dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/redfern_park

antar.org.au/resources/redfern-speech-30-years-on/

Seven Circles of Peace, from the Decade to Overcome Violence

overcomingviolence.org/en/decade-to-overcome-violence/about-dov.html

Notes

Notes

About Catholic Mission

Catholic Mission, as the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies contributes funding and provides project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania and South America as well as remote dioceses within Australia. Catholic Mission creates opportunities for people to be formed in mission, and respond through prayer, fundraising and action, inspiring them to reach out, and give life—within Australia and around the world. All of us engage in mission when we proclaim our faith through our words, actions and lives.



About Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

The aim and purpose of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM) in Sydney is to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding, taking responsibility for the pastoral care of Catholic Aborigines and supporting them in the living of their Faith.

The work of the Ministry also provides an interface between all Indigenous people and the Catholic Church, it represents the concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acts as an advocate on their behalves, as well as providing certain services such as counseling and access to education directed towards practical assistance.



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**ABORIGINAL
CATHOLIC
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SYDNEY



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Reach out. Give life.

