



TRANSCRIPT OF SUBMISSION
KEICHA DAY – 10 JANUARY 2024

KEICHA DAY: Hi, my name is Keicha Day, and I'm a Gunditjmara/Yorta Yorta woman.

TARA FRY: So, what does it feel like to be an Aboriginal person living in Victoria?

KEICHA DAY: It feels stifling. It feels stifling because I live on Gunditjmara Country, which is known to the wider community as Victoria's birthplace. And so, in order for it to be a birthplace, there has to be a death place. And for her, there's many death places, and so, when we talk about, a birthplace, especially in a colony, it's about colonisation. So, it's stifling in a way that there's lots of reminders outside of the obvious, like living in a town and living in a white person's way or expected to live a white person's way and be grateful for it. You get a lot of monuments. You get a lot of streets, parks, reserves, you name it, they have it in the Henty's name, which is the coloniser here, and so, yeah. So, I find it stifling because there's nothing in the landscape about us that counteracts it. And if we do attempt to counteract it, there's just a lot of racism, like outright racism. If the racism here is mostly covert, if we're quiet. But if we do start to say about, you know, take down the monuments or don't celebrate genocide on Jan 26, then we become a problem and then we become petrol sniffers. And, then we become cannibals, we become, 'Youse weren't even here in the first place' or 'you should be thankful that the Chinese didn't get to you first', like the English were any better. I think that the Chinese kiss up their cousins, like the English do. So, there's that. And if they don't have any morals set within their community, like within their family group, they're certainly not going to have any morals extended to First Nations people that they're colonising. So, that's basically why it's stifling here. And there's definitely no encouragement by all leadership by the council. So, Glenelg Shire Council, to have pride in self if you're a First Nations person, because the answer or the, the response to that is always we have to think about our constituents like we aren't constituents, we're forced to be constituents. So, they need to consider us, but they never, ever do. So, it's another way of them guiltling us into, you know, bowing down to the majority. And it's just like, what about us? Like at some point you guys are going to have to think about us and how traumatic it is. And stifling it is to live in Victoria's birthplace, which is and always was and always will be. Gunditjmara marine.

TARA FRY: What are the most important things you want people to know about your experiences?

KEICHA DAY: Well, first and foremost, that it's Gunditjmara Country. It always was. Always will be, and that sovereignty was never ceded. I think that's really important. I think that the language that we use around colonisation within the colony serves basically what is, what a colony is set up or based on and set up for,

which is white supremacy. So, the language around it suits that agenda, that we were settled, and we weren't settled. That's heavily documented in not only oral histories of Gunditjmara people, but of diaries of those colonisers that come, come over and, yeah, were absolute maniacs, raped, murdered, pillaged the land, for their own capital gains, in the name of the Crown. But essentially, they were squatters. The Henty's didn't get, I guess, the blessing or whatever from the crown to colonise here, they actually were squatters, and they squatted until they were given that blessing, I guess, from the Crown, So, I think, like, that's really important too, that people need to understand that because there's a lot of language that, that the colony uses around colonisers that, you know, they're pioneering and, you know, they did really? Yeah. Exploration and, you know.

TARA FRY: “Settling”.

KEICHA DAY: Yeah. They were. And there's nothing pioneering about genocide. There's nothing pioneering about raping and murdering First Nations people. There's nothing pioneering about killing people over whale that was beached, and not only killing them, but massacring, like, torturing. We're talking about women being raped to an inch of their lives and then hung up, barely alive on town buildings as a warning to the men to behave. You know, that isn't settled. That is absolute colonial violence, and it was perpetrated by people that we name streets after. And that's the, you know, that's the disgusting thing. There should be no pride in genocide. Excuse me. And it's something that we really try and work hard towards. I think that there's a shift in community now where, we have elders that have done, you know, the real hard yards and that are now, you know, at end of life and so, that knowledge and that link to, you know, mob that did see massacres that may have witnessed massacres or were actually told by witnesses of those massacres. So, that's, you know, a really important shift. So, we need to remember all those stories. And then underneath them, we've got our parents that, you know, have, there was no supports in place, there was no childcare, there was no funding for petrol and all that sort of stuff. There was no feeds to get interviewed like we do. There was no sitting fees or anything like that. And they were expected to by the colony to be productive, to feed into capitalism, and so, that they were seen as a good Aborigine. But also, they have a cultural obligation to Country and mob, and that's where the really important work that they weren't financially respected for, comes into play. So, they're bugged, but they're, you know, still in leadership roles, and some of them may be looking to retire, and live it, find some joy in life, I guess, you know, like, that should be the ultimate goal, that we should be joyful on Country. And then there's, you know, their children. Who is my generation, who is a lot less tolerable to the atrocities of a colony. And there is a bit of a tussle between generations on how we choose to say sovereignty never ceded, but that's, that's cool. That's evolution, isn't it? You know, like, So, I guess, the important thing that come out of that generational stuff is that, we have always been here. We're not going away. So, the quicker that, you know, we get leadership in the colony from council and from their constituents, the smoother the transition will be.

TARA FRY: And what does self-determination look like to you?

KEICHA DAY: Self-determination. When we say self-determination, I just think of the end goal. And the end goal for me personally is again, just feeling black joy on Country without any judgement, without any debate on facts, living in my truth. So, being able to, you know, have all the facts like just accepted that this Victoria's birthplace was based on genocide of my people and massacres and, you know, language taken away and all that sort of stuff, but, you know, to get to the end goal, which is black joy, but never forgetting where we've come from and how far we've come. So, that we don't make the same mistakes again. And I know that that sounds like all very kumbaya, but it's not for white followers. It's for me and my family to feel black joy. That's all I care about. Because for a long time, well, not for a long time, ever since Henty landed here, we've been forced to consider him and everyone like him. And I don't want to do that anymore. I don't care for it. I don't care for them. I don't care for people that don't care for Country. I don't care for people that don't care for other human beings, because at the end of the day, that's what we're talking about. We're talking about human rights.

KEICHA DAY: It's a human rights issue that Glenelg Shire Council and their constituents feel that it's okay to call us petrol sniffers in the comments when we say, please don't celebrate genocide. Like, what the fuck are you guys? You guys okay? But that's what happens when you benefit from colonisation and you use language like settling and pioneering and, you know, it's all very gaslighting. But just remembering that we're, you know, the colony exists because of white supremacy, and we exist because of black excellence. Like, we should be able to feel joyful. So, self-determination for me is us getting to decide how we choose to feel that. And whether it's through land justice, deadly, whether it's through, health and wellbeing of our people, through our ACCHOs, and running a really deadly ship there to be able to make sure that our, you know, that our mob are healthy and well to live into their very, very late years, to be able to feel black joy, because, you know, it's a hard tussle when you still have to partake in a colony that doesn't respect you and that doesn't care for you, but you still want to feel good about yourself and feel like you've contributed something, but we should be able to. We should be able to go to the dentist when we need it.

KEICHA DAY: We should be able to go to the doctors when we need it, and be able to have those safe spaces so, not have whitefellas entitled to it, because they can't get into mainstream services, which is something that I am seeing a lot today, which really conflicts with when I was a young girl and making cups of tea out at Lake Condah mission for the elders and listening to them and their ideas around self-determination. And that's definitely what's shaped what I think about self-determination and self-determination is the ability to have organisations and safe spaces within a colony that we can just be ourselves and feel that black joy and be looked after and cared for and not gaslit. Let us be heard, and let us be healthy and well, you know, like that's a human right to feel healthy and well. And that ties in with housing and health and land justice and social justice and all that sort of stuff.

Like it's all interconnected. We need those safe spaces. But when they slowly start to be infiltrated by mainstream community because their services are inadequate, the problem with that is that they're the same people that will laugh at Blackfella jokes at a party. They're still the same followers that will, you know, get into a bit of a rant tanty when it's on the front page that, you know, billions of dollars has gone into Aboriginal health, but then they use a picture of a black fella in red dust clearly charged up with cans around them. You know, use Melbourne Cup pictures and talk about yourselves, you know, like So, it's about that fairness as well, the fairness of how we're perceived. It's a lot. Self-determination shouldn't be, the end goal to that is such a small part of what self-determination is, because it's the journey as well. And how we get there, and all the little wins that we have along the way to assert that sovereignty was never ceded, and that we're still here, that this is still Country, that we still practice this culture. You know, like the other weekend, we, a couple of the cousins got together and did a naming ceremony, you know, like, initiatives like that, I think is self-determination. And I think that that's real deadly because there's no interference by government. There's no interference by anyone else saying we shouldn't be doing that or you can't do that because we're not going to fund it. Well, we don't give a fuck. We're still going to go out on Country and we're still going to, name our babies and give them a sense of identity and pride.

KEICHA DAY: And, you know, that might be their only first experience of what it means to be Gunditjmarra on Country, because they might live away because of Stolen Generations and all that. So, it's about that, I think that really important, element of healing our mob as well along the way. You can't self-determine when there's mob that is still hurting, still trying to reconcile their past, still trying to find who their mob is. Like, that's insanity to me, that there's the expectation that, well, you decide, you decide what you want, how that looks like or how you self-determine. But when we say, well, we want to self-determine this way, more often than not, there's always barriers. So, we have to be constantly doing it ourselves. Self-determination in itself is just existing, waking up in the colony and choosing to participate or choosing to go and protest it. You know, like, I feel good when I go and protest on Jan 26th or November 19th. But I also, feel good when my babies are on time, ready for school So, that they can get education So, that they can grow up and write submissions and stuff like that to stick it to the colony and determine for themselves what self-determination is, because it might change again. Yeah.

TARA FRY: What changes do you want to see for your children and grandchildren?

KEICHA DAY: I just, for my kids and for my grandkids, I really just don't want them to have to keep on fighting the same fight that I saw. My elders have to fight. One that sticks out in my mind is Jan 26th, and I grew up, seeing like Aunty Betty King Ross on the Town Crier and ended up on the front page of the local rag. And I can remember thinking like, that was the first time that I was actually excited about, oh my God, you know, because I'd heard the stories about and obviously live a life of being black. But then we go out in the community and we're all very nice to each

other and we're, you know, surface level. But to see Auntie Betty King on the front page and doing that and hearing the way that my Nan spoke about it. So, and for context, my nan is Auntie Femy Lovett who was then married as a Day and to hear Nan crack up laughing about it. And, you know, elders, our elders were very strict. They come from mission days where you're expected to brush your hair, act proper, you know, not disturb white people basically, and so, to hear them laugh about, you know, something that would be perceived as not mission quality was So, freeing to me and my soul. And I remember that that for me did it like, that stirred something up in me that I was like, I want to be like that.

KEICHA DAY: And so, whenever I have to go to talk to the council about stupid shit because it is always stupid shit, I always envisage that picture of Auntie Betty King and also, like the adrenaline that must have been running through her veins to grab at the town crier on Jan 26, in Victoria's birthplace. Like that, you want to talk about self-determination? Self-determination is deciding to say, no, I won't. I won't stand for any of this. I won't stand for disrespect. I want the truth to be told. And when you're repeating the truth and no one's listening, what better way to do it than to grab at the town crier and end up on the front page of the local rag and tell these fellers the truth So, that, that in itself, like I want my kids and my grandkids to remember where they've come from. And I'm lucky enough that my kids have had their great grandparents in their life. Well, they still do. My grandfather's alive. Both my grandmothers died in July this year, last year. Sorry. because it's 2024 now, but they know these people. They know people that that called Auntie Betty King sister. They know people that, when Aunt Betty used to get pulled up by the cops because her and Gigi shared the same birthday and she would give the cop Nan's details So, Nan would end up with her fines of suspended license and all that sort of stuff, like.

KEICHA DAY: And so, I want my kids to remember, you know, like, when they see their elders, you know, pictures up in museums and stuff like that, that there were people that really made the difference. And really, you know, we've always been resistant people. But I think that was our elders' generation was the first to really start to strategize in the colony. And I just I love that because when Auntie Betty King is reaching for the town crier's stuff, we're also, in that generation, seeing Auntie Sandra and Auntie Tina take Alcoa to court. That then sets up a legislation for Fram and Lake Condah, that then is recognised in the realms of, you know, Wik decision and go further than that in Native Title Act and the Traditional Owner Settlement Act. And then now to see, you know, the Justice Commission even come out and talk to community about that, I think is a really important thing. So, I want them to still continue to remember where they come from, from their old girls that just fucked up the colony. And we should always be here for it and be supportive and be supportive of our mob and how they determine self-determination for themselves. Even if you don't agree with lunging at the town crier, that's not for you. That's cool. But don't hang shit on mob. You know, don't talk down about our mob because we are still a very traumatised people and we're asking for our humanity to be recognised, but we also, need to recognise each other's humanity.

KEICHA DAY: And I think that's really important. So, I want my kids to be able to know the stories, remember the people, have those same principles and morals that were passed down by our elders. But also, I want them, and I can remember Gigi. Gigi is in my ear now saying about education. I can remember I used to hate going to school because I'd rather just be black, hanging out down at Lake Condah mission and doing black fella things, then have to be whatever prop for the colony, but she just always harp on about how important education was. And I never ever, it's something that I never really agreed. Well, not never really. I didn't agree with it because I just thought, why wouldn't you just want me to be black rather than go to school and have to deal with whitefellas racist white farmer children and stuff like that. Always punching on at school? Like I just, why would you want me to do that? And then now I see having children that that is So, important because you got to go to school to be able to write submissions, to be able to know the nuances of what it is to exist in a colony, but then also, how to beat them at their own game. What are these whitefellas like to do is they really like to change the goalposts, which is fine, because we're the most adaptable society ever had to be. That's been that's been, you know, we're adaptable.

KEICHA DAY: When, Budj Bim erupted, we adapted to the landscape. we adapted. When the Hentys come along, we adapt all the way through the changes of, you know, legislation. I named them before about, you know, land justice in that land justice space. And there's going to be more legislation to come. So, I want my kids to know the stories So, that they remember why, why it is it's important to, self-determine and feel black joy, but also, remember where we come from and the trauma, and that's why we should be appreciative of it. but then also, remembering their own humanity and their own and their mob's humanity as well. That's don't ever forget that. Don't. Because legislation will come and go and we've seen that it'll come and go. But your mob is always going to be there. And that's the most important thing, that you can't be ragging on your mob because we're all traumatised, you know better than each other, and you just find ways when the colony does get to you to self-determine, whether that be, mobilising to, you know, protest something, or whether that be just to go down the council and or write a letter to the council and say, I'm not happy with this. I want it changed. I think that's really important for them to determine. but oh my God, don't ever act like coconuts act. Make sure you keep this recording So, they can hear it. Don't ever act like coconuts.

KEICHA DAY: That wouldn't make me happy. That wouldn't make me proud. Don't ever forget where you come from. Don't ever forget the struggle. Don't ever forget. Don't ever forget your humanity. Because I'll be in the shadows. Haunting you. Like, that's not what I, that's not what I've been doing work for. It's not what our elders have fought for. We fought for, our humanity to be recognised and respected. And that means, you know, there's this thing about, like, only leave your footprints along the way. And that's really, really true in that, you know, you leave your footprints not only in the landscape, but in other in your, in your kin soul as well. You can't be going out and damaging them even further. And I, I stress that because I really worry whether that's going to, I've seen examples of it, now where we're, you

know, we're saying to each other, well, you don't really know because you weren't there. And we're starting to sound like in the comment section, gubbas to us. Well, why are you So, traumatised about Jan 26? You weren't there. So, I think we really need to be careful of that and we really need to, I keep on repeating it, our humanity. We need to remember our humanity. But like everything, it's interconnected. So, we need to also, remember the stories of elders, and there's pictures like, look at the pictures. I keep on going back to Auntie Betty King grabbing at that town crier. Like that picture for me is like, that's it.

KEICHA DAY: That's the post. That's the post. Like, that's that's where you should be at. But then also, you know, like, because I grew up with Aunt Betty, if people only knew her through that picture, they would have a perception of her. But she was a very spiritual. She was a very funny, engaging woman. But she was like all of our elders, very smart. You know, you can say whatever you want about any of our elders, but they're very smart and they're very strategic. And that's evidenced in all the things that we have today that we can call our own. Sure. They made mistakes along the way. We all do. Who cares? That's humanity. But, but yeah, like, a picture can tell you a thousand things, but the truth can tell you a thousand more, and that's important. So, when you see the picture of Auntie Betty King. But you also, need to know the scallywag behind it, you know that she is a scallywag. But also, she was a very smart, smart woman who looked out for everyone's kids, was always happy to see you, always yarned up to you, and was just a very like big in stature, but also, big in heart. And so, I think that's really important. Don't let the colony tell you a narrative about our elders. Don't let the colony tell you who you are. You tell the colony who you are because. Yeah. And lunge at the town crier. I'm here for it.

TARA FRY: We'll have to attach that picture.

KEICHA DAY: You have to. Yeah, it's my favourite picture because when they tagged me in it for our Jan 26 stuff with the Glenelg Shire now. And I remember thinking, I'm gonna have to save that picture because I want to print it out and put it up. Because like I said, that's where it began. She was she was, aunty Betty was everything that I wanted to be like, because she would just do that kind of stuff like, fuck yes. Sometimes the colony need to be stirred up. They need to not have Aborigines that are good Aborigines. They need to, because it makes them nervous and they should feel nervous. They should feel something other than pride in genocide.



TARA FRY: So, what does Country mean to you?

KEICHA DAY: Country to me means home. Like, it's a place that you belong to and that belongs to you, and there's nothing like it, and the best thing about it is that

it's a birthright. It has existed since time immemorial, and that's really special. It teaches you a lot. It's a teacher of many things. Patience with the weather, especially down in Gunditj. It'll teach your patience but also, you know, like, it's a feeling that I don't think that I can articulate. Yeah. I know that when I'm feeling tumultuous or feeling like I need, some calming, then there's places on Country that I can go and sit and just exist and be who I am which is just a sovereign First Nations person on Country. And I, you know, I'm not, I'm not anyone's mum. I'm not anyone's friend. I'm not, you know, all these things that I am. I just exist on Country, and that's really cool. Landscapes, beautiful Country obviously. Gunditjmarra and Yorta Yorta landscapes are the best, but it also, I think, tells a story of the people as well. Like, obviously for Gunditj Mirring, the easy one would be, for my people, especially out at Lake Condah. And the landscape out there tells a story of, like I mentioned before, about how we, continually adapt. We're the most adaptable society, I think, in the world and that's heavily evidenced for, not only ourselves through oral history, but science as well. and I think that's really, really cool.

KEICHA DAY: Like, I think that's a really cool thing to be able to be proud about as well. It's also, like, as I said before, ties into your identity. Like, where are you from? Where do you come from? And if I mentioned Heywood or Shepp, then yeah, people instantly, instantly have, I guess, a perception of who I am or may be and I guess like, what I will, may or may not tolerate as well. Like, I feel like people would probably treat me a little bit different if I was from a different, area. So, and, you know, I think I do the same thing, like if someone says that they're Gunditjmarra Yorta Yorta, I instantly feel like gravitate towards them because I'm like, oh, you're a Countryman. And straight away there's a rapport. Whereas if they're saying that they're from somewhere that I don't know, I ask a lot of questions, but it's all very formal and there's no instant connection like Country connects. It means that we, we've always got a home to go to and that, you know, that's the thing that connects. So, many generations that connect. So, many, families that that's where our story begins, really, isn't it, on Country. And I think that that's really, really fucking cool that we can actually say as First Nations people, that this is our land and sovereignty was never ceded. And that's a much different experience to whether you've owned a house, a little small block for, two generations.

KEICHA DAY: And, you know, you've worked really hard for it. I'm sure you've worked really hard for it, but have you gone through colonisation? Have you gone through, goal posts that were never set for you that that exist purely for white supremacy? That's how you got your block. Whereas it's a lot different to having a birthright because that little block of land, you could lose that in any way, shape or form. But however the way I choose to exist, on Country, there's nothing I can do for me to lose it. It always belongs to me, and I always belong to it and it's guaranteed for generations to come. That's a fact that we just come from there. So, I wanted to make that, that absolute difference. That there is a difference between Country being your birthright and tied into your identity, that ties into your sovereignty. So, I'm a Gunditjmarra woman. I come from Heywood instantly. You know, that's a fact. And it's never going to be changed no matter how. Whereas if someone's like, oh, hey,

yeah, we've lived in the area for 40 years, well, you could have a crack addiction tomorrow. And then by the end of the year it's all gone and you'll never have that back, but yeah, there's Country is patient, you know, like, and I don't mean to minimise what, what drug addiction does for people, but in saying that, you know, like a lot of our mob are traumatised and triggered by the colony that do have drug addiction and alcohol addiction.

KEICHA DAY: But Country is patient and it's always there, ready for that person to come back to, to heal, and to remember who they are. And that's the difference. Country is patient, its healing, and it's forever and it's like us, it's also, adaptable. So, when you get whitefellas coming and clearing land, it's still Gunditjmara land. It's still Yorta Yorta land. It's still, you know, like. And it just keeps on going. but yeah, it's the identity and it's the importance of Country. And obviously the health of Country too is important with the health of mobs. So, that's an important one too that, you know, we should have a say over Country and the health of it and what, how it's affected. Because at the end of the day, we are custodians and we do, you know, along with a birthright comes responsibilities to look after Country and make sure that it's healthy. And that's the balance, isn't it? When you talk about climate change and, you know, we get Blackfellas can do all the sustainable things that we want. We can drink out of paper straws and hate it, but it's still there's still whitefellas that are in power that are making the decisions, that are still drinking out of plastic straws and still doing all the things that they shouldn't. But you know, having said that, that's their, who are they descendants of? You know, that's the difference. And that is shade.

TARA FRY: What has happened to your mob and to Country because your land was taken?

KEICHA DAY: Quite a lot has happened. I just think that that is such a loaded question because again, it's like when you start to unfold the layers, it's layers upon layers and layers upon layers of trauma. Like, that's the only thing that I can think of. You traumatise the fuck out of us. You traumatised our land. You therefore traumatised the people and you keep on doing it. You know, like. And there's no amount of anything that we say that, that will change it because you are driven by capitalism. It's driven by white supremacy. and how do we go up against that? I, you know, like, that's a rhetorical question, obviously. And it's something that I'm appreciative that a Justice Commission exists for, because it's like living in a colony and seeing what a colony does to a country is So, gaslighting, and it can break your spirit So, much, the devastation that it causes no longevity in a colony, you know, like things are always, oh, this is our five year plan. This is our ten year plan. This is, and it's like, that's not even a generation. You're not even planning generationally. Whereas we, you know, like when we're doing nation building, that's exactly what we're doing. We're building for nations like we're building for generations to come to continue having a strong nation. And those things just don't align in a colony.

KEICHA DAY: And I honestly don't know how that will be reconciled because white supremacy, like, I just I keep on coming up against white supremacy because that's it. Like and white supremacy is driven by, sorry, money, capitalism. And if we're making up 2 to 3% of the population, there's still, you know, Whitefellas still argue whether it's our land or not. So, then around and around, in circles we go. Meanwhile, they're fucking up Country, you talk about waterways. Waterways. The way that they treat waterways is disgusting. I remember hearing a story about how they, how they had a de-snagging project up on the Murray on Yorta Yorta Country, and they took out all the snags. So, all the old trees they took out of the river system, not realising or not listening to the blackfellas when we said, That's the home of the Murray cod. That's where they live. That's where they, you know, that protects. There's a purpose for trees that fall in the river. And it forms part of a very important ecosystem. But yeah, they took it all out. And what do they think happened, you know. And So, then when they make these decisions and they say, you know, like, oh, well, this is a part of our five year plan, but they don't realise that the effect of taking out things of waterways or doing things to waterways, the waterways don't work to a five year plan.

KEICHA DAY: So, in order for them to recover, it's probably going to be past that five years and go into their ten, 15, 20 year plans. You know, like having to get an ecosystem back that was there for since time immemorial, just because you want it to look aesthetically pleasing for visitors or, you know, you get your fishing line caught on it, well, because you're not supposed to be here. So, you know, waterways, the way that they do that, they, it affects it that way. It also, you know, for down in Portland, there's a skate park here. And that used to be, the original waterway. And they actually filled that in and then, realigned the entry into the canal. And So, it exists as it does today. So, the skate park, that area is filled in and the skate park exists there, and then the waterway is more, you know, aesthetically pleasing for their town planning. But in in turn, the water pressure actually exposed a burial site along the canal. So, things like that, you know, what do they reckon? And, an action always calls a reaction or reaction always. I don't know what it is.

TARA FRY: For every action, there's a reaction.

KEICHA DAY: Yes. For every action there is a reaction. And so, you know, like, it's all good and well when you know, the action is like boo. And the reaction is, ah, I'm scared. It's a lot different to the action being I'm going to take out all the shit that snags my fishing lines and then in turn, not have a home for the most important iconic fish to ever be in Doongalla, you know, like, but then they never, ever learn from it. They never ever, you know, with climate change.

TARA FRY: Someone else is doing the five year plan. Yeah.

KEICHA DAY: Someone else. Yeah. Yeah. But even the fact that they have, you know, like for Doongalla, they've got MLDRIN, which is a committee that sits all the mob that along the Murray River, which, you know, like duh, but the power that they

give that group, what is it, because they're still doing stupid shit. They're still letting farmers, they're still allocating farmers water from a waterway that is already stressed and there's not enough for cultural flows, you know, like cultural flows get an allowance in waterways. What the fuck? Like that's why waterways exist to breathe life into cultural landscapes. That's why we call them the lungs of the landscape. But when you start to distort or try and make them better or aesthetically pleasing for the colony, that's when you start to go wrong. Like, and it stresses me out because, you know, the question before was like, what do you what's the most important thing you want your kids to know? And it's like it. Probably the most important question in the context of that is always question the motives of decision makers and people in power and challenge it. Go the fuck to school So, you can challenge these dickheads that think it's a good idea to take away from waterways, whether it be resources like the tangible resource of water, or take away homes for the most iconic fish through a de-snagging program. Like what are you trying to do? Snag? Because to me, that's de snagging.

KEICHA DAY: You're only trying to de snag fishing lines for tourists. But then if you ask them, they'll be like, no, that's not what we meant. Like. So Yeah, I guess like for that, we really need to, and that's only a couple of easy examples. There's a lot of examples where they changed the landscape. I mean, you only have to look at the Portland foreshore where they've changed the landscape there, Hamilton, where they've changed, where they created a bigger waterway, for the Hamilton Lake that like, that's man made, but it's built on an historic waterway that, you know, probably wasn't equipped to have water all year round. And then they create more problems by, you know, like algae and stuff like that, mosquitoes and, all that sort of stuff. And they're, they're very much like, tick tock. They do it for the views. The colony always does it for the views. You look at flooding now is a huge issue, when people pay, you know, whatever they pay to live on a waterway and then they have all these issues and then they're like, well, help us because we're flooded in. But no one ever tells them. We just do it to yourselves like they tell us when we need help, you know, you shouldn't have built your house on, on a river and then not expect to get flooded and not have sandbags that are in your shed all year round.

KEICHA DAY: And or better yet, just don't buy a fucking house along the river. You know, like common sense needs to prevail at some point. But I remember this poster that Auntie Nisi, she used to have it in her lounge. She probably still does. And it talks about, you know, like when the last water, when the last resource gets taken, is it then that you'll listen to us and yeah, like whenever I go to these meetings, I always ask the question like, well, what is your end point? Because whenever we go into meetings as First Nations people, you know, sitting at the table, is this a prop? Are you ticking a box or is it going to be meaningful? Like, are you going to listen to us, or are you just going to wait until the last resource is taken and then you're going to come running to us and then it's our emergency. We can't save any of us. When you have taken the last resource, that's it. What are we going to do? Do a fucking rain dance? Well, we would have done a rain dance. Only you told us to stop dancing and you told us to stop talking.

KEICHA DAY: And So, therefore, you want us to magically conjure up a rain dance? If I could do. If I had those type of powers, I wouldn't be doing a rain dance. Trust me, I wouldn't would not be doing a rain dance. And you can read between the lines on that one. But yeah. When is the last of the last for white people on Country? And the worst part about it is they take us all along with us, with them. They take us all along with them. There's nothing that we, you know, and they say, like, especially in the context of Native title, that there's a legislation that exists and you can say no. But when you say no against likes of Twiggy and Gina, people that have got fucking disposable money, that they built up on the backs of Blackfellas, and black land. How we how were we expected to win? How were we expected to win in a court system that, we're overrepresented in? Anyways, you talk about conscious and unconscious bias of people that exist in our community that extends to people in power, like judges that are going to make judgements on whether they need access to a resource or not, whether Twiggy can go and blow up a sacred site and fuck up storylines in landscapes for mob, you know, like when you talk about health of Country and stuff like that.

KEICHA DAY: You know, we've we have that issue of offshore, well, wind farms, for example, and exploration of Country. We've had lots of instances where we've been asked to explore Country and they want to explore, underneath the lava flow, like. And you're asking us to say yes to this. But then if we say no, we're going to get taken to court like we're the criminals, and we have to prove, like, why it's a no, but we still, at the end of the day, a judge with their bias or unconscious bias, that's who's making the judgement. You know, like and we were talking about capacity of community. We are a pretty small community in the grand scheme of things. We are overstretched. Our capacity is overstretched. It's probably one of the factors as to why there's some of our now elders that aren't retired because we just don't have capacity. I know of one uncle, he's the John Farnham of Uncles, where he has retired every single year since, I reckon before Covid. And I reckon for this month, he's the acting CEO at DDUB. No names, no names to be named, Uncle Fatty. But that's you. You know, like, I find comfort in having when Uncle Fatty and the likes of mob that are like Uncle Fatty, you know that you're going to be right.

KEICHA DAY: So, we keep on asking them to come back, and we need to let them go and feel black joy. It's such a hard thing because, you know, when you ask the likes of people like Uncle Fatty, it's stability, it's kindness, it's empathy. You know, you're safe. You know, you're right. You know that. You know, black fella issues, there's this scene on Friday After Next or next Friday when, they're talking about black people's problems, and the white fella tries to interfere and he's like, this is black people's problems. Like, that's the type of uncle or auntie that you need that knows the nuances of black fella problems and that you don't have to give them the back story to why it's a problem, you know, like why when there's a black deaths in custody, me and my family might be, well, are usually highly triggered and emotional. Therefore, you won't see us at events, or, you know, you might see us doing out of character shit where we need a bit of bit more care and understanding at

that time. Whereas, like, you know, if people don't have experience or knowledge of black people dying in custody and what that feels like, they would just be like, well, oh, we thought they were good Aborigines, but now they're not, you know, but if you've got uncles like Uncle Fatty and the likes that know that, you know that you can be yourself.

KEICHA DAY: And it goes back to those safe spaces in community that our elders have fought for, that are really important and that I see, you know, just a little bit of a creep of mainstream community accessing because their services are inadequate. Well, when your services are inadequate, that's a government problem. That's not our problem. We're already stretched. We didn't fit into your criteria and when the roles are reversed and it's more about having a safe space than a black and white issue, it's a safe space. You don't understand the nuances of black folk. You don't know what it took for Auntie to get out of her house, to go and talk to a doctor about a problem that, you know, could be women's business, that, you know, was really hard for her to get out of the house. And she doesn't want to see you at her house service and deal with having to act yet again, you know, because when you do go into a mainstream service, use your whitefella voice, and you talk about white people things. Whereas when you're in your own organisation, your own setting, you're having a laugh and you're being yourself and you're talking the way that you want to talk and you're talking about things that you want to talk.

KEICHA DAY: You're bitching about the comment section, on Jan 26 things and you're bitching about, you know, what are we doing about those monuments or talking about kids getting taken away, but not in a judgy way, you know, like, how are the kids? Is there anything else that we can do for you fellas rather than, you know, feeling some type of way about it? So, when you ask about, like what they do, what it means, for Country and community, like the health of Country is the health of the community. And if we're feeling disempowered by people that are in power, they won't listen to us about Country and people, then what the fuck? Why do we exist sometimes, you know, like, why the fuck do we sit at tables? And try and get listened to when it's just a tick in the box. I'd rather not. I don't care for it. You know, like I've been making cups of tea since I was eight years old. My daughter's nine. I was making cups of tea for my elders, listening to this sort of stuff. Intellectual type stuff, and so, you know, like when you see Auntie Betty King lunging out of town crier and then you're in the streets and you hear neighbours talk down about her, you're like, she's more intelligent than you.

KEICHA DAY: Like the intelligence of our elders and our generations to come. And the way that they critically think and the way that they articulate that, but not only that action that is fucking incredible. Like it is something to be admired. But then when we're reduced to alcoholics and petrol sniffers in comment sections because we don't want people to have pride in genocide, or we're asked like, what have you done? Well, mate, what the fuck have you done? Because I'm pretty sure that you're up there tearing up the dunes in your fucking 4x4 while we were trying to restore it. So, what the fuck have you done? You know, but then when you talk about

that, they're not capable of that type of conversation. It's the angry black man. Well, yeah. Angry. Um. Highly emotional. very single. but yeah, you are. And it and that seeps into every other aspect of your life because you've still got to play sport against these people and you've still got to, you've still got to go into their shops and, you know, try and you have to I don't think that there's whitefellas that think about where they have to spend their money, whereas we do. We're like, all right. If there's a if there's someone.

KEICHA DAY: But even like making sure that whoever's commenting these horrible things in the comment section, checking out where they work So, that we don't spend our black money there, close the account. We don't they don't get our black money. Then if we're not good enough to as human beings to show some compassion and empathy, then you don't get our money. No, you can pay your bills some way else. but yeah, that was like I went off on a tangent, but.

TARA FRY: I always do. Oh, what are some examples of good practices or programs happening on Country that could be adopted more broadly?

KEICHA DAY: I think there are some really deadly health services that exist. So, ACCHOs un Country, that could definitely, teach mainstream fellows a thing or two about how they interact with our mob. So, you know, like recently we held a, [indistinct] invasion day protest or rally and, and there was a woman there that she was a personal carer and she had one black fella on her books. And when she attended that rally, she was like, I just realised now that I've been talking to him and engaging him So, wrong, like I just engage him as a white person. And I never realised until I came here how isolating that would have been for him. What can I do? And so, you know, it's things like, well, wear a black fella t shirt, support a business, clothing the gaps, buy a t shirt from there, and wear when you go to his house and read up on like follow things that are happening that he might be interested in. don't go too overboard and want to be a sister girl, but you know, even a t shirt just wearing a black fella t shirt to on that day and still act in the same asking how he is and he might open up to you.

KEICHA DAY: But the fact that she thought about that and didn't think about that beforehand just blows my mind. So, I think, you know, like mainstream communities or mainstream medical centres have a lot that they can, learn from our ACCHOs one of the best ACCHOs that I've, experienced in my lifetime was, up in Meanjin. So, Brisbane, and their health service, they're just killed it out of the park, smashed it right out of the park. would chase you up, but not in a hounding way. Would make sure that you attended your appointments. And the focus was always about, we have to keep you healthy. And this is why we're calling you. It's not to try and henpeck you or anything like that. It's, you know, your health, your responsibility, but we're going to help you get there. So, I think that, you know, like, I would love to see them even

them knowledge share with other ACCHOs that might not quite get it. that could work So, much deadlier. They are like, yeah.

KEICHA DAY: on the ground. You know, there's a lot of community projects like, with the CMA and communities for our waterways because I bitched about the waterways before. So, I better mention that. so, you know, like, for down on Gundeeck, we've got, the Glenelg CMA mob, and they have a dedicated worker that, works with community on projects and actually ties it in with farmers that, I hate to say own, but have waterways that are on properties that they own, that work with community and protecting those and that we've seen really deadly outcomes with that, called yarns on farms. And it's been really cool to have farmers that, have always wanted to connect with community and have, you know, sites on their Country that they might not have, known where to go or who to speak to. because that's what the colony does. The colony confuses the ones that want to be. That could be good partnerships. but once that is being connected, there's been a lot of protection on Country and a lot of work on waterways. a lot of partnerships that see, you know, because when you're protecting sites, you're also, upskilling our mob. So, creating fences, but working with the farmer to do it when you're working with farmers, some of the old school farmers are really cool.

KEICHA DAY: And their knowledge sharing that you have and the skills sharing in that space is really cool too. You don't get that in schools. but also, I think it does a little bit towards healing as well. because I do know, you know, like there is old school farmers that are white supremacists. Absolutely. but then there's old school farmers that went to school with our elders that, you know, always wondered what happened to them. And they're So, lovely and like, you get you hit the jackpot when you're on a partnership sort of thing with them, like, because they just go above and beyond because they get enthusiastic about it too. And they have pride in Country as well. Like, So, that's really cool. Other things like, you know, working. I would like to see more councils and leadership with councils working in partnership with our communities. rather than always it's the constituents worry about the constituents. So, we can't be seen as favouring one to the other, yet they favour the other all the time, let's be honest. But projects, you know, like, Warrnambool City Council have, have a partnership with East Denmark, Gunwitch marine and, I forget the other one. Sorry.

TARA FRY: Okay. Like Gary Woodland.

KEICHA DAY: No, it's, Oh, my God, it's Joey Chatfield. He represents them on the board. Anyways, it's the three groups, and, That I work on modules. So, at the opening of the Hopkins River, and preservation of that site, and they have scientists on board. And that's a really cool project, just like for info sharing, skills sharing. there's a terms of reference for everyone to abide by. So, you know, like working really hard as a three, TO groups to, back each other up on decisions. When one says no, that's just a collective no. there's opportunity to talk about why it's a no. So, that, there's no resentment when you leave the table type thing. you know, we talk a lot

about, like, good faith, and I fucking hate because it's never good faith. Good faith is nearly always a gaslighting tool to just be a good Aborigine. but good faith, when it when it really works, is really cool. When you get groups together that have a terms of reference that, you know, in good faith, work towards the project aim and we all get something out of it, whether it be knowledge or, some work for our mob. but yeah, it always depends on the people that are in the position from the council as well, and their conscious and unconscious bias. They'll go as far as they want to, and if their bias doesn't allow them to go to want to go very far, then it won't go very far.

KEICHA DAY: And so, yeah, but that has been a good project. I've been I said on that project, and it was a good one. I'd like to see more projects with museums especially that have our secret sacred objects, and especially ones that have our ancestral remains, and meaningful partnerships, like writing letters in support of getting our stuff back from international museums as well. Don't just pat yourself on the back for doing the right thing. Melbourne Museum does a lot in one way, but then also, doesn't do a lot in other ways. You know, like at the same time that they were negotiating with us to get our ancestral remains back and secret sacred objects, which is the morally right thing to do. They were also, still wearing our possum skin cloak design on their uniforms, but not paying us royalties from that. And when we picked up on it and pulled them up on it, and said, you're welcome to renew your license oh nah, you know, shit like that. It's still shitty, you know, you partnerships have to be meaningful or the way meaningful. So, I don't really I mean, having said that, I don't really have one that's a perfect example. But the ones that we do, some of them have good foundations, like the museums. but they could be better and they should be better. in order for them to be perfect.

KEICHA DAY: And perfect is not having us always fight for what is the right and moral thing to do. Like don't keep fucking remains of human beings in your cupboards and then say to us, we've only got a set budget of X, Y and Z, and we have to do it by this date. Excuse me? Like what? You know, one of the I hesitated there because one of the most, probably the most disgusting interactions that I've had with the museum was when I worked on, the return of Ancestral Remains for the Guditjmarra people. And my brother Tom had earlier, on behalf of Guditjmarra people, him and Uncle Kenny Saunders actually went over to England to bring back ancestral remains from the museum there. And I remember we met them at the museum at like 3:00 in the morning, like it was all very it was all very like, is this even fucking real? Like I'm here at a museum at 3:00 in the morning, waiting for my brother and my uncle to bring back Guditjmarra people from England. And, you know, they want a photo op and they want to, they want to in like a report about it and blah, blah, blah. and it just all felt very like, yuck. But also, it was like a time for joy, for Guditjmarra people. But Whitefellas wouldn't have understood the joy in that. Like they would have patted themselves on the back.

TARA FRY: Just trauma porn for them.

KEICHA DAY: Yeah, that's exactly right. Trauma porn for them. but anyways, these two, the ancestral remains are actually two skulls that had. And now that I think of it, I don't know whether it was a museum or a university. It come back from. Because the skulls were actually cut in half. And then there was a screw, at the back of the skull. a screw on one side and a hook on the other to keep the skulls together. And then when you pull them apart, you can see the anatomy of the skull. So, there was two of them like that. and they were going to be part of the ancestral remains that were returning back to Gunditjmara Country. and So, as the I don't even want to say manager, but as the overseer of making sure that the museum was doing what they said that they would do and making sure that they got home. I had helped, like, get a group of mob together to repack the remains So, that they could go back to Country. And those two skulls in particular had already been in a box and the box had ribbons on it. and So, when we had seen them, I'd made sure that because they've got very barbarically, but they have, numbers written on them to correspond with who they are, you know, as they do. And So, I was making sure that the numbers were corresponding with what was on the paper, what was on the PowerPoint.

KEICHA DAY: Yep. Tick. And I had specifically instructed, the museum that no one was to open any of these boxes. Once the bow, once the bow was tied up, no one was to touch them. and when we went to get them, I think would have been a week or two later after we went back and picked a spot down home. I went back and I don't know even what made me check, but something made me check because it just didn't feel right as soon as I walked in that room. I don't know how to explain it, but I like it was in my chest. My chest would not let it go until I opened up those two skulls and made sure that they were exactly how we left them. And the skulls had been opened and they had been open. And how I knew that they were opened was that they weren't in the right box. They weren't in the right corresponding box. So, whoever had opened it had then put the skulls in different boxes, because they wouldn't have realised that the boxes had numbers to correspond. So, when you talk about, partnerships and how I say, you know, the museum does good foundational work because they have a committee that talks about ancestral remains and they have a legislation around that. But still, we're being treated as human curiosities. And still there's people within those, facilities that feel like they're entitled to us, even in death, even in death.

KEICHA DAY: And when we're on our way home. They still feel like they can untie those pretty little bows on top of boxes. And what are you looking at? You know, who the fuck has a morbid curiosity to want to look at a skull that was cut in half, has screws and a hook on it to keep it together So, that it's not falling. Who the fuck you got? A you got a maniac employed at the museum and I'm concerned about that. And that's exactly what I wrote in the letter. after I reported it to the full group and saying, you've got a maniac, you've got you have security system all the way through this museum. You've got cameras all the way through it. Who the fuck was it? Who the fuck went into a classified room where you can't? Not a normal employee or an everyday employee can gain access to you. Have to have a special pass to get in there. You've got to sign in book. Who the fuck was it? Because I hope

they get sung. I hope that their life is exactly as they wanted it to be. When they opened up those bows, opened up the skulls not only just to look at them, but handled them. What the fuck were they doing touching another human being like that when they're on their way home? Not only that has the disrespect to put them in the wrong box. Tie up the bows like my ancestors weren't going to tell me through my chest that I needed to check them.

KEICHA DAY: That's how dumb they think they are. That's how dumb they think we are that, you know, like, even though our ancestral remains can't speak, they can speak. Otherwise. How else would I have known to open them? Because I don't want to. I don't want to open the. I didn't want to open them in the first place. I don't want to be traumatised seeing ancestral. Remains in the first place. But I still have to because I've got to make sure that they come home. And when you talk about, you know, like the museums wanting to do the right thing, bring in ancestral remains, given them back to community and stuff like that. We're talking about, like, not whole skeletal remains either. We're talking about bits and pieces. Bits and pieces that [REDACTED] by the name of [REDACTED] who I don't agree with and I don't think that [REDACTED] should be touching our people. and I don't think that because [REDACTED] has a formula, on how [REDACTED] determines where these pieces belong to, [REDACTED] monetises on that, but [REDACTED] won't [REDACTED] won't put it up for peer group. review. That in itself is dodgy practice. Why the fuck is a museum even employing someone like [REDACTED] who isn't transparent enough to come and present to communities? So, you know, when [REDACTED] doing pieces of actual human beings and saying definitively, yes, they're from Gunditjmarra cunt. What is your formula? Because I'm not bringing people back that are from somewhere else just because you're saying they're from Gunditjmarra.

KEICHA DAY: So, you know, like, I guess I speak on that because we do have good partnerships on a surface level. But then when you start talking about the added trauma that they I was traumatised from that I think, I don't think I, I was pregnant with son at the time. He's, he turned eight just recently, and I don't think that I was ever the same working at Gunditj Mirring even after that, like I just, I did not find black joy in and victory in that. Like the fact that someone would open up skulls that made me want to fuck and blow up the museum. I found great joy when Wakanda Forever, came on and he smashed up that museum. And I have visions of fucking. Yes, I want that to happen in real life, because how the fuck do they get all these things that are on display? But then in the other way, they want to have deadly partnerships and give remains back. So, you fucking should like. And that shouldn't be articles shouldn't be written about it. You fellas certainly shouldn't be patting ourselves on the back for it. and you're doing that all while still displaying stolen artefacts from all around the world. Like, that's the other thing, you know, when you say, like, what are some really good things that work around the community? Probably when I think about it now, because I've worked myself up, probably fucking nothing, probably fucking no partnerships. Fuck it, there's none.

KEICHA DAY: Because there's always something with people that we have partnerships with. Apart from those old school deadly farmers. And that's saying

something in Australia, like, if I'm praising up old school farmers in Australia over people in power, then fuck, what are you fellows doing wrong? Because what the fuck? Yeah. Where's the empowerment form of. There's no empowerment. And then when we get given what's rightfully ours, it's sort of like when you're playing with kids and you're like, well, have it, then have your ball and shove it like. Because then then they're nowhere to be seen. They don't want to partner with you anymore. but the way that they could, especially with museums, could be partnership partnering is helping us lobby for our things to be returned from all over, but also, returning things from all over in your museum to arseholes, like, I think. When is that going to be outdated? When is that going to be frowned upon by people? That if you want to know what people that practice culture in Torres Strait Islands do go up to Torres Strait and flood their economy, don't just pay a museum and be like, oh, that's really nice. that's a meaningful partnership going up to Torres Strait and seeing the people actually dance because they're still they're going out and not eating all the kooyang out at the lake, but eating some of it, even the thing of like, going to organisations or going to, black owned businesses and paying for 100 shirts.

KEICHA DAY: We want, I'm going to pay for 100 shirts, but give them out to community that can't afford it. Don't let them use that. After pay. I want to pay for 100 shirts. You know, like how they do it, how the rich folk do it. Kmart, Lay-buy's as at Christmas when they pay off everyone's Lay-buy's. Why don't why followers do that for black followers in black owned businesses? I'd love a free shirt. I do get free shirts from Clothing The Gap. Having said that, that's a successful partnership and that is a successful partnership. Black owned businesses like the way that they treat our community is like second to none. the way that, you know, like closing the gap especially is a good example of them having a business that supports their social interaction with community and their programs and stuff like that, like successful partnerships, is when you leave a community better off, not when you're making them be thankful that you exist, which is a lot of what our partnerships are about. It's always about meeting a criteria or making sure that we get it done by end of financial year and yadda yadda yadda. It's about how you treat people, which is what I go back to, like the Atros and how they could definitely show mainstream community how to just be normal in a human being. I don't understand why it's So, hard to just talk to another human being and try and find a common ground and not be a fucking arsehole.

KEICHA DAY: But yeah, I don't know if [indistinct] it. I don't think I'll see it in this lifetime, though. I'm getting old now. I'm 44 this year, So, I don't think that I will see it in my lifetime. I hope my kids do successful partnerships. I'll be still around, hanging around, watching them do the successful partnership. making things go awry on the other partnership on the other partner's level. But, Yeah, fuck that descended into chaos. I don't believe in any successful partnerships.

TARA FRY: How could First Peoples history and culture be better taught at school?

KEICHA DAY: Such a valid and important question, because we keep on getting lied on in this colony. And that's the biggest thing. So, language around our existence needs to be reflective of facts. Like I keep on going back to that, that settlement settling. No, and it's not enough that people say, well, they're just kids. They shouldn't know, kids are getting raped every single day. They're too it's too much for them to go through that. But they're still, still kids go through that today. Like, kids are a lot more understanding and resilient. You need to equip them with knowledge straight off the bat So, that they do know what rape is, that they do know what, what horrible things exist in the world. and I know that that's a really in-your-face example, but I guess it's the only way that people are going to understand how we have to. It's important to make our kids understand the truth. and I use that example because, you know, obviously, I've got two kids myself, and one of my greatest fears is someone hurting my children. And in order for me to make sure that they're not hurt, they have to understand why certain actions hurt them. And that is, you know, assault on all levels is an easy, tangible one. so, you know, safety around how they interact with other adults, trusting their gut, all that sort of stuff is important.

KEICHA DAY: So, then when you move that over into the context of learning the truth about history, you need to be telling the kids early on So, that they're not getting to high level, which is what's happened. High level positions, they're making decisions and they're like, well, I don't understand why you're So, traumatised because this area was settled. And then they go to a Jan 26 thing to see what it's all about. And their minds are fucking blown because they didn't know about massacres. Yet. I've known there's not a time that I can remember that I didn't know about that. I honestly think that we set up our children to fail if we're not telling the truth and being honest but equipping them with knowledge that is going to serve them later, and it might serve them in a way of their humanity, which is what I hope, but also, serve them with a purpose of what they want to do later on in life. They might want to work in that space. We can't be having our children learn the truth when they're not children anymore, when they're adults, and they've already shaped an opinion on what we're talking about here, which is colonisation. There has been So, many times where I have, even through my Facebook, I've had friends say to me, I didn't realise any of this happened until I saw you write about it. But it wasn't just once I had to write about it.

KEICHA DAY: It was, you know, on my sixth time where they were like, oh fuck this, she keeps on banging on about it. I'm going to see what she's talking about. And their minds are blown. It's not up to me. It's not up to us to tell our constituents the truth of how this country was founded. and it's stressful. It is the most stressful thing to have to. Because when you do all of these things, when you talk about colonisation, when I say all these things, it's basically when you talk about colonisation, it instantly makes you another in your groups. You know, like I wasn't really vocal about colonisation until like later on in my life, like really vocal, and really, you know, pushed that agenda. So, people's experience of me as Keicha Day was just that. I played sport and I had a laugh and, you know, like to do fun stuff and all the, you know, like, I was one of those good aborigines. But then when Facebook

comes along and they're actually seeing this is actually what consumes me in the times that I don't see, you know, like when I play sport or, when I'm going to the movies or out to dinner with you guys, it's a relief from the constant barrage of having to right the wrongs of colonisation. And So, they never really understood until they became friends with me on socials.

KEICHA DAY: And like anyone you know, you lose a lot of friends along the way, people that you thought were friends. And they don't ever get that. It's not a difference of. Opinion. It's a difference in humanity. If you think that this is okay, that my ancestors have endured this and that you reap the benefits of that, and you don't try and make amends or try and learn or just be a good human being about it, then we've it's not a difference of opinion, homie. It is a difference in humanity, I instantly become afraid of you and your capabilities, because if you don't have any empathy towards another human being on that level, then I feel like you are probably going to murder your mother and you, you wouldn't bat an eyelid. Therefore you're an unsafe person in my world and you're out, you know, like so. It definitely does make you other in lots of circles. And, and that's tough because when you talk about, and through like anthropology, a lot of that study is to do with community people, groups, how individual people form groups and how what makes you belong to that group. And that's essentially the human being, the human experience, you know, like that's when you talk about evolution and, your experience as a human being, what the meaning of life is and all that sort of stuff.

KEICHA DAY: Essentially, as a human being, all you want to do is belong, whether that be to your mob or to a group. and when you suddenly become other in groups that you felt you belonged, it is traumatic and it is upsetting. And it's, you know, like we talk about, you know, talking up our resilience. But it's like, I don't want to be resilient to this, you know, like I should be able to. And it goes back to what I was saying about experiencing black joy on Country. I should just be able to be who I am based on facts. It's not like I'm making any of this up. and just like, let's just live like, let's just don't be a shitty person, you know, like, don't take the snags out of Doongalla and then be surprised when the Murray cod is dying or affected. You know, the waterways are affected. Don't and don't think that that is, an isolated incident. I think that's the thing that I get frustrated with, too, is that a lot of the things that happen in the colony to our landscapes, it's taken on as like individual incidents, like unrelated. And it's like, no, it's related. That's how climate change has happened because it's all related. So, again, we go back to like, what do we want our kids to learn in school? And it has to be the truth So, that we're not So, that we can all start on a level playing field.

KEICHA DAY: Facts are facts. There's no gaslighting, there's no nothing. It's just human beings interacting and wanting to be a part of a group, a movement for the betterment of our generations So, that when we're at school, we're learning the truth. We're growing up, we're getting into positions of power, and we're having the same moral, set to them be able to make the difference for generations to come. Like, I know that I have a vision of that meme where that fella has all of them things on the

board, and he's like, and this is what needs to happen. And So, I feel like that in this space, but it's like, it's So, true. We all need to know the facts. And I'm not minimising that. They're hard facts. They are hard facts, especially when you've got generations that have been built up or have grown, as adults based on, white supremacy and curriculum that, you know, still, supports white supremacy and colonisation as settlement and is all very Kumbaya and, you know, Thanksgiving type things. and then it might feel like a rug from underneath you when you find out that, no, actually, it was pretty brutal. But then also, you know, there's a bit of a disgusting element to that because then they're like, well, I've lived here for X amount of years.

KEICHA DAY: You're not taking anything from me. And it's like nobody said anything. But that's exactly what they gravitate towards. So, we need to have, you know, in order for that to happen, we need the kids to learn the truth at school. So, that then we go into a future where there's no ego, there's no entitlement, there's just human beings that want the best for the next generation. And I know that that sounds like it could sound like So, far out. It's not going to happen in my lifetime, but hopefully in the hopefully my kids will see it. I think that we can do it like people are very powerful. When they put their minds to things. I mean, look at them when they said that they couldn't, do a day of mourning or whatever. Yeah, they did a day of mourning for the Queen. That was pretty powerful. People power. You can do it. So, when we talk about curriculum and, you know, I have seen a change in schools and curriculum like for, my kids, they go to a school in Portland. And I remember when my daughter was about to I was enrolling her in Preppies in 2019. And they, the sports teams were the last names of colonisers.-

TARA FRY: The house colours.

KEICHA DAY: Yep.-

KEICHA DAY: Yeah. Dutton, Henty,-

TARA FRY: Mitchell. And.

KEICHA DAY: Mitchell and. Yeah. And I was saying to one of my cousins like, oh yeah what school. Yeah. I'm gonna, I'm probably gonna enrol my kids in that. And then the first thing he said was cuz I just have to let you know before you find out for yourself. And he said about the team names, and I was losing my mind because the principal of the school was someone that we went to school with. And, you know, she's such a beautiful person, has a same morals set as us, as First Nations people. And I know this because she attends community events and, you know, her kids wear black, yellow and red and you know, all the things that you know, sharing in humanity. So, I'm just like, I went to her and I was like, Steph, I, you know, like, realistically, by the end of Sis' prep year, these names need to be changed. Like, I can't be attending a school. And she goes, yep, I know she goes, I'm already on it. I'm already I'm already thinking of ways to change it. And I was like, look, if it's not

done by the end of Sis's first year, like, I'm going to start protesting, like I'm really going to make a noise.

KEICHA DAY: So, just as a courtesy, and I know these things don't happen. Well, by the time sis started school and at the end of January of the next year, they'd already changed it. They had a competition. Who has? Who can? We're renaming our house houses. can you please think of or forward four names that you think will be really deadly for? And, So, the same cousin I said to him because he's a plant person, and I said to him, why don't you just, pick out four plants that their predominant colour is like yellow, green, blah, blah, blah. And that's their names, like, but get the Gunditjmara names and we'll just that'll be that. Like we need some representation. And the school community had a vote on it and they voted for that name. So, you know, like I think and I always use that as a deadly example of leadership.

TARA FRY: Was the vote between the coloniser names and the native plants.

KEICHA DAY: Yes, it was, so, people had put forward names. So, it was like animal names. And So, then they put up a vote to the community to see what they wanted.

And the vote was, the plant names. Yeah. Which is really cool. And I just think, you know, like when you give the people power and power to make the change, you know what? Sometimes I'll make that change. And that's a really cool way. Rather than telling someone these are the change names and, you know, the names are forced or whatever, giving them the opportunity to vote for it, I thought was really cool, but also, it was such a pressure off of us as well. Like, I don't really care honestly what the names are going to be, just as long as it wasn't going to be them dogs. And but it was such a like reaffirming experience in the colony that, you know, like, sometimes humanity does prevail when we give them the opportunity. so, yeah, I tell that story because I think that we don't give and I tell the council this all the time is don't give constituents enough, credit for their critical thinking. and if you put things to them and the vote is the vote, then that's the vote. You know, we live in a democratic society. But what I don't like is when people say, well, this demographic aren't ready for that conversation yet, So, therefore we're not going to have it. but I do see a lot of the schools have, curriculum and, teachers that want to make a difference as well, that are good human beings that, yeah, influence a curriculum So, that their students achieve their academic goals.

KEICHA DAY: But they also, get a little, little bit of insight into the truth of, how the colony came about. And it's quite interesting, you know, like, I've got a lot of teacher friends that talk. About their experiences with students that have probably never met a blackfella. And I just that blows my mind in itself that they've never been a blackfella. But, and just how what? They've never met one, but they have all these opinions on one, but teaches them as teachers then challenge those, assertions and then they also, action them by, you know, let's go out on a tour and employ Gunditjmara people to teach you about Gunditjmara Country. And they're unchanged after that, well, then that's cool, because the real world is always a rude awakening

for people like them that won't, you know, they think that they're big dogs in schools, but then they get out in the real world and they say the same filth. And then, you know, there's not a teacher there to hold your hand and try and show you that this is how you be a good human being. you just probably abruptly get shown that you're a shit human being.

TARA FRY: Knocked out At the pub and you don't know why.

KEICHA DAY: And then you're the victim. Suddenly you're the victim. so, yeah, that's it's important for a wide range of things, not only to make a change for generations, but also, the safety and health and well-being of our people in future that have to keep on coming up against people that have never met a black fella and talk about abos and coons and, and you're just like, what, 2023? It's important.

TARA FRY: **And what about, how could our kids be better supported at school?**

KEICHA DAY: They can be better supported by Seeing themselves in the curriculum I think one of the things for me in school was whenever we had black studies and you would fucking die in class because they would be talking about Blackfellas in northern Australia. you know, the real Blackfellas. And it's just like. And then not to even to add on to that. You know, they have they have a whole different language, culture, landscape, but Whitefellas don't understand that. So, when, you know, when we see when we're getting shown a video in class and they're talking language and the white kids in class can't understand why we don't understand what they're saying in class, then you're suddenly having a conversation as a fucking 14 year old about colonisation. To kids that don't believe you, that think that you're making it up. and that was my experience in school. So, like.

KEICHA DAY: That's why it's important for our own health and wellbeing of not only our kids, but then adults that have to encounter adults that don't have experience of black fellas, later in life. It's just. Yeah. What else can I say? I think I'll just leave it at that. I mean, yeah.

TARA FRY: **How else could we improve the Victorian education system for First Peoples.**

KEICHA DAY: Resources is the biggest thing. we need to be able to resource adequately, engaging our community. I remember when I was in school and my grandparents would come just because it was important to them that the kids knew that this land was wasn't settled. and my nan would come and she would talk about her experience of, life on the mission. My grandfather would come and he would be like the typical, blackfella Bushman and bring in, like, possums and koalas and stuff

like that and teach the kids about the flora and fauna. And they just did that on their own backs, you know, they were two, elders. And like a lot of our elders that, didn't have money that would scrape up for the petrol money to get into town to be able to do these things. and I think adequate resourcing So, that our people are financially respected. If you want mob to come and do a welcome, then pay them for it. And the schools need to have a budget for that. And it needs to be a dedicated budget, not just a gammon budget. And they need to base it on significant dates of the year that don't change. reconciliation week, NAIDOC week especially, sorry day, and whatever other day that is significant within their community. I think that's really important for them to be resourced. Like last year the schools for NAIDOC Week ended up all of the schools in the district.

KEICHA DAY: I didn't realise, but they all went down to the foreshore and, had the deadliest day with Gunditjmara people. and I just think, you know, like more of that. But the mob needs to be resourced to be engaged, and schools also, need to be supported with that resource So, that they're not worried about where they're getting. Because there's a lot of schools, I'm sure, that want to do things, but then they have to take resources from one bucket that's already under-resourced to do blackfella things. And when you're when you're accountable to a school community and they say, well, how come our toilets haven't been fixed? And the principal is saying, well, we use some of those funds to pay for a welcome to Country. You know, you can imagine the dialogue around that and it becomes a negative thing. So, that's why it's important for it to be adequately resourced. we do have CSOs in our schools, which is, absolutely essential, but we need more, we need a lot more. I know that last year we had two positions for as examples that were advertised for Gunditjmara language. and I didn't realise, but they service all of the schools throughout the week and it's just like they're in the end, we only ended up getting one person employed for it. and I'd like to see positions like that as an essential position. To be resourced, you know, full time, ongoing rather than at the end of each year we assess to see like, is it enough? Well, yes, it is like it is. The kids haven't seen a kid. Even my kids were really engaged. and it gives them another opportunity while they're at school to practice culture and kinship with their CSOs that are usually their uncles and aunties. They come and see them like, that's a fucking cool thing to do. but yeah, the schools need to be supported in that respect, that they're not taking funding out of other buckets to then support NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week and sorry day, then they're never going to change. They're going to be like Christmas. They won't change. So, then you need to be resourced and be able to budget accordingly for every year. Because what we get as a community is they'll get to NAIDOC Week and see how much money they've got, how they're tracking, because that's the end of financial year. And then they'll be like, right, we've got this budget, what can you do for us? And it's like, well, because our kids go there and you want to do, you're more than willing to do a deal with them. But that's not really how business works. Like, you wouldn't approach fucking Donald Trump and say, all right, I've got X amount of dollars. What can you do for me? He would say, absolutely not, but only because he's already adequately resourced.

KEICHA DAY: and we're not. So, we recognise that schools aren't, rich. Public schools aren't rich. Therefore, they need that help. And if our community can push that. They get resourced So, that they can engage our communities. then they need to because we've got a plethora of things to do now, like tours. You've got space, you've got spaces to go, national parks, all that type of stuff. And if you're saying to the community, look, we've got funding to employ one Gunditjmarra person for the day, this is the date. Do you have anyone available? Hell yeah, we do, because you've already got the budget set. You're not coming to us saying, oh, hey, how much does it cost for X, Y, and Z? but also, you know, like with that, I mean, for the tour example, you also, if it's all fully resourced, you don't actually have to ask parents to fork out for that experience, which is the other thing that I think about because conscious and unconscious bias. I can think of many parents to kids that would not give them \$2 to even go towards a tour on Gunditjmarra Country, but if it's in the curriculum and it's resourced and it's on this day, then they've either got to take their kid out of school for that day and the kids all the more, less humanity in them for that.

KEICHA DAY: but it gets paid and they don't have to whinge about their \$2 going to community that will just smoke petrol with it or drink alcohol with it anyway. But yeah, So, that's why it's important. And we need to make sure that they're resourced and I don't think that it's that far like that. It's not that far off. I mean, we have schools that now have recognised that mental health is really important, and they have someone that serves as a mental health, go to person within the school, which is So, important. and First Nations and how this nation was built should be absolutely equally important because when you think about mental health issues, that why there's mental health issues that exist in our community, it's because of the colony and it's because of the lies and the gaslighting. that's where our problems starts. So, yeah, it would be good if we viewed that as strongly and as important as mental health in schools as well, and making sure that our students have access, because, I mean, especially when you talk about public and private, private have money and they got money coming out of their rings and they can go into all of these things. And that's an experience. But the public, we definitely need to be able to support our public schools to have that experience, because then it also, economically includes our community in that equation as well.

KEICHA DAY: Like it's an automatic hand in hand type thing. It builds partnerships. And if there's any, you know, the run off of that, if there's any trouble with or issues with any of our kids in schools, then, you know, like there's a better relationship to say, hey, I've noticed that X, Y, and Z may not be feeling all that great. Like, is there anything happening? Is there anything that we can help with? Like it opens up them communication lines as well, which is really cool. You know, you don't want to. I know a lot of our parents, their only experience with schools is, when their kids are in the shit and they have to get spoken to. whereas this is a, resourcing and stuff is a good opportunity. You know, that same parent might be, might not want to do, dancing or they might not be one that attends rallies, but they might actually sit at home and do weaving and or be a deadly painter. And they

could have a session there at the school to do painting or weaving, which is So, important. So, it's about capturing all skills in our community as well. When the schools engage us, not just go into a landmark and talking about the things that we're talking about in this interview, which is heavy stuff, and sometimes people just don't want to talk about it, which is fucking absolutely valid.

KEICHA DAY: Why would you? but their difference in making, in the colony could be still practising things, I'll talk my face off till the sun comes up. But if you try and get me to weave, I don't have the patience for that. Like I probably should maybe when I'm older, instead of knitting, I'll start weaving. But I feel like the time that it takes for me to weave. I could have already ranted and written a letter to the council and tried to make a difference. Or, you know, done an interview to try and make a difference that way. whereas I admire people that can sit and patiently paint and weave and make a difference through something that's like So, beautiful and powerful and that saves breaths like that. You don't have to rant about it. You don't even have to rant like you're. Yeah, your artwork and your creation and stuff. It speaks for itself rather than you actually having to speak for yourself. I'm learning a lot about myself in this interview.

TARA FRY: Same.

KEICHA DAY: I mean, like, you know what? Maybe, maybe this is going to be my last interview. Maybe I'll just be like, don't talk to the hand, talk to the weave, and that's it. Like, that's all I've got to say. Yeah.