

ATTENTION:

[REDACTED]
YOORROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION

This first part of my submission was a submission sent to Yoorrook a while back-

I have spent my whole life caught up as a product of colonisation trying to work out who and what I was- as a child who looked like the so-called "master" race but with a black soul raised up by my indigenous nanna whose identity was shattered by the stolen generation's trauma. This unresolved trauma compacted and compacted within me for 32 years until a car accident 4 months after I got married in 1998. The car accident triggered a flood of ancestral trauma (and my own buried personal trauma) that at the time I didn't understand and/or remember and I found myself caught up in the mental health system diagnosed with psychosis. I have since uncovered through an intense personal search that Carl Yung would term this "psychosis" as entering the collective unconscious and is what our blackfella ancestors have shown me to be the "Dreaming". For 16 years I endured the plight of the "too black to be white-too white to be black"-a hellish limbo-searching for any trace of what made sense to me in a system designed to medicate and label-imprison and "e-c-t" any trace of anything natural, wholistic or spiritual out of any human being-let alone one with indigneous heritage buried under colonization's lies and secrets. This nightmarish pressure cooker culminated in me jumping off the Westgate Bridge- not because I wanted to die but to give my unborn child back to the Creator and away from the hell pretending to be in the name of mental health I was trapped in in Sunshine Psych System . This system had nothing to do with mental health-it was nothing more than a money pit for big pharma-preying on the low socio-economic status of the people of the western suburbs. It took me 16 years of enduring psycho-babble, electric shocks and toxic drugs but I got out-my heart and soul deeply saddened and deeply traumatized by the beast that is colonization but still intact. However it will remain un-detoxified unless I speak out about what I witnessed of what others endured in there-and what I endured myself-and I did NOT lose my child for no reason or bear my nan's pain for so long not to want to allow this to heal within me-so I can do my bit to help this trauma heal for all of us-every single one of us-one country, one world, one mob of every different shade in the garden of Mother Earth. Because at the end of the day I believe deeply in the words of the "Boss" Brucey Springsteen- "Nobody wins unless EVERYBODY wins"- we just have to learn to play fair together with rules that work for everyone-that everyone understands and agrees to-in other words, that we ALL grow the fuck up and take responsibility for the bit of the beast that lives inside us ALL now and bring it back to something healthy that brings true pride and peace and sanity-instead of the all-consuming ball of destruction and entitled rage I witnessed and was almost taken out by in Sunshine Psych, and in this colonized consumer madness that is the world that we now know, and rot in a little every day-unless we ALL call time and say enough-"If we all don't take care of Country it can't take care of us" is the bottom line to end this old "mad" story.....

Now in line with the new story, with all of us being responsible for beginning this new yarn by focussing on our mutual custodianship of our Earth nome, comes the second part of my submission-my poetically framed mission statement dedicated to my personal totem Dingo who quite literally brought me back to life through connecting me back to Culture and Country. The Spirit of Dingo helped me to understand this Connection as a way back to health and peace for us all as the collective human (and humane) race.....

From my Dingo Soul to Your Hearts 1/2

Michelle Griffiths – Wiradjuri Descendant

You have no idea what you do to me
 With your traps, your guns and your 1080
 You think you have a need to control,
 But every Yuugi (Dingo) you kill is a knife in my soul

They are my Totem – a part of me,
 A part of my Spirit – of my Country,
 I weep for you that you don't understand,
 That to kill off its creatures is to kill Sacred Land

You have lost your connection – it's plain to see.
 When the zeros in your bank account are viewed as beauty
 & 'Ka-Ching' is the tune that makes you groove,
 But let me tell you of the music to which I move

All my life, my white skin's masked a soul which is black,
 I can't breathe in your world of nature attack,
 'Dadirri' – 'Deep listening' – I have done all my years,
 Where your heart and your soul are your guiding ears.

You hear deep-through the Dreaming – the heartbeat of Earth
 And you know that only what's eternal has any real worth.
 So, sit on the Mother and breathe deep with Her,
 Then ask Her what really matters – and She will assure...

That at the end of your days, your piles of cash,
 Will mean about as much as your body of ash,
 Who and what you loved and who and what loved you
 And if you gave this life your best shot will be ALL that rings true

So please open your hearts, your minds and your soul
 And please loosen your grip on your need to control
 Please let my totem and my ancestors live and rest in peace
 You have NO right to kill for power or profit increase.

So please listen with Heart to the howl of my friends
 And feel the Ancient wisdom and healing their pure heart extends
 They have burrowed a den into the very depths of me,
 And I thank the Creator and beg you – PLEASE let them be.

My name is Michelle Griffiths – Through my maternal grandmothers' lineage. I am a proud Wiradjuri descendant, though I am proud of all the genetics I have inherited. I just want to be a bridge for all my cultures to find peace and harmony together – as much as I wish the same for this beautiful planet we have all been gifted – not just we humans but every member of our whole living breathing eco system.

I wrote this poem as part of my role as the volunteer Aboriginal Liaison Officer at the Dingo Discovery Sanctuary at Toolern Vale near Melbourne – a role through which I became known as 'Aunty Dingo' to the younger members of the local Mob – a title which both warms my heart and fills me with the deepest care and responsibility to honour the beings I am named in honour of.

The first dingo I met from the sanctuary, back in March 2016, was a K'Gari dingo known as 'Saxon' – He rubbed his head on mine and the depth of love and healing I felt emanating from him made me feel like I was melting, it was so strong- the exact same feeling as when I fell in love with my 'gentle giant' husband, which had previously passed on.

My next encounter was with a group of dingo pups - their mum Cooma kept leading them towards me with this seemingly deliberate sense of purpose and knowing. I had lost the only child I was pregnant with under extremely intense and tragic circumstances and this encounter with Cooma and her puppies cracked my wounded heart and soul open in the most powerful way – so much so that it occurred to me to do some research into the traditional connection between Dingoes and my Aboriginal ancestors. I was overwhelmed to discover that in traditional culture, for women who weren't blessed with having children of their own, the Dingo mothers would share their puppies with them – and before I knew this fact – that's exactly what Cooma did with and for me.

So, on behalf of beautiful, noble Saxon and loving Cooma and her babies, who now have babies and grandbabies of their own (plus my "Bundalong Besties") – all my Dingo family- the agony I felt at seeing the newspaper headlines of their wild mob on K'Gari ignited my passion to write an extension of my original Dingo Soul poem – dedicated to the Wongari of K'Gari.

From my Dingo Soul to Your Hearts 2/2

Now on beautiful K'Gari – Paradise on Earth
 They are encroached upon by humans from the day of their birth
 Humans who think they are entitled to this...
 To create a Dingo's prison in pursuit of holiday bliss

No island off Africa where Lions would reign
 Would the apex predator be treated with such disdain
 But because our king beast looks like 'man's best friend'
 He is expected to be ... to a disastrous end

Genetically its proved that Dingoes aren't dogs
 That they are wild – and their instincts are to chase that which jogs
 So please walk on K'Gari with your wits and respect
 And lose the sense of entitlement that leads to neglect

This is Sacred Ground you walk on, from the beginning of Time,
 And our Dingo's role is to protect it and keep it sublime
 We humans have developed a belief that WE rule
 To the Dingo – and Cultural Lore – it's the belief of a Fool

To me it runs deeper, it's far worse than that
 We are killing our planet – in our race of the rat
 I can't dictate to you on how you behave
 But that I was a parasite I don't want on my grave

If you think that is harsh – think what a parasite is
 It takes and it takes but refuses to give
 And that's what we are if we just take from the Earth Home
 But don't respect and replenish all Life where we roam

So, my advice – walk this place but with an open mind
 Of the attitude you hold and the energy it leaves behind
 You are part of Life's web – not the main cog in the wheel
 So let Wongari (Dingo) do their job – and let K'Gari (paradise) heal.

PLEASE consider these deeply-felt musings on your next trip to K'Gari – in fact anywhere you are on travel to on this 'Sacred Southern Land'. It's our Home to which we are all responsible – not just land to build your home or 'empire' on or some holiday destination. To Mob, it's our Mother – and the animals are Family, our brothers and sisters – and as our Elders teach "if you don't take care of Country (and all its inhabitants) it can't take care of you"

Thank you for your consideration,
warmest regards,

Michelle aka Aunty Dingo