



TRANSCRIPT OF SUBMISSION

DALE WANDIN – 15 MARCH 2024

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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: And if you just like to introduce yourself.

5 **DALE WANDIN:** Yeah, sure. So my name is Dale Wandin. I'm from the
Wurundjeri tribe. I'm here sort of speaking on my own behalf, just from my own
experiences and my own observations. So I do know that there's been conversations
that have been had with myself involved as well with Wurundjeri, but yeah, as
previously discussed, this was more sort of mutually sort of recommended from both
10 ends, as a lot of the input that I had previously, we felt that we could sort of dive into
and, and sort of not capitalise on but, build from really. So, yeah. How do you want
to start this off? Like, do you want to kick it off with a particular question or.

15 **COMMISSIONER LOVVET:** Usually start off with a short story.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah. For sure.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: You can start off wherever you want to start and we
can join in. -

20

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: So ask questions as we go.

25 **DALE WANDIN:** So without sort of going too far into it, I can sort of start from,
like the things that I dealt with as a kid and sort of like branch out from there because
obviously a lot of the stuff that I deal with currently is like reflective of a lot of the
things like that haven't really changed since childhood. So I grew up in the northern
suburbs around like Epping, Lalor area. I'm 41 years old now and growing up in that
30 area, you're connected with the northern suburbs. Like you got like a hotbed of mob
out in the northern suburbs in Melbourne. So, it was always good. Like grandad
living around Preston, Northcote, Thornbury sort of areas you're never too far away
from community. But what I sort of noticed growing up in the area is especially in
modern day sort of thing, the difference between what you tackle or what you
35 observe as a kid as to what you tackle now as an adult, are very, very different
because I feel like by design a lot of the hardships. Sort of get ignited from like the
policies and stuff that are put in place by state and federal government. So what I
mean by that is, is that things around like native title and traditional owner like
(indistinct 00:02:46) and stuff like that, I feel like by design they'll sort of
40 strategically put a line in the sand with community and with mob and sort of go, hey,
like, we've got these opportunities for you.

45 But instinctively they know that if they put it at a specific point, that's going to create
a rift within community. You know, one of the biggest things at the moment is
ongoing disputes with, Wurundjeri and Tuggeranong and Bunurong and all that sort
of stuff around, like land disputes where I feel like by design government know that,
hey, like these registered Aboriginal parties are going to like throw all this money

that they're getting from doing cultural heritage and all that sort of stuff like instead of actually creating profit and, pushing things forward. They're stuck in courtrooms. And they're sitting there having ongoing disputes with each other. And I feel like as myself sort of watching that, I didn't see it so much as a kid. Like there was always
 5 politics growing up as a kid. But the politics were very different. It was like you were standing against government. Whereas like, now I feel like there's always that, hey, we're together, but you turn your back and like, I'm going to say something about you as well because, like, we've got this ongoing thing and there's even points where you sit in courtrooms and you'll have, like, people that are supposed to be going for
 10 the same thing.

They're going, hey, like, let's, let's forget this. Like, you and I are like, we can go and like, sort this out together. And again, it ends up becoming like this mob against that mob. And it's like there's even in-house fighting where it's like just around, like Just
 15 people fighting with, and a lot of it, like you could put it down as greed, but I feel like it's a lot deeper than that. Again, that's by design. And one of the things when I ran as a candidate for treaty they got me when I was full of spirit and so confident and what we could achieve around it. But a lot of the older people that you'd speak to are so just weathered and just battled, they're exhausted. And when they hear this, the
 20 first thing they go is like, this is native title. This is exactly the same thing that we're dealing with all these other things it's just another set of hurdles that we've got to jump through. It's just another it's just another thing that's going to make us feel like, what is it like the mice in the bucket with like and they're all trying to escape out of the bucket and no one can really get to the top of the bucket because the scale is too
 25 high.

And so, like, you see that sort of stuff and I try and keep it all together. So I don't sort of jump onto the next thing but, seeing that and I've been seeing it for a while now, you sort of sit there and just go. I understand why elders are frustrated. I understand
 30 why people are so burnt out by the ongoing things that they've got to deal with. And this isn't even dealing with their own stuff. This is just dealing with like, hey, we got this thing for, let's see if you can do it, just figure out your bullshit first. And you know, like that to me, is like, I feel the government do know what they're doing. And it doesn't matter what figurehead is in there again it's all by design. They know that
 35 until that stuff sort of gets sorted that nothing can really advance, and it's by their own implementations. And so like a lot of people will generally just throw up their hands and say, you know what? We're happy to remain grassroots and be disruptive. And then again, like that becomes problematic for government because it's like, 'oh, we don't understand'. It's because you're not listening. And I'm not taking anything
 40 away from Yoorrook. But I actually said this to somebody the other day when I was communicating around like, treaty and self-determination and all that sort of stuff.

And I was like, again, by design, they have these things in compartments because they don't want. So they'll have people specialise in specific things because it makes
 45 it look not as Chaotic when this spot fires and not a big bonfire. So, you'll have Yoorrook and you have self-determination, you have all these sort of things and in a way where you have like specialist people and I respect the work that you do. But

like they're preventing having more people like Lydia Thorpe, who depending on who you speak to is influential and quite prolific. But I'm sure, like in the eyes of many others is that there's like a misguided sort of representation and tunnel vision and problem problematic and troublemaker and to some people, all of that might be true. But one thing is certain is that, like, she does know a lot about what community wants and needs and desires and I feel as though by design, government have these things set out because they don't want more. Lydia Thorpe's they want people that don't come off as being that angry black person. It's like, but like there's a lot of angry black people out there and they need to pay attention to that. So I think that's probably like the best starting point there is that I think that there needs to be more attention paid to and not just like, oh yeah, we acknowledge and we observe. Because that to me is just like another tick in the box. It's like, oh, okay, so you see it, but what are you doing? Like, what are you what are you actually doing to sort of take the next step? What are you doing to actually transform this? Where is your money going? Like, we all know about black cladding. We all know about, like, how certain areas, like I used to work for, for companies that, you know, would have these government incentives like hire mob. And you can have like indigenous employment programs and government would start throwing all that money. But it's like, okay, well where's that money actually going? Like we'd have like a couple of shindigs like or like community gatherings, which was great. But in saying that, it was like what was actually being done to further our ascent into being the next generation of business leaders or, becoming the head of that specific department that you worked at, like a lot of the roles would start off as like base level. And in terms of development, it was pretty much you were lumped in the same scenario as anyone else. And, if you were coming in into any other organisation or any other workplace that didn't have those incentives put in place, you would understand.

You're like, okay, well, I'm lumped in with everyone else, indigenous and non-Indigenous, because they never promised that. Whereas like you're walking into a place that has like indigenous recruitment strategies, but then once you're in there, you kind of like in a playpen, it's like being a child's play group. It's like, 'okay, well, what do I do now that I'm here?' And it's like, 'well, you just you just do what everyone else does and try to stay out of the way sort of thing.' So, you know I had a conversation with a municipality about a month ago where they were talking about, 'oh, how can we create a safe space and how can we sort of create a better recruitment strategy?' And I was like, 'well, how many visibly identified positions do you have within your organisation?' They're like 'one. And it's our like indigenous like it was basically the person that would have conversations with Wurundjeri.' Okay. Like, well, we're working on this RAP and not RAP as in registered Aboriginal party, but like RAP as in like reconciliation action plan. And so like they have these like reconciliation action plans that like to be quite honest. Like if you're not being proactive in it, it's just a whole bunch of hogwash. It's a way of like generating more income for other sectors that are attached to government in some way or form, where it looks good for the company to have it.

But I don't feel like anything is really being held to accountability in terms of okay. Well, these are the measurements that we have. And where are we at with these

measurements? And I said to them, 'well, one of the things that you need to understand is like when you only have one person here that's identifying as First Nations.' and they're like, 'oh, well, we do have other people, but like, they're reluctant to identify.' And I was like, well, that to me is that's not safe for me as someone that clearly identifies as Wurundjeri. Like because I have countless run ins with people. And one of the things that I do in my spare time, like I've got to play mob police with like my own culture where there's people that are for whatever reason, reluctant to tell people who they are like, 'oh, you know, like I'm a crowd. - I'm a proud Koori person from.' I'm just like, 'but who's your mob?' So, like, you'll have people that get assigned into these big positions within indigenous spaces. And I'm not going to say names or anything like that, but if I get too detailed in it, it'll basically expose one of the people that I'm talking about.

But it's basically like almost like a born again Christian sort of mentality. It's like, I've just found out that I'm mob and it's like, okay, but like, are you are you on the journey or have you been accepted because there's a certain point and it doesn't even stop there. It's like if I wasn't aware that I was Wurundjeri. And then one day someone came to me and showed me a photo and said, this is this is who you are. And I'd be like, oh my God, now - and what I see is like, oh, all of a sudden I've got to start like doing paintings and I've got to start doing like all this, like all this gammon stuff, like I've got to break out the dot paintings and I've got to, I've got to go and get that big job. Like for whatever company like because it's, a specific position for an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander. So now I qualify to do that in reality, what these people should be doing. So we'll use Wurundjeri as context. You get shown a photo that you're Wurundjeri. The first thing you should be doing, like work at a website. Like just put it in the Google machine. Hey, look, someone's sent me this, this image. Like, I've been told that this is me and I won't use Wurundjeri in this context, but you hear various stories of like where a lot of people that for them it's pretty straightforward.

Sometimes they're like, oh my God, we've been waiting for you to actually connect with us. But then you have other things where, some people may have their lineage confused with some of the issues that we have around missions. So one of the things that Wurundjeri find is that a lot of people will go, 'hey, look, we believe that we're Wurundjeri.' And it's like, 'okay, well, like, show us like where you think that this is the case.' And generally speaking, like a lot of the ones that get rejected is generally because they have the understanding that because their family was out at Coranderrk, therefore it makes them Wurundjeri. And like you'll find that the documentation will say that they're from like a different mob or like they're not connected to us at all. And that's fine. Like we're happy to assist when that sort of stuff comes up. But then you get some people like 'I walked into [REDACTED]', and every now and then they'll put up like new artwork that gets commissioned.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yep.

45

DALE WANDIN: And I'm walking past and I see like this artwork and it's beautiful dot paintings and I'm just like, oh okay. So I'm reading about the artist and I'm like reading this journey and it says, hey, like Wurundjeri artist.

5 I was like, it's not Wurundjeri. Because like the first thing like we don't do dot paintings. Like a lot of people think, oh, you know, like all mob do dot paintings, play didgeridoo and all that sort of stuff. And I'm like, first off, we don't have the right timber or the right termites to have like Idukki and stuff like that. So like we're not sitting there with like we actually have didgeridoo players that like seek
10 permission from, like people that actually have that stuff. We follow the protocols, we do the right thing because we understand what it's like when people break those protocols. But a lot of people will just sort of go like going back to what I was saying, it's like I reached out to said person and after like a few weeks of backwards and forwards, like 'give me a number.' And I'm like, 'no, I'm not giving you my
15 number. Like, you can call through the office and they'll transfer it through.' And then I'm having these conversations and it's basically like, oh, they grow up in Ferntree Gully and like family members trying to wash the black away, basically. So they're holding on to all the information. It's like, I don't care about all that sort of stuff. Like, I understand that that's like a process for you, and I show empathy and
20 sympathy towards that.

And I'm sorry that you've got to go through that. But at the end of the day, you've made that decision, and it's in your own writings where you're on this journey. At what point have you bypassed the traditional owner group that you say that you come
25 from to then sort of go, well, I'll ignore all that and I'll just start practising, doing the artwork. And one of the things that I said to him is like, you're distorting our stories. Regardless of whether you are or not, Wurundjeri until that's done, there's so much more that you need to learn about your identity before you even go into that journey of like, selling artwork and creating revenue for yourself. It doesn't matter if you're
30 living interstate, like people are seeing your artwork. And now, I'm not tens of thousands. Let's just say tens of thousands of people are going to walk past that painting. Like I walk past it every time I go into Doncaster. And it's like so many people are thinking that what you're saying is in line with like, Wurundjeri culture and it's not. And so like when people come up to me and they start talking about
35 things and I'm like, where are you getting this from? And it's not like it's an uncommon thing. It's very common. Like a lot of people will come up and say, oh, you know, like I've heard this story from this person or that person.

I'm like, that's not our story, though. Like, that's got nothing to do with our culture.
40 So like, I don't know where you're saying this. And so things around like dot paintings and things like that. And the stories that are told, because this particular person is not the only person. I've had conversations with Kinaway and indigenous art code around, like their membership processes and stuff like that. I'm like, you need to pull your finger out and police this properly and speak with traditional
45 owners around, when we're seeing like these gammon buddy stat decs coming through, like, how's a police officer or a chemist going to identify that someone's from a specific mob? And I've even spoken to the Advancement League in the past

12 months because something came through on my desk around a confirmation of
 aboriginality for somebody. And I'm not going to name names, but I called them up
 and I said, I don't understand why this got signed off from you guys when we're just
 up the road, like you should have just referred them on to us and they're like, 'oh, like
 5 this is a few years back.' And I'm like, 'I understand. But we've been around for a
 long time and I don't understand why this wasn't.' Hey, this isn't us.

Come down and like sort it out there and that can all that can all get fixed. And
 basically what was agreed upon after that was that the Advancement League weren't
 10 going to sign anything off Wurundjeri base. So if someone comes up and says, hey,
 look, I need confirmation of Aboriginality. I identify as Wurundjeri, Bang straight
 through Wurundjeri. And I think that's the fair thing. And if there are mobs that aren't
 necessarily registered, like as a registered Aboriginal party or anything like that,
 maybe that places like the Advancement League and sort of like step in and like help
 15 along with that process. But unfortunately, what I've been seeing is, some people
 using (indistinct 00:22:35) as almost like the license for them to sort of I know the
 more that I use this term it's, it's going to end up mainstream and I'm going to hate it.
 I call it "horticulture", but not like horticulture is in plants. I'm talking horticulture as
 in like whoring the culture for the sake of, like benefiting through funds. So basically
 20 what I mean by that is that. Someone goes and gets a stat dec and I will call this out
 because I'm still waiting for communication back from this. But the torch. The torch
 is a very, tricky sort of scenario that I've tackled around, like identification. And
 because it's linked with corrections and corrections, don't want to put the time into it.

It's basically like, hey, these people are incarcerated. This is an incentive that we've
 got in place. I agree with the incentive that the torch do. I think that what they have
 in place if it's done correctly, it's a great initiative where First Nations people can sell
 their artwork and then the profits do go to them once they're released and stuff like
 that. But I went through their website, I don't know, I can't remember why, but I
 30 went through it once and I remember coming across all these names where they're
 just like saying that they were Wurundjeri. And I was like, 'what's going on? Like,
 why are all these like, people saying that they're Wurundjeri and they're not?' And
 there was one person like, I started doing the digging, like back when I had social
 media and I do Google searches on these people. I'm like, maybe they're linked
 35 somewhere through marriage or something like that. Maybe they're tied in with
 Gippsland Mob or something like that. And there was one person that was mates
 with a cousin, and I reached out to my cousin and I was like, 'hey, is he mob?' And
 he's like, 'no, mate, he's Gub.' I was like, are you serious? Because like. And I had a
 look and basically there was a description of something on a photo about his kids and
 40 like his journey and all this sort of stuff.

The completely was identical to a description around one of the artworks that he had
 done through the torch program, and I was just like, okay. And so I spoke. I think his
 name's [REDACTED]. And I just said, 'look, something needs to be done around this.' And
 45 he's like, 'look, whenever we see stuff, when it comes down to like, Wurundjeri and
 stuff like that, we get a bit funny about because we do know that unfortunately, like,
 Wurundjeri kind of falls into similar traps as Yuin and Palawa and stuff like that.

5 People go capital city, and they ignore the fact that we're still visible and we're still active. And I feel like sometimes people think, 'oh, big city, we're just going to like fall in place and like be invisible.' And it's like, no, well, there's a couple of hundred of us. Wurundjeri mob still around. When someone identifies, you stand out like
 10 people know, like there's people that are on my radar and I'm just. I'm just waiting. It's like I've given you enough chances to sort of like, do the right thing by yourself. But at a certain point, if you're not doing that, you're elevating yourself to a point where, it's all going to come undone, where it's going to get exposed, and it's like, I've given you enough chances to be honest about it, there's people in like identified
 15 positions working in orgs at the moment where they're just sort of brushed off my approaches basically saying like, hey, like, what are what are we doing around this? And they're like, oh, you know, like the photos are put in boxes and like but my dad saw photos of my grandma and she's black as night and all this sort of - just cringe sort of conversations that you have.

20 And I'm like, and they'll talk about the colour of their skin. I'm like, hey, like, cut the bullshit. Like you saw the person that's reached out to you. Like, I'm not talking about the colour of your skin. I'm talking about your lineage. That's the only thing I care about. That's the only thing I want to talk about. And the more that you drag this
 25 on, the more suspicious that I become. Because you're in these positions and you're actually start, like, interacting with more and more of the mob that you're saying that you're a part of, but you're being very discreet when actually saying that you identify as us and like, they'll come up in podcasts and stuff and I'm like, it's just a matter of time. Like if you get into a certain point where your mob's highlighted as like, and you say something that is not in line with our culture or our values. Is and you put
 30 mob like in disrepute, like Wurundjeri is going to be very, very quick to go, 'hey, she's not she's not with us' like we've tried to do this for a long time to try and like rectify this.

35 They haven't been forthcoming with the information. A perfect example is that the person that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all that time and then like all of a sudden like [REDACTED] had to come out and say like, look like with the with the information that we have, there's no connection there. And, you know, I don't want
 40 these people to fall in these same traps because it's not about and I say this to everyone that I speak to around like their identification, I'm not there to prove that somebody's not who they say they are. I'm on the other side of the fence. I want to prove that you are so I can bring you in, this isn't any secret club. This is about bringing mob into the fold. We're stronger together than we are against. And I want
 45 to make sure that if you are who you say you are, that you have every opportunity to tap into the knowledge that I have, tap into the culture that you are so desperate to sort of connect in. And if you're not doing that actively and you're not identifying the importance of that, it says a lot more about your journey and where your affiliations lie within your culture.

If you're happy to profit from doing these lovely pieces of art and all that sort of stuff, like there's a lot that you're missing in terms of - without naming the names in

this room, we're all pretty weathered around like indigenous politics and like the
 stuff that we grew up in, like, there's. I don't go out and do artwork like I've done it
 before. I hate doing it because I feel like it's not. It's not my purpose. Like my
 purpose like as you can tell, I talk a lot like my role is more as a communicator. Like
 5 I can articulate things with my words, but, if that's your space. Like there's
 responsibilities around getting to that point. First, you can't skip the hardships that so
 many of us have gone through before getting - you're taking the glory without taking
 the responsibility of what all the rest of it means. Like you don't even have a story at
 10 this point. Whether it be within, like, you might have your own personal story, but
 that equates to nothing if you're not actively connected with the mob that you're
 claiming to be a part of. So that's where I sit with that. I think that in terms of
 identifying and where that sits around my culture and Whether it be through creating
 a business like and getting certified through Kinaway or, like all these sort of places,
 I feel like a lot more needs to be done around to me, a stat dec just doesn't cut it.

15 And I know that there are places that sort of are moving away from that, but it needs
 to be a bit more. They need to be stricter on it. They need to be a bit more heavy
 handed on it. And again it's not about calling out it's not about calling anyone out for
 me. Like if it was someone like Rupert Murdoch or something like that, where like
 20 they were constantly like creating profit for themselves and stuff like that, but they
 were doing it as like identifying that's different, that's exploiting something. But like
 if you're going through like an honest sort of way of doing things and you're doing
 this without. Taking the right steps, and you're sort of naive about the whole thing.
 That's one thing. But there's people out there that are actively doing this strategically,
 25 and they know that what they're doing is wrong. I've had not personal conversations
 with one person, but there's been communication that has come back to me from one
 specific person that's out there again, doing dark paintings as a Wurundjeri person.

And when approached about it, they basically said, 'you need to recognise that there's
 30 more Wurundjeri people out there than like than you think.' And it's like, 'well, mate
 you need to understand that, like a lot of our documentation is like heavily
 documented by colonisation, by missions, by all these things. That doesn't matter.
 Like what you say, like there's so much stuff there that's concrete evidence that goes
 35 against what you're actually saying, like go have a what is it first Australians, it's
 specifically saying out there like, we were down to double figures at one point, like
 less than 20 people within our mob. And you can't go from knowing that there's that
 smaller number of like Wurundjeri people to then turn around and go, oh, we just
 don't know where they all are because there's just - you never know where they're
 40 popping up. And it's like, no, we know where they're popping up. And if you think
 that this is like nothing that we're like, I'm paying attention to it. And, you know, as
 stressful as it is, like, unfortunately there needs to be people that are sort of like
 doing this sort of work, and I don't want to be that person. None of these
 conversations are nice conversations to have. Like the last thing I want to be doing is
 45 saying 'I'm not saying that you're not mob, but I'm saying that you're not. You're not
 us', basically. Yeah. So -

5 **COMMISSIONER LOVVET:** -that's a really good point you make particularly because of colonisation and, the sheer impacts of that, the number of mob going to double figures, low double figures, it's a really important point that it's only stresses your points really about can't be this many Wurundjeri people, because it goes back to those survivors at that point in time.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

10 **COMMISSIONER LOVVET:** Do you feel it's a do you feel it's a set sort of age group that are going through this?

15 **DALE WANDIN:** I wouldn't want to sort of like, pinpoint it as a specific age group. Because the ones that I've got an eye on at the moment, they vary. There's some that are like there was one in particular. It's probably in their late 20s to early 30s, and then there's two that might be like late 40s to early 50s. So there's like two clear sort of generations there. But there's a lot that come through and it's like, some of the applications that will come through on my desk. They're like very cut and dry, like, yep, I know bang done. Then there's some where you need more information and then there's some where they've heard through the grapevine. And so like
20 unfortunately, it's never going to be an easy sort of process. It's stressful for the people that are putting that through, especially like if it's not straightforward. But again, like for me it's about proving that you are. And I've even gone as far as like to contact neighbouring mobs like I'm all about like strengthening those relationships that are fractured within the things that I spoke about earlier about by design. It's like
25 and some of these mobs sort of like they hear and they get a bit confused, like, all right, why are you calling me for? And I'm just like, look, we've had this one that's like popped up on our desk. I just want to see, like, do you have any connections with any of these names?

30 **COMMISSIONER LOVVET:** Maybe they've gone the wrong one.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

35 **COMMISSIONER LOVVET:** Maybe you need to be over here. Not here.

40 **DALE WANDIN:** Yeah and, that for me is about relationship building with like other traditional owner groups as well, is because they need to understand that like whilst some of our relationships are a little bit bent and fractured at the moment, like there's people out there like the younger mob that are trying to right these wrongs as well. And -

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: And do you think many of the relationship issues are because of the construct of colonisation?

45 **DALE WANDIN:** Yeah, 100%. So it really goes back into like the native title stuff and the boundary negotiations. I wouldn't even call them negotiations. Their arguments at this point you know, there's clear written documentation that I'll sit

there and I'll watch anthropologists and historians, come through. And one of the things that frustrates me is that a lot of people will use work that gets referenced, and then I watch it get diluted more with every new edition of things that happens. And I'm like, at what point are you going to go back to the original reference and go, 'oh, okay. Like there's bits that I may have missed from here.' And so like there's stuff that I was going over, I don't think it was Monash, I think it was Latrobe. And they were transcribing all the Howitt and Fison papers. And so like, I spent like a large amount of time, like going over a lot of that sort of stuff and seeing a lot of the things that would be frequently documented. And then you go back and you look at like some of these publications that get put out and you can sort of see the influence that are coming from - without casting any sort of like stones at anyone.

There's certain names and certain sort of influences that are evident within, like the work that's been put out. And I'm just like, that is not accurate. And it's like it all becomes a strategic push to try and benefit in these disputes around native title and boundary negotiations and stuff like that. And I'm like, at what point is - things like government and stuff like that is like there needs to be more time and more of their money, not our money, but more of their money put into these things to sort of go, 'all right, we need to cut the bullshit here,' like these things - it's been happening pretty much my entire lifetime. Like, I'm 41. I could probably count at least 30 years of that where I've been hearing or witnessing just the micro cuts between neighbouring mobs. And we're supposed to be on good terms, like according to what's documented? It's a very different from what the we're sitting in courtrooms, like I said before. And it's like, and even then, like you sort of look at it and it's like, how are we even correctly being represented in those courtrooms? Because I know I got a day job and I was saying this earlier off record, but I'll bring it into this now is like the amount of hats that every person that's entrenched within their culture has to deal with.

Like, I could probably count on two hands and then some. The amount of tasks that and the amount of hats that I got to deal with on a daily basis just upon waking up in the morning. And it's like there's such a disconnect between what an indigenous person is to an indigenous person, to what an indigenous person is to a non-Indigenous person. And I feel like government ignores that even though like, they could see all these things and but it's still like, 'yeah, but what is it that you want from us?' Like they sit there and it's like, 'hang on a second.' I can see like people that I work with that are non-Indigenous, they've got what I would call like first layer sort of issues, they'll wake up if they've got like a family, they'll get their kids ready for school, they'll get themselves ready for work. They'll do all these things. They may check their emails on the way to work, they'll get to work. They'll deal with things. A lot of the stuff that they're dealing with outside of that might be working out things around dinner, working around things around like their direct relationships.

Anything outside of that, whether they're like in friends of groups, whether it be like they're dealing with like community based things, they might do things for scouts, all that sort of stuff, all that sort of stuff. They've got in check and then they go home. They have a choice as to what they engage in and what they clock on and clock on

with. I mean, clock on and clock off with what my day generally would consist of. And I'm sure like it's probably the same with a lot of people that you would speak of is that I've got WhatsApp groups that are connected to like (indistinct 00:43:22) ■■■■■. I've got stuff around funeral funds and like community organised fundraising where they try to assist in community projects because there's not enough assistance in the government sector and even the private and public sectors to help the First Nations hardships. So there'll be things where you wake up in the morning and, unfortunately, a lot of our first movements isn't a sort of like kiss our loved ones. Good morning. We go straight for the phone and you're constantly like, okay, like. And this is one of the reasons why I removed Facebook.

I still have Instagram, but even that's becoming just traumatic in a lot of ways. And confronting is that you're constantly faced with the ongoing injustice around community and you wake up, you check your phone, you're seeing messages around like specific things that are happening within the community. You then go on social media and all you're all you're being subjected to is like the pain of the people around you and very little positivity. Every now and then you might get like an ad for like a First Nations like company that like you're dealing with or something like that. Like at the moment I've got like gammon threads on and like I might see like a gammon threads ad in between all the doomscrolling of like just shit that you've got to get through. But there needs to be more of that sort of stuff where you're seeing your community sort of thrive and like, you're not seeing that, you'll see I think it's called black Pearl where like, they do the artwork space and stuff like that for like a lot of mob. And I think it's just around the corner around here. But, that's a good incentive.

But that's just an ongoing struggle for them to get funding. I'd be concerned as to where a lot of this mob would go if that wasn't if that space wasn't available to them. And then you've got like a lot of the community centres and stuff like that that you have here. I'm not naming the name, but last time I went into the health centre on Nicholson Street a very prominent elder was sitting next to me, and he's just like not going to mince his words here, but he was like, 'fuck, it's like McDonald's in here these days.' And I just sort of. I read between the lines there, and he was just like, 'it's an absolute joke. It's not like the community that it once was.' And like, it just felt like just an absolute shit show. Yeah. Like and I sit there and it's like, government plays a big role into, like, where these sort of incentives can go. And I don't feel as though there's enough being done in those spaces. The I'm just sort of mindful on time. So like I don't know how much time you guys have slotted in for this, but another thing that I wanted to

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Just on the identity stuff. You've talked about that before we move on.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Are you concerned from your point of view around treaty coming on board? Now are you concerned from your point of view that that will bring out more mob trying to identify as Wurundjeri or even just mob because

we're about to negotiate potentially, the country's first ever treaty. Do you think more people will try to inappropriately identify or identify?

DALE WANDIN: No, well I'm glad that you sort of mentioned that because I probably would have steered clear of that. But it's a very important thing. So as I said before I ran as a candidate and I was a part of a documentary that was done in conjunction with Wurundjeri and the University of Melbourne as a part of the grant. And I went around and I interviewed like a whole bunch of elders and like community members within Wurundjeri and all that sort of stuff. And I got more votes than anyone else within Wurundjeri. But one of the things that was very prominent is that we're a minority on our own country, even in terms of like First Nations people, because you've got like mob coming in from all these other spaces. And one of the things that we argued was that in terms of protocols and like all that sort of stuff, the structure around how treaty is done, it is not ethical the practice itself, like the fact that they're even having meetings in a place where, government were plotting to basically do crazy things to mob. And we're now sitting in that room sort of trying to turn something ugly into something beautiful, but the pain still in those walls. And, you know, we had representatives from community that were elected that stood down because of that very said thing, just culturally they did not feel safe being in those walls, considering all the things that were decided against First Nations people.

But one of the things that was evident was that, you'd speak to people in community that were eligible to vote but didn't vote because they felt like the way that it was done. It wasn't culturally safe around traditional owner groups and we have one recognised Wurundjeri person as our representative and that was through the reserve seat. So if it wasn't for the reserve seat, Wurundjeri wouldn't have a person in there. And even then the information that comes out of those meetings is very and I'm not saying that this is at the hand of the Treaty Commission. I'm not saying it's at the hand of Wurundjeri people either, or the representative of Wurundjeri. There's something there where like I have to sort of look around for the information and if I've got additional questions as opposed to 'well, what's happening here and why is this sort of stuff happening?' Like I remember when they were preparing for the next election, the one that just happened.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

DALE WANDIN: I had an email where it was promoted to me as though like the Treaty Commission was giving an update as to what was happening and I was like, oh, great, like, I'm going to attend this. What I actually attended was a recruitment drive and to try and like get more people voting. And I was like, 'this is not what was advertised to me.' And I remember sitting in there and there was a bunch of non-Indigenous people in this meeting. And then there was a fella that was like from up north and he was First Nations, and he started to talk to me like he was acting like he knew all us Wurundjeri mob. But then he was sitting there saying, like, talking to me, like I was non-Indigenous, and I had to pull him up. And I remember the people that were mediating. They're just like, oh, God this is not good. And I was like, the

fact that, like, I ended up having an offline conversation with someone from the Treaty Commission maybe two days later. And then they tried to recruit me, and I was like, 'no that's not what. That's not what I'm trying to do.' I was like, 'you guys need to understand that we need more information on the ground, like there's not
 5 enough people especially that's grassroots that are aware of what the next stages, are what's happening. Mob's not going to look at your emails every couple of months. I'll look at your emails.' I'm like, 'but I know, putting out a community email to some of our Wurundjeri members and then you'll see the turnout not being all that good. And it's like, because you haven't told them, you haven't gone out and told them like they
 10 don't. They don't want to see your text message. They don't want to get your registered mail, go and talk to them.' And they basically said, 'oh, we've been moving around and doing all this.' And I was like, 'yeah, but why haven't I seen you?' And they're just like, 'well, there's only five of us.' And I was like, 'well, there's your issue.' I was like, 'you're serving the entire community of Victoria with five people.
 15 You're saying that you're going out to these places. Where are you going? Because no one I know has seen you and like, even my own representative. Like, I see these photos and people are gathering around for photos, I'm like, where's my representative? And like, then, then you causing a rift within your traditional owner groups because you're there as a representative for me. And it's like, why aren't you sitting in that? Like the one person that I'm looking for in that photo is you, and I
 20 never see you in that photo.'

But then you go and tell, like your traditional owner group and they're just like, oh, I can't talk down to the elders, mate. Like. And I'm just like, well, I'm in a rock and a
 25 hard spot here because, like, who is it that I'm like, holding accountable for this? It's like, so you've got I still consider myself young, but like, you've got people like myself that have the drive and the energy to go out and do this sort of stuff. And like I will say to places like my mob at what point are you going to play to your strengths within not just community, but in terms of the way that you interact with the world?
 30 I'm not talking just government. I'm talking private, public, you name it you wouldn't hire a police officer to be a brain surgeon. You just wouldn't do it because stuff's going to go wrong very, very quickly. And what I feel happens is that I respect my elders, I respect the elders of the community. But at a certain point the world changed and there's a lot of things, there's a lot of moving parts in the world now
 35 that. If you're not staying on the ball with these sort of things, you're going to miss out on so many opportunities, so much information, and some of it is at the hands of government where like they could identify these gaps and sort of go, 'all right, well let us like get you plugged into these spaces.'

40 And this will I'll touch on this a bit more around education later. But like just in terms of like the treaty stuff, it's like there's people that are in these positions. That may be plugged in because they are influential or inspiring or qualified in terms of what they believe community needs to flourish and take those next steps. I respect that and I live with their decisions around that. The people voted for those reasons.
 45 Now they're in those positions. What are we doing to ensure that these people are qualified to talk - you can talk from your community perspective, you can talk from your heart. But in terms of implementing those next vital pieces of the puzzle, to take

- it to the next step. Where do these people where do these leaders sit in terms again, this comes under their development. It doesn't matter if you're young or old. Invest in these people like you've got these people in this position, and you'll probably find it within your own spaces as well as like there needs to be. The expense and at the
- 5 hands of government to invest in these people, even. Look, even if all of this fell over tomorrow, what's the what's the plan after this? Where are these people in these positions, whether it be Yoorrook or whether it be treaty commission like self-determination fund, all these places just fall tomorrow.
- 10 Let's just say this. What's the succession plan? Where are these people sort of going to take the tools that they've gotten from this role? How do you carry that over into your next thing, so you can become even bigger and better in your next step, in your next stage in life? Those are the things that I feel need to be rectified. And when it comes into the identification side of things going back to that, I don't necessarily feel
- 15 as though that can go back to the registered Aboriginal parties. What I feel is most at stake is like. I'm going to articulate this as well as I can. When we were going through the community conversations and like People from the Commission or the Assembly were coming in and talking to Wurundjeri. And we're having these conversations about, 'oh, nothing's off the table, we're not negotiating treaties for you
- 20 guys. Like, you can do that yourself, all this sort of stuff. But we're going to put in framework' that to me is already a red flag because once you put in framework, that's a set of rules and guidelines that you need to adhere to in order to then go through the next stage.
- 25 So that to me doesn't say that nothing's off the table. And to me, what I feel needs to be on the table is that I work at the University of Melbourne the opportunities that are afforded to me I'm going to say limited. I'm going to be pretty blunt. Do I like the job that I'm doing? Yeah. But do I want to be doing that job? No, I don't like the job that I would like to do. I'd like to go and work for Wurundjeri. I'd like to go and do
- 30 effective work that can forward my culture and can make - let's put it this way, there's no amount of money that's going to take away my hardships. Because everything's advanced so much financially now, there's no way that I can practice my culture in a fashion that I'm not going to live in poverty. And again, that's by design. So the government is responsible not just the churches, not just the education system,
- 35 but the government as well. They are solely responsible for the attempted eradication of culture, language and even colour within our space and the fact that we're at the stage that we're at now, we've come a long way, but it's taken a long time to get here.
- 40 And I sort of sit there and go, some people that you talk to within community, they're like, 'no this is about like country and all that sort of stuff.' And I agree with that. But a lot of this, you need to put a dollar sign on it because. Without the money that comes through you can't do anything with country because the world again, by design everything revolves around the dollar signs. And so would I like to go out and help dad do cultural burning and restore a lot of the country that we have left. Would
- 45 I like to stop making that country sick? 100%. There'd be nothing better in my mind than to spend time with my family and going and creating the health back into land. And I walk down past the Yarra, like where [REDACTED] at the moment. Keep in

mind, I rent on country. And it's one of those things where you walk past thousands of houses along your song lines and stuff like that, and I'm walking down the Yarra, or I'll ride my bike to work down past the Yarra. And I just see massive houses and golf courses and just litter everywhere. And I'm like, I'm wishing on Powerball
5 winnings to be able to go out and do the things that I'm doing.

Like I'm literally like putting in a ticket and just hoping that one day I can resign from my responsibilities at work are not my priorities. You guys as mob will understand that. But like to talk about like a business side of things. They don't
10 necessarily understand that you might have one person that sort of goes like, 'oh yeah, no, I completely agree with that.' But this is your job. And I'm just like, 'you have no idea what my job is like. This is a job.' And so -

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: This is one of your hats.
15

DALE WANDIN: Yeah. This is one of your hats. And so like I walk past and I see how, like how I want to like the, the image that I have for country and people post footage online of like the seal that goes through the Yarra River and stuff like that. And they're like, oh, you know, it's so beautiful. And it's like, yeah, like, you know,
20 like, I'm glad that you have the opportunity to sort of see the beauty behind that. But I also see things where you know, the litter traps that you've got, like in the city that are filled with syringes and polystyrene and stuff like that because, the council is like, 'you know, oh, that's not our responsibility. That's like Parks Victoria or it's this one,' or like all the e-bikes that get thrown in the river and like, just shit everywhere.
25 And you sit there and you're just like, all right I remember once I put through a request to cancel I forget what it's called, but it's like river cleaners. And I think there are about \$2 million, and it's like, you put them there. It doesn't obstruct anything that goes through the river. What it does, it's got a little rubber conveyor that like, hits the rubbish, collects it, and you put it in the main part of the mouth where like,
30 most of the rubbish would like filter out to. And there's rivers in Sydney that would benefit from this as well. And basically it goes through into a conveyor and it goes, it looks like a little ferry. And I mentioned this to council and they basically just - there was just no progression in that conversation was like, oh, that's not our responsibility. So, you know, maybe talk to this person. It's just like, here we go,
35 yeah, I got the I got the run around with it basically. And I'm just like, oh, but you can get one of us to, you know, put some fancy artwork on one of your strategies for the next financial year or something like that, like you want to put money into that because you know it doesn't cost that much to commission someone to do some artwork, but to actually do effective work and work with traditional owners, a
40 traditional owner that you pay respects to and you acknowledge every time you do your little virtual signalling thing before every meeting.

And, you know, 5 or 6 people have to do their acknowledgement before you actually conduct any proper business that has nothing to do with us, you do this sort of stuff,
45 because it's to pat yourself on the back. It's not doing anything effectively to help First Nations people do the things that they've been telling you for so long. Let us do the work. We can do the work you need to allow us to do the work. And that's where

the money side of things around treaty needs to come into it. And one of the things that I've spoken about with you previously, and one of the things that I used to speak about a lot in the conversations around treaty and Wurundjeri is the amount of money that gets generated through stamp duty and telephone poles and all these different things that gets put in place on other people's country that traditional owner groups don't see any of that money.

They don't see any of that money come through at all. It doesn't exchange we don't see it. We don't have any decision on it whatsoever. And it's like, but you want to move our culture forward. It's in quotations. That's things that I hear a lot, you're wanting to do things for First Nations people. One of the things that can be done for First Nations people is like all this property that gets turned over, turn that stamp duty into land tariffs turn it into like money. That goes back to traditional owners. Like, if we're not going to get the land that is being like, that's being ripped from us, like I haven't seen a cent of any of this money. If anything, I'm throwing more of my cash into landlord hands and my partner's a real estate agent it's one of those things where you sit there and you watch like, I'm a bit of a walker, I'll do a 20 K walk like a day, just to talk to myself and get the motor running and keep myself sharp. So if government ever wanted to, stop me from being sharp, they could always take out my legs, so. But I'll find a way but basically what I'm getting at is like, it's so bittersweet.

I'm getting my mental stimulation. I'm helping talk myself through these things and try and work it out. Like, what is it that we need to do and what is it that they're doing? And how can I assist with my expertise in getting to the next steps? But my hands are also tied. But one of the most depressing things is that not a single square of any of that. Like, I can't make it my own. I can't make a single part of that land my own. And the stuff that is available to us like the army camp that we have up at Norris Crescent or Coranderrk and stuff like that. I've explained to somebody - and I think I used this in the previous conversation. I look at the land that we have at the Army camp, and I look at the land that we have, like at Coranderrk and stuff like that. It's like a stolen vehicle. It's like someone's taken that vehicle from you and they've just revved the absolute shit out of it. And it gets to the point where the car is not really driveable anymore, but it's not at the point where the insurance will cover the damages for the vehicle that's been taken. So you get that thing back because it's like it's past the point of repair for government.

When we're talking about the land, they're like, the army camp's too expensive for us now, so we're going to hand it back to the traditional owners. And it's like you'll see some of the locals around here or there, like they'll still blame us for the damage around, like the old army camp and like Summerlee Lodge that was there, completely ignoring the fact that one we don't have the funds to like for the upkeep. Two people go in there and vandalise it. It's not us that's vandalising it. It's other people that are going in there like, hey let's go have a party and like, oh, we found this haunted house. Let's go in there and like, smash it up and they'll go in there and they'll smash up the asbestos walls and, like, smash up the floorboards and all that sort of stuff and put graffiti in there. But that's us, according to community members

in Healesville, because they don't know what they're talking about. And you'll get like a lot of these elderly people and they're like I remember it used to be so good. They'd have like nice flowers and a swimming pool, and it's like none of that was there. When they gave it to us, it was all boarded up so at least 60% of that is not
 5 even standing anymore. It's literally like the front part of Summerlee Lodge and going back to the stolen car thing.

Is that you go to fix the car up and restore it and they're like no, no, no. Like you can't touch that because if you do that you're then messing up the insurance side of
 10 things and how that translates. At the land side of things. It's like, okay, well, let's do something more to benefit and prosper from the land that we have. I know that once we floated the idea of having a golf course put in place and a gym and stuff like that, let's create opportunities there that very quickly got knocked on the head. I don't know where it got knocked on the head from, but it was basically like, no, this is this
 15 is what you have. And like now it's just like upkeep, like we have the (indistinct) Rangers there that like, do a lot of good work within planting trees and maintaining, grounds and stuff like that that are affiliated with Wurundjeri country and a lot of that space out there is like, you know what? Like you can spray the blueberries and like and mow the lawns. But in terms of like doing anything like maybe just plant a
 20 few like native trees out there and stuff like that, like a hands, are -.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Startling aspiration.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah. And so there's nothing that can create opportunities out there for us. And so how does that extend to Wurundjeri itself has certain things but
 25 Wurundjeri people. So you've got like the registered Aboriginal party itself that might have specific assets that have been handed back by the government that have restrictions to it.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

DALE WANDIN: Wurundjeri people that are members within that registered Aboriginal party have nothing. They have absolutely nothing where there's no
 35 opportunity for someone like myself. I'm exhausted as a lot of the people in this room would be exhausted as well, because there's so many things that we're doing within the community. But with the opportunity for us to be able to do a lot of stuff on country and create those opportunities and actually create wealth. I have passions as a creative. I said to you before, like I have done Aboriginal artwork before, but I don't do Aboriginal artwork. I'm still an Aboriginal artist. And the misconception
 40 there is that, like, as a creative, people will come up to me. They're like, oh, you know, you're a Wurundjeri artist, like, can you commission artwork for me? And I say to them, no, because I'm not a traditional like I like to do animations, I like to write, I like to be creative, I like to create music. I don't have time to do any of that anymore and when I'm doing it, I'm so tapped out and running on fumes because I've
 45 got to go through the constant red tape of all the other hats that I've got to wear, and then I've got to, try and like butt heads in a respectful way with my elders that are white knuckling like the stuff that they're dealing with at the moment because they're

5 unsure if, the next people coming through can take the ball and run with it, but at the same time they're reluctant to listen to the younger mob as well because they're just like, 'well, does this mean that I'm done if I let you have this?' Like, they're scared that the power that they have or the power that they believe they have, like they've got the power within the community.

10 But in terms of how that translates within, the conversations within government and stuff like that is minuscule in comparison, it's just an ongoing struggle that you deal with. And my concerns around treaty is how does that actually go away? Like, what is it - people talk about reparations and stuff like that. I'm like, I'm going to be very blunt here. If you want to talk about wealth that's generated within Melbourne or Naarm. Someone like myself. Not that I want to be someone like myself.

15 Should be Saudi rich. Like I should be fairly wealthy with the amount of revenue that comes through on my country. And I am fortunate. And when I say fortunate, through a lot of like grinding. I've now scraped over \$100,000 a year with my salary. That's still in today's comparison, like I would look at as what I was when I was earning 40,000 years - 40,000 years, \$40,000 a year back in 2010. So, you know, like, that wasn't a lot. And that was a struggle. And it's a struggle now. And I sit there
20 and I'm like, 'if I was earning a hundred thousand a year back in 2010, I may be having a very different conversation about where I sit,' but I'm not ignoring where a lot of so many other people sit, especially First Nations, people where like, we just don't have anything to show for the countless amount of hard work that we go through. And then it sort of plays into the stereotypes and the misconception that
25 Blackfellas don't do anything. It's like we do too much. We do way too much, like when. So I'm going to throw my partner under a bus. My partner is overworked. She'll work anywhere from 10 to 16 hours a day in real estate. And that really ramped up around Covid because people would drop off in that industry. And like the turnover, they're just like, not this is like too much.

30 But that's one job and it's like, 'you got a choice to walk away from that. And I don't have a choice to walk away from any of the stuff that I'm dealing with.' And I know that, like yourself, can sort of like stay the same. There's so many things that you have not even an obligation. Your commitment is unwavering to like the people
35 within the community. And the family. Because that's just how it is. Like you don't question it. And so many people that are non-Indigenous have like this disconnect as to what being a First Nations person really is. And they just sort of think, well they speak in hypotheticals, why don't you just do this? And it's like, you just don't do that you have this constant disconnect of like, 'oh, well this is blatantly
40 obvious to somebody that, you know, might work admin on a 9 to 5 basis. It's like, well, you know, if I don't like it, I just stop doing it. And mate, you can try and run away from your cultural obligations. You can't run that fast like it's if you run from it, it's going to run after you and it's going to bite you and it's going to bite you harder than you ever imagined so -

45 **COMMISSIONER LOVVET:** If you're walking. 20 K's a day, your obligations are walking 40 K's a day.

DALE WANDIN: Exactly like you. Just you don't you don't fight it. You just. You just have to take it in your stride. And so hopefully, like what my vision is around treaty and I'm not I'm not saying make me rich. That's not what I'm saying. I do
5 believe that there needs to be opportunities for First Nations people. I know that there was someone within my mob that in a previous conversation I was talking about the opportunity for having land available for - Wurundjeri people should be able to get, like, a piece of their land back. And I sort of played devil's advocate there, and I was like, so what about the house sort of things? It's like we're talking
10 about like pipe dreams and hypotheticals and all that sort of stuff. And I was just like, you're in a relationship with someone that's not Wurundjeri. You get this piece of land and you're like, 'oh, well, we'll even buy the house, like, but the land is given to us and okay, so that relationship falls apart. What happens to all that there or you default on the house, what happens there? There's all these questions that need to be
15 answered before you even approach government about this. And I feel like if we're talking in a pipe dream because, like, this person didn't have the answers for those questions. And I was like, well, you need to go back and you need to find the answers to your own questions before you approach anyone about, like, proposing these things because you're automatically behind the eight ball.

20 If you're trying to negotiate with somebody and you're ill prepared, they're like, we've got the advantage here. So next time they come with the answers, we're going to move the goal post. And like we're always going to have that advantage. So they're never going to be prepared on the next step. So if you're talking about things like this
25 like obviously like I can't talk about like the marital things and I can't talk about like legalities around like what would happen in those scenarios. I definitely think in terms of my own responsibilities as a Wurundjeri person, if those things ever came through and I wouldn't be saying things like land I'd be like you need to provide us stability. I think the opportunity of, like, having land without having an actual house
30 on that is problematic on its own, where you're setting people up to fail because, again, with the interest rates and everything that's going through right now, like we've lost a lot more than just land. We've lost a lot more than value. And given that it's 2024, there's so much more that we're losing as things get more and more expensive. So if you if you were talking about a pipe dream, absolutely, yeah if
35 auntie wants something that's viable where she's not like living on the outskirts of country and not even owning property there.

Like, I think that that needs to be available to members of these. I'm not going to speak on behalf of anyone else, but I'll speak on behalf of like Wurundjeri as a
40 registered Aboriginal party, like the members that are confirmed members of Wurundjeri, they need to be - at least entertain that opportunity. I feel like those things, you know, given the revenue that's done through here and that that can sort of play into where government might be like, 'oh, well, it's going to cost too much for us.' And it's like, well, you look at the stamp duty, we'll go back to the stamp duty.
45 So, say like stamp duty of a house that's \$1 million. Say like it ends up being like, I don't know how it works, but I would just say it's like \$15,000. At least half of that needs to go into funds for Wurundjeri people to be able to put that back into housing

5 opportunities for Wurundjeri people, where they can go, all right, like we've got funds for this. So, the amount of money that people paying for housing at the moment is like crazy. Whether it be rent or purchasing homes. And again, like none of it is seen by Wurundjeri people and it's all done on Wurundjeri country. So, at least make it. something that can be done like in the immediate future because.

Someone. Before I move on to the education side of things. One of the things like, I had a meeting with somebody the other day and we're doing we're doing a tour for the Docklands, and they've got a new app that's been implemented and like, you go at
 10 certain checkpoints and it'll start playing on your phone and it will give you like the verbal history and it's like, yeah, this is, this is great. It gives people that are like in tourism and stuff like that, the opportunity to get the knowledge around country and stuff like that. I was one of the audio pointer things, but like from the government standpoint, it's ticking a box. And they're like, this to me is bare minimum where
 15 government have that opportunity. They're like, 'well, we've done this part here. We've given you a bit more visibility.' And it's like, well, have you really? Because there's someone in this conversation, they're like, are you one of the younger ones that are going to start doing the welcomes? I'm like, I don't do welcomes. And they're just like, why not? And I'm going to be very like direct when I say this. Because to
 20 me it's no secret. So if government hears this and then they see me like doing welcomes at one point, I've made a pretty straightforward decision as to why I'm like this. The last welcome that I did was for a bunch of First Nations kids that were a part of a summer school.

25 So I did it for mob, but I'm not going to go out. And all my family are living in Healesville and I'm renting not far away. So we're pushed, like, mind you we're traditional owners capital city of Victoria. And I don't know anyone that lives like within like CBD or inner - like those really popular suburbs like Fitzroy Perrin Kew, who could even afford to live in Kew? And Templestowe and like where houses are
 30 the size of city blocks and you're walking past these houses and you just going, wow. Like, that's incredible. That someone has that much generational wealth, it doesn't even matter if - it's just they bought that house like a couple years ago. The fact that they've been able to, you know, even if it's on a loan, like the fact that you're able to accumulate so much debt, to be able to be in that house is just astounding. I could
 35 walk into a joint now and apply for a loan. I'd get nowhere near close to what that place even amounts to in terms of like, value. But basically I (indistinct 01:27:48) find myself here. But basically, when I look at that sort of stuff and I've got all my family living in what we call Vegemite village, good old ██████████ in ██████████, which is the absolute outskirts of Wurundjeri country.

40 And it's like and they don't even own it like it's through the registered Aboriginal party. It's not like, it's not like my dad owns the flat that he's renting, like he's renting through the corporation. It's disgusting. But you know, National Australia Bank or Commonwealth Bank or like, you know, MCC or something else, like they want to
 45 come through or the AFL, like all these places, they're just like, we're going to require your services drive down - they don't know. They don't care. It doesn't matter. They're like public private companies. Come and do my service. Come and

do a welcome and a smoking ceremony. We'll pay you X amount of dollars. And then they're like, ignoring the fact that there's 5 million people plus in this capital city, and there's a couple of hundred of us. And so, like the demand for our services is like crazy. But the understanding around like, how much energy and exhaustion and sort of like takes for like you driving like almost two hours some days. And it's not the first place you go into, you've got to like you'll go from Healesville and then you might start off in the city and then all of a sudden you're out to Melton and then you'll go up, I've got to go back into the city again, and then you'll go, out to Lilydale and you're doing like 4 or 5 trips and you're not doing 9 to 5.

10 You might start at seven and then you might, you know, finish at like 10 p.m. and but yeah. And that's a good day. And it's like, but the people in the suits, you're making them feel good about themselves. And then it's not like the people that are going out and doing those welcomes are getting all that money, because it's got to go back through the tribe because how are they actually getting there? How are they staying afloat? So like, I'm not I'm not taking pot shots at like traditional owner groups for that. I'm exposing it for what it actually is. It's like these people like they're struggling like, they might get 300 bucks in a day, like. And then I walk past the petrol station down the road before \$2.31 a litre and it's like you're driving from Hillsville down to the city on \$2.31 a litre and that's in the city. So you go out to Hillsville, it's going to be out like \$2.70, maybe \$2.50, like it's ridiculous. So, you're dealing with these sort of issues and it's like, oh, but you know, like I saw a message on, you know, the glorious Reddit today. Like, oh, you're lucky the French didn't come before us and all this sort of bullshit, like, you're dealing with people like that and you just like.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah, but wasn't the British, it was the French.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah. And it's just like. So, like, at what point are we ever going to be able to get out of that bucket if we're a bucket of rats, at what time are we going to be able to, ascend outside of that bucket and tip it over and actually be able to flourish on our own country? So that's why I don't do welcomes to country, because if I'm out there and like one of I kind of made a comment about it before, one of the things that grinds my gears is like, you'll have people to go out there and do welcomes to country, and you've got like 5 or 6 people that will come up and do their own little acknowledgement beforehand. And it's just sort of like, so what am I doing here? Because like, you've all got to like, make sure that you're not feeling like I get it. You all want to be respectful. Like, that's fine but show the proper respect like we're still here. Give the respect. That's like we're out here doing this sort of stuff. And there's so many times where, like, I'll go out like I'm not going to name the company, but I used to work for this company, and that had me there to go and do my little back when I used to do it, because like, one of one of the mob that was high up in the position insisted that I do it.

45 To sort of position myself and show visibility is like your traditional owner. So like you need to let them know who you are. And I respect him for that. But I basically get up there and it's like I had 30s to a minute and trying to get an auntie or uncle

down to a minute would be hilarious. But the only time I've ever experienced that and I'll take a fire and shot here. The AFL, when it comes to like doing welcomes to country. Like for events for Naarm and Victoria. Like on the clock. Do it again, do it again, do it again. I've sat there and I've watched like the rehearsals. Like you go to like their office and you're doing the rehearsal and you're doing the voiceover, and then you go there and you go to the MCG, you rehearsing. And then it comes time and then like, be on the clock. But they go to Brisbane, they go to Northern Territory and they have like, oh, it's such a magical experience because it hits all those stereotypes, all the feel good things like, hey, we're in the land of the Red sand, and all of a sudden it's like they forget that the landscape isn't the same everywhere else, but the culture still has the same love and passion as anywhere else, because they're in a different state, they got to flex that and like, look, this is how we're going to promote tourism to you.

This is this is where the real blackfellas are like, let us put it on TV for you and let's not give them a minute. Let's give them, you know, three, four minutes, like if uncle wants to say something, let him say something. And that to me is like - I sit there and I see these sort of things. And I'm like, at what point? Victorian mob, not just Wurundjeri, but Victorian mob themselves, is the right amount of like, respect going to be shown around those specific things where it's just like just I'm not saying don't waste our time. Give us the right amount of time.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

DALE WANDIN: Like it's to me just because it's a formality, it doesn't mean that your level of respect needs to dwindle, like show that you care. There's things that I do outside of the community and Wurundjeri would smack me on the hand for it. I hate talking about money. I hate talking about money because it's disgusting. It's a disease. But it's obviously necessary for the point that we're making here. But one of the things that I've done and I've done it with my son's school they're like, 'oh, you know, like we've got a budget and like, we can pay you for this.'

And it's like, I don't want to talk to you about money. As soon as it becomes transactional, the information that I'm giving you goes out your head. As soon as I walk out of this door, I'm like. And it's important that you understand that what I'm actually saying here is for purpose, like, because as soon as people go, well, we paid for this. It comes under anything around, strategies around cultural awareness and stuff like that. It's necessary. But as soon as people go, well, this is a requirement for me to have like people, autopilot and that sort of stuff. And it's like, yep, well, I've gotten through this like hurdle and now I can go and I'll remain quiet about like certain things, but it doesn't mean that it changes my perspective on things. And like in some spaces, you really just preaching to the choir and some like the people that are engaging with us in a respectful manner, like they're not the ones that we're trying to change. They're not the ones that we're trying to get to listen. And so like, and people in government are no different. There's people in government that will sit there and go like, oh, we hear you and we're doing what we can to help you. They're not the ones that were like trying to, help understand this.

They're not the ones that are want to speak to. I want to speak to, you know, some of the ones that are a bit like defiant. And, you know, I'd love to sit down and have a conversation with someone like Andrew Bob, because I know that he's ill equipped. I
 5 know he's not a politician, but I know that he's a driving force around the opinions and the views of people that are in the opposition government, even the labor government. There's people in those positions both locally and like state, local, federal, all of them. There are people that they need to have those confronting conversations. They need to understand that 'hey, that money that you're allocating
 10 the First Nations people isn't going to First Nations people,' but you want to like put that out there that that that's happening. Well, you know, how about you actually speak to the people that that are saying we're not seeing it and we can actually show you where it's going? I think I could go on forever on that. But I will talk to you like about that. So that's my view for treaty is there needs to be like stuff around the
 15 treaty aspect where traditional owner groups can see equity and really flourish in that just quickly around the education thing.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: If you do have many more subjects, we can say that we can pause today, for instance, and we can reconvene and do this again very soon,
 20 if you we can do a part two, and we can send this off to start to be transcribed in parallel. So up to you, if you've only got a little bit more

DALE WANDIN: I've only got a little bit more. Because like these are, these are the most pressing things. So like and I'm hoping that like there's mob out there that are
 25 touching on certain things that that they're passionate about.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

DALE WANDIN: The biggest -
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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: and we've heard not to take away from you but it's not that and also this is not the first time. So some of the things you're telling us about which is which is powerful.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.
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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Other mobs are coming to us and speak and strong about it too. So -

DALE WANDIN: Yeah,
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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: It's you know,

DALE WANDIN: Again it's great. No, that's encouraging. Exactly. Yeah.
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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: So I've done a lot of submissions at a part one, two, three and we're still going with them because there's so much to talk about because there is.

5 **DALE WANDIN:** Well, I feel like I speak at a pace that might actually put your transcriber at - I might test it a bit. So

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Fair enough. Yeah we're used to it.

10 **DALE WANDIN:** But like, I'm trying to get as much in as I possibly can. So, like, the last thing around education, that's like a massive red flag for me. And again, I'm not going to mention any names, but one of the most concerning things is that as First Nations people, we're constantly siphoned for our information and our knowledge. And this doesn't just extend out to like, this isn't just like universities. I'm
15 talking like I'll even extend it like broadcasting places like, ABC, SBS and stuff like that. They'll come out and have like interviews with elders and stuff like that, and they'll get raw footage. And a lot of it doesn't make the final product of what they're recording. Like, they'll talk to my dad about cultural burning and they might have like two hours, three hours of like footage of him talking, where's all that stuff that's
20 on the cutting floor going? It's being archived. And then they can pull that up later on. And we don't have like the intellectual property of that. We've got broadcasting places that have like intellectual property of our knowledge. So if my dad passes away tomorrow and mind you his health is not that great at the moment, do I have to go to ABC to plug the holes that may have been left if my dad passes away suddenly and because I've been so tapped out in all my other hats that I'm doing, I haven't been
25 able to be there.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

30 **DALE WANDIN:** Dedicated enough to get the rightful knowledge. Again, this is by design, it's like you're creating these potholes for people to fall into these traps and be like, so then when it comes down and this is where it cycles back around, how do you identify like so we go back to applications for Native Title. Where does your knowledge extend to my it goes da da da da da. And they're like but what about this
35 here? And it's like, well I don't know about that. It's like, why don't you know about that? Well, because, you know, I had to work at a university and I had to do this and I had to do that. And they're like, yeah, but you've got this knowledge here, like, why, why don't you? And it went when my father passed away because unfortunately, like I didn't have the ability within again why design what you've put
40 in place. Like you've set First Nations people up to fail. Like whether you want to accept it as that, like it's exactly what it is like. There's at no point and I'm not even talking about like First Nations people, like within Australia, this is globally like there's things in place here where like where structurally and like.

45 I see it within my work within the university, is that like one of the positives that I get from working at the university is that I do speak with other First Nations people around the world and I'll have like a zoom call with like other universities in Canada

or like the United States or like even Europe. But one of the things that stands out to me around education, to sort of bring it back to, to the education side of things is. I've been approached before about a PhD, and I get people reach out to me about my knowledge around country and around like culture and all that sort of stuff. And I'll do lectures. I'll have conversations with various groups of students and then like, people will like send me a text message or like give me a call. And they're like I saw your name you're referenced in this book or referenced in this thing. And I'm just like, hey, that's great because academics are using like the stuff that I'm saying and like they're using my knowledge to gain within their own systems. And then when it comes time for me to actually gain from that system, unlike at a membership tier, this is the way that I describe it. It's like if anyone listening to this plays video games or anything like that, or I'll even use it in like a Scientology type method, like it's a good way of explaining it. Scientology. In order to rank up in the ranks like you need to sort of hit certain tiers and certain tiers.

I think there's certain amount of money that needs to be generated. So like, and if you're not like providing enough money you can't elevate. That's exactly what this is at the university. It's like, I'm good enough for you to ask all the questions and siphon all my knowledge. Take everything that I can, whether it be discreetly or like out in the open, and you can reference my knowledge. But as soon as I actually want to do something with that, I'll know 'you need to meet the prerequisite.' And it's like, so I didn't meet the prerequisite for you to take my knowledge. But now all of a sudden I need to have a certain capability in order to gain from said PhD. And that to me is just a slap in the face and there's so many people that are like that, it's like, my dad doesn't have a PhD, my dad's not a doctor, but they'll bring him down, like all the time to talk about how he activates seeds through fire and creates medicine through smoke and how he can determine where a fire will go and how it burns and how long it burns for. And, you know, like, I'm sure Victor Stevenson would be in the same boat whenever he goes places as well is that there's always this desire from like, First Nations people. There's this hunger for our knowledge. But as soon as I'm like, well, okay, I'm interested in this.

And I know that like the decision from the higher ups can be overridden that prerequisite. That's your decision. That's not just like that can be overridden. You can be like 'based off this, we think that you would actually be suitable from this.' And then it's a feel good story for you guys at the end because you give me my little document and my little hat and stuff like that. And this looks good for institutions. But instead they're like, 'well, no you got to go through all this sort of stuff first.' And that to me just doesn't make sense when it's like so at what point? - So it's kind of like when people are like they pick and choose as to when like First Nations people or First Nations people. And within institutions, sometimes or most times, they'll pick and choose when we're experts in the information. So when it suits them all of a sudden respected elder, respected community member, respected Wurundjeri person. But then when you're trying to say, 'well, I feel like I could elevate myself through this' I mean, I'm still working at the place like, it's only going to benefit them in the end. But, all of a sudden there's red tape there, and it just sort of sits very awkwardly with me. I just sort of go, 'well, what are you what are you doing?'

that I said to him is we implement language. Like, I know that Thornbury Primary has like a language program, but it's in affiliation with Wurundjeri, Wurundjeri across it. But there's a lot of elders within our community that can't speak language. And as soon as like these people, like I've had friends go teach me a language. And I
 5 said, no chance. And they're like, why? And I was like, because you're the kind of person that's going to go up to my auntie who can't speak a word of it because one, she doesn't have the time and like two she's getting on in age. It's not a priority. So, it's like you go up to her and you start speaking in language you don't understand the amount of trauma that you're ripping, because you're just a constant reminder to her
 10 that she feels lesser of who she is, and that's the complete opposite of what it is.

And then you've also got - because Wurundjeri do a lot of place naming and stuff like that, that gets eliminated. So there's another chunk of we talk about like revenue and stuff like that. That's another service that Wurundjeri have that would quite
 15 easily diminish. You start doing that because 'I've got like this private business I want to like feel good about myself,' my kids learning this language. So I'm just going to like go and do this. So rather than doing like the respectful thing and getting the information from traditional owners seeking the right advice, you're just going to get like something that you don't understand the meaning of, some things have
 20 different meanings, like the way that's translated even like (Greeting in Wurundjeri Language) like it's some people just automatically think, 'oh, it's welcome.' And it's that's not necessarily like. Means 'come with purpose.' Like there's things around it. And it's - I've even had people in coming back to the education part. Like there's people that are not indigenous that go through, I don't know if they still have it, but
 25 like, there's like an education grid within the Catholic schools where they utilise the services of some independent educator that basically tried to get all this Wurundjeri knowledge off the internet, and some of it was Tangerang, some of it was Bonorong, none of it was Wurundjeri.

And, I ended up calling her up. And basically she's like, oh and again, this is, this is where I'm talking about privilege. She basically she, she's from [REDACTED]. She had a dream about the river and stuff like that. So she just came down and bought an apartment in [REDACTED], and I was just like, you've got to be kidding me. Like you're
 35 talking to somebody that's like renting. And she's just like, I had a dream and it brought me here. And so I purchased an apartment by the [REDACTED]. And now, like, I'm giving all this incorrect knowledge and she's like, 'oh, you know, it's so hard to find them.' Like, 'it's actually not hard to find. You just need to know what it is that you're looking for. And you also need to know what you're talking about.' I go
 40 'and it's clear that you don't know what you're talking about.' And then she was trying to engage in like ongoing conversation 'no, look, it's not about that. Like, I need you to stop doing what you're doing.' And there was like an Instagram page and like, I think her name was (indistinct 01:54:22) [REDACTED] or something like that, and also did, like, all this dancing and all this sort of stuff but it was just the opportunity was there to tap into something where you could create revenue. And now like I said I don't
 45 know if these Catholic schools still have it, but I went down the rabbit hole and I started, like, checking in and all these Catholic schools were all connected to each other and they're all using the same incorrect information around like Wurundjeri

country and Wurundjeri culture and stuff like that. And I tried to explain to her and it was just like, 'yeah' just like straight over the head like, 'oh you know. Yeah, okay.' And it's like, but what are you doing about it? There's no incentive now because like you've.

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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: That wasn't in my dream. What you're saying.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah, exactly. And so these are the things that we're constantly dealing with. So you've got one side of the fence where people want to extract.

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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

DALE WANDIN: Like they've just got that hunger for the knowledge. And then we're not really like, we'll get the acknowledgement for it, but we're not really sort of. I don't want to use the word celebrated, but you get what I'm saying. Like these institutions -

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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: But then there's no recognition -

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DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Different thing.

DALE WANDIN: The institutions get a lot more out of our information and knowledge than what we're getting out of providing it. And again it becomes transactional. They're like, 'well we wrote up a grant and x, y, z and you know, you sign this thing and therefore it is what it is.' -

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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

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DALE WANDIN: Same with like broadcasting the same it's the same across the board. But then you've got the other side where, you'll have these other people that see the advantages in exploiting it, and then they'll use it willy nilly and then like, 'oh, you know, near enough is good enough.' Just like with the article that I was telling you about, it's like, 'no, mate, near enough is not good enough.' And I said to them in my response to the ages, like the fact that education is just as responsible as, the church and like government within like the eradication of languages, it's within their best. Like it should be one of their priorities to get it right. And it's like I'm not saying to again, put money into these spaces that First Nations people aren't gaining any advantage by. Put it back into the traditional owner groups.

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COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Yeah.

DALE WANDIN: You've got people I'm going to mention their names. You've got Mandy Nicholson, you've got Brooke London, two people that have like, worked very hard in reviving the language that has been lost. And again where do these people have the time, these two people that could revive the language within

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Wurundjeri people? Give Wurundjeri people like, 'hey, you, you want to learn your language, you want the time to learn the language here. Here's the time.' Pay the people like don't pay these schools to teach somebody that has no connection to teach other people that again have no connection to then gain advantage from our language. Instead of going to people like Mandy and Brooke and going, 'guys, I know you've got a lot on your plate right at the moment. We've got X amount of dollars that's available to you. So then you're not burning through your time and burning yourself out. Let's make this available to mob. So then they can if they want to learn their language, they can learn their language.' And that's what I was explaining to them. And they were just like, no. And so like it became this thing where I was like.

'We want our readers to feel a certain way.' And 'you're not allowing our viewers to do that. You're actually being confrontational. You're being a troublemaker.' That's how the email was interpreted. And so I just I knew straight off the bat I was like, the only way that I can ever get this across is through independent news outlets. But what are we referencing at that point? I'm just going to redirect them to a paywall that they don't have access to in the first place. It's like, I don't need to preach to the choir. I need people that don't know what they're actually reading. I need them to actually read both sides of the story and make their own minds up. And they're just I see things like that. I'm like, 'maybe they're not ready for me,' but I don't care. Like I'm around. I just keep knocking on that door. So but they're the main things that I wanted to talk about. So -

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: It's been good.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: It's a lot to unpack in that. Yeah. That'll be good to go through.

DALE WANDIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER LOVVET: Finished.

DALE WANDIN: Fantastic.

<THE RECORDING HAS CONCLUDED