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TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDING

UNCLE LARRY WALSH

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## &lt;THE RECORDING HAS COMMENCED

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** And I'll ask you the question about who you are and so forth, even though I know who you are, but just for the transcript. So thanks for  
5 coming in here today. So can you tell us who you are, and introduce us to how you see fit around cultural ties and connections to Victoria?

**LARRY WALSH:** Well, my name is Larry Walsh. I'm born 28th of the 11th, 1953 or not - 28th of the 11th, 1951. No one is certain because I was born on the  
10 riverbank. So it's only when mum and them were travelling, doing fruit and veggie picking that I was recorded. Born in Swan Hill. No, I was recorded born in - this is later in Mooroopna Hospital. No, to both. My family maintain myself and two of my sisters were born on the river, because our some of those mission reserves had  
15 visiting Aboriginal midwives and they helped with the births, help. My great grandmother was one. So I was born and then I was taken at two but we weren't we've already done all that details. I was very lucky because some of the things I did, I got hired to work at the Aboriginal Legal Service. After 2 or 3 years of that, I went for a break up the bush. And in the meantime, because of the - all the Senate  
20 inquiries into Aboriginal heritage at the time, which are I put a the paper in. While I was away, they brought around the Cultural Heritage Act. I went back to fruit and veggie picking which means you don't have to think. So when I got back, Jim Berg, Mr Berg. I called him mister because whenever I mentioned any of the old leaders to my aunties, uncles and that they were always said, oh, you know, you got William Cooper - they go Mr William Cooper. When you went you know, these days you'll  
25 go Uncle William or Aunty Marge, Mrs Tucker.

It was a way of defining a person that was leading rather than just an uncle or an  
aunty to you. So Jim and I always joke about that with each other, Mr Walsh? Yes,  
30 Mr Berg. We always do everyone looks as if we're about to tell each other off or something or have a go at each other, but we know we're using it as a way to try and keep an old term alive with affection. Although we're different characters, I went in to see him because I heard he got a place at the museum, and he said, what are you  
35 doing, Mr. Walsh? I said, not much, Mr Berg, why? You should I come and work for us. Oh, again? So I did. And while I was working for him, the museum started forming its advisory committee, and somehow I was on that while I'm also on the Koori Heritage Trust. And it was sort of, I was the crossover between the two,  
40 because I was raising issues at the time. Like I was raising the issue that we haven't got a clear picture of what's in the bush. And I found a mob that did a survey. They lived in Portland, he's dead now, but it's the environmental group of Portland, that did ten books on every region of what plants - cardiovascular plants there.

The Koori Heritage Trust had a copy, I had a copy, and whenever Jim went Bush,  
he'd come back with something and - because now and then we talk about eating  
45 some of the stuff and Jim had and I had so he goes, oh, I've got some oh, beauty I'll have some of that. You know so we kept each other interested in still what plants were there. The museum then did stole - they asked me, they did a women's plants thing, and they stole the phrase I always use. They asked me, but I said it's actually

Uncle Colin who taught me it. Where he said, look, when you're looking at the bush, you are looking at our supermarket. You know, all those plants out there were part of our food sources, our tools, our building, our canoes, and that's the whole works. So everything was there, I added that the trees are the 7-Eleven with the Aboriginal world. Well, I'd always acknowledge Uncle Colin for telling me.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah, yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** And I just added one bit. Yeah, and the 7-Eleven of the trees. So Terry Garwood came to see me, and he was the CEO of Aboriginal affairs. And he said Larry, you're doing some work over in the western suburbs as well, to try and find out how many Aboriginal people live there. I said yeah, I've hired this bloke from a grant from the Reichstein Foundation, Robbie Mate Mate. Robbie was a Queenslander, but he was down here because he had a son born down here, and he wanted his son to know the area. Robbie spoke seven different dialects of these people, he had the scars, and he also spoke eight European languages, I mean, go to Rob with a pub and someone would be speaking in a foreign language, and Rob because he was real black and real singing, and he spoke very softly. He'd be able to go excuse me, what language is that? And he sit down with them and in the end, he'd be joining the conversation in whatever language it was. Like one time it was a Yugoslav, another time it was an Italian. So Robert had a thing about languages.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Deadly.

**LARRY WALSH:** Anyway and I was getting him to go to the schools to talk to the schools, to find out how many Aboriginal kids were in the schools so that we could send a notice to the schools, to the parents to see what the western suburbs needs were. So once I made me a cultural officer, I had friends who were at Melbourne Uni and did the first Australian, or Victorian biology on Victorian region. And they set up Merri Creek redevelopment, and they set up - another one of them worked under Sir Rupert Hamer to set up the Yarra Bend Trust and all that. And so they were giving me advice on how to start these programs, and then I gone - But these are only programs that last six months, I want something more. So a woman named Melissa Brickell, she approached me because she had worked with VAEAI, and I had talked about it, and she'd gone into the government (Indistinct).

And she said, Larry, I've talked to someone in there and they put me on to a couple of training companies that may be able to help. You know, we had a lot of unemployed young Aboriginals, and we thought this is a good way to bring them back into their culture and identity by getting them to learn to re-veg and some of their use. So we went to this company, and they gave us - well, they said that they had two choices, and I took the hippie choice, because he'd been in the same group as the others that I'd met Darcy Dugan, Bob McDonnell, Sue Farah, all these people that were specialists in native species. And Jeff was an old style hippie, which suited me. I didn't want someone that was going to be too hard with these young ones, because that was my role. So we had him on, and we kept getting renewal and renewal because we, we got the TAFE to start a course. And about six years later the

ACT use trade, you know, like to get something as a apprenticeship. What do you call it? It was the federal government and the trade union approved of having a national meeting where I met with representatives of each territory, each part of Australia, and we sat down and worked out what - if we wanted a full time course,  
 5 our apprenticeships, what we need in it.

It was approved and it became indigenous gardening and landscaping apprenticeships. From that, quite a few of them went to work into Parks Victoria after they decided to do a review of the Heritage Act. And the real reason they did  
 10 the review was because back then we had the right to stop emergency 20 - 31 day cease work. We wanted to ensure, well, in some cases, it was used in Geelong. A young bloke was working there he's gone why are we doing it? And I gone, simple. He said what? I say 31 day, yeah? So the lawyers are going to be waiting. Go back, you can go back on 28 days. So every time they put the thing and someone wanted to  
 15 challenge it in court, 28 days, we kept doing it. And in the end, half the developers gave up, like REM gave up down Geelong. Another one gave up down Bendigo way, all because I was telling the - how to bend the rules. So they asked for a review, I don't know whether it was developers or industry or whatever. So the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at that time, Gavin Jennings, he - we were having a state-wide  
 20 because every three months we'd all meet, because there was only 11 of us. You know, different age groups. Some were the elders or, you know, knowing the history and culture of the areas. Some were young people working with the elders of their areas. And I was the wild card.

25 The wild child, if you like. So they said, well, okay, we need to examine the act again. And I go, okay. And so we had a meeting, all of us cultural workers. And we said, well, actually, some of the young ones we're training, why can't they become forest workers and waterway workers? And so that was part of the change, too, because before that there was only one. And his name was Brian Nelson, Uncle  
 30 Brian. And he talked to me about how he'd like to see it expand. I kept it in the back of my head. And then three years later, I used that chance to raise it with the rest of the cultural workers. And they all agreed, so because you know, Uncle Darcy Pettit was taking people with him out on the sightseeing. Uncle Ivan Cousins was doing the same, you know, because we talked to each other. Yeah and for some reason,  
 35 they all thought - I don't know why, but they all looked at me kindly, as if yeah, this is the smart one. So we they had talked with me. When they'd be there in Melbourne, they'd come and visit. Matter of fact, I was in Warrnambool last week, and some of them got - You still in Footscray? You know, like that's how far back it goes. Like their sons and daughters are saying, who are now running some of the businesses  
 40 down there - You still in Footscray? So they met me when they were kids.

Anyway, we asked for it and the worst Aboriginal affairs minister we've ever had, Gavin Jennings, agreed. They did the review, they did the restructure. They got rid of our having the emergency act and I was the only one that never got his job back. I  
 45 knew that would happen, because they knew it was me behind telling them how to use the emergency act. So I think they thought I was going to be more trouble for him. So I never got my job back. But when they said to me what are you going to

do? I said, oh, you know, the more things change, the more they stay the same. So at that time, after the indigenous gardening and landscaping, the young people are asking, can we use some of the old stories in a modern way? And some of them became dance, some became theatre, some became art, various arts. So some people

5 think I - well, when I was working at the trust, we were trying to expand people's knowledge of their own traditions. Now, I will admit, Jim started that in the legal service days when Jim was CEO. And it's funny, but you see it now through the Torch. The bloke that's running Torch, actually, when we formed the Koori Heritage

10 Trust, we got him to run the programs of going to the prisons and so forth, young kids. And he keeps inviting me onto the board. But no, I'm not a board man.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** I want to come back to that, but I want to let you just really have a good run - anything else you want to say?

15 **LARRY WALSH:** Giving all those backgrounds?

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** No, no, no that's good, that's good. Because we've got some detail to dive into it and unpack a bit more.

20 **LARRY WALSH:** Right.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** But yeah. So just finish off that one and then I want to come back -

25 **LARRY WALSH:** So anyway, what I'm getting at is that I was still living in a park. So I still had a say in how that park got revegetated. And some of the head rangers would come and see me about - Oh, you know, we found a scar tree along the Maribyrnong up in Keilor. Nah, okay, we'll get it registered. So I had a good relationship enough that I was able to still see what their point of view was. And I

30 had enough relationship with some of the other cultural officers, and they'd keep me informed of what's going on there. Over time, I thought, there's a problem here. These ministers can override us. So look carefully at the Water Act. I looked carefully at the Logging Act, and I noticed in them that they can override Aboriginal cultural heritage. So I thought that's the problem, how do we get around that? So on

35 and off, as I say, I was still talking to Aboriginal groups that were trying to get our projects off the ground on their forests or their waterways. So it kept making me look at the thing every now and then. I was very lucky that at the time, because the environment groups I was involved in, you know, some of them were fighting to stop the rainforest actions logging in the Asian, Malaysia, all them countries. And some

40 of them were trying to stop the import and export of South American forests. It was there one day they contacted me a few years back, and they said, look, mate, we need a fundraiser for Ecuador. I said why? he says, oh, they have a constitution that says they're allowed to speak on the forest's behalf. I said, okay, so what do you want me for? Oh, we'd like some Aboriginal people who are involved in environmental issues

45 to speak at it.

So I lined up Robbie Thorpe because Robbie helped me in the early days with the

two conferences organised. And I did a little bit of storytelling, and we raised 10,000. We didn't do one, we did a couple, and it was sent over to the Ecuador, and they reported back to us. The environment people who were over helping the Ecuador. And they said they won. Oh yeah, how? oh, the Constitution, blah, blah blah, right.

5 So I looked up their Constitution and under chapter seven, it had rights of nature and it's got all the same stuff as a lot of constitutions, but this interested me. You mean they're winning court cases on this? Yeah, right. All right, we'll find them again if it ever happened - needs it again. So I've been looking at it, I was talking to a woman

10 named Dana who works at the Environmental Legal Service. The one in the greenhouse in Carlton. So I talked to her over the Covid years, because I was reading more about and looking at other countries.

And so Dana went over - I can't remember her last name, but Dana, she's the only Dana in the building. Dana went over there and watched the court case, and she came

15 back to me really excited about the idea that, geez, if you can get that in, you know, you'll change the whole way people deal with the environment. So she's willing to talk to your legal people, you just have to say that you're talking to Uncle Larry - Dana, you talked to Uncle Larry, she'll respond.

20 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** And she was also involved as a trainee lawyer with the Kakadu National Park World heritage listing. So she had a bit of an idea of where I was going. And she referred back to me about it. Unfortunately, I've since then been

25 distracted with other things. Like once Covid was over I started to have to work again. I'm supposed to be writing a history of things at the museum. I knew the research assistant, but that's a different problem. I'll get one sooner or later. I mean, I can't be bothered right around every organisation going can I look through your archives? I need to find a couple of papers. So for me, I got distracted by some of

30 that, and then finally, I've been talking about at other meetings to get it up to treaty. Now I'm not sure what treaty can do with it, but I am pretty certain neither the Liberals nor Labor are going to win. So there's going to be a few more independents, and I'm trying to sell it - the thing to the Greens.

35 Suddenly I ran into their national environment person, and I told them to look at the Ecuador Constitution. Why? Simply, they will pinch bits of it for their own policy. I haven't made an approach to the Teals because I don't know anyone in them. But I believe they have a very positive environment - want some actions on. So this may work with the greens and the Teals. If we can do some work with them, not me, but

40 people who, if they've got the understanding of what it's about, may be able to talk to them about how their policy works, blah, blah, blah. This may actually have an influence on their policies and stuff. Now, I know the government can always go, oh, but it's got to fit in with the federal act. Okay. The thing is, the state government can change it, then it becomes a federal debate. The state government has no idea

45 whether it wants to change, because I've watched that girl talk. She's either quoting from memory or something she's read - the acting premier, or she's not the one that's making the decisions. So I'd like to see the Minister for Finance, the Minister for

Treasury, they're the two making all the decisions. She's just a dummy. She's because Joan Kirner rescued the party from a wipe-out, they think the same thing will happen by having a female - wrong female.

5 And Joan Kirner at least would have a say in what she was saying. A difference. So  
 anyway, my whole strategy is to let every Aboriginal group in Australia know,  
 because the Australian Heritage - Aboriginal Heritage Council is interested in what  
 needs to change. And if it can be done in one state, they'll ask the feds for an inquiry.  
 Somehow I met the chair and the secretary. She said you're Larry? Yeah. You're  
 10 Uncle Larry? Yeah. I heard you want to talk about changing the Heritage Act. Yeah.  
 So I told them the plan, and they said, if you can get it up on a state level and it  
 works, we can have a federal inquiry into it. Okay. So I decided rather than bring in  
 first the Ecuador stuff, because of my current working culture and heritage. I looked  
 at every Heritage Act, and I found the funny thing. I also listened to some of the old  
 15 songs and stories. In Victoria up until 1860, all the songs and poems were about  
 migrants. In Sydney that started about 1830. Before that, every song story was about  
 migrants. You know, the Wild Colonial Boy and (indistinct 00:28:28) few. Paining,  
 they looked like English gardens. It was those second that were born in Australia,  
 and third generation that were born in Australia, started writing for the white people,  
 20 stories of the bush, stories of - and painting, some of them. I maintain we were part  
 of that heritage change.

Now, no heritage act covers the iconic Australian identity, or anything that iconically  
 Australian. It doesn't cover Banjo Paterson's works. It doesn't cover Maeve Hughes.  
 25 It doesn't cover the Heide School of Art, because I realised that you've got to win the  
 white public. And so I gone, right, I'm looking at their stuff now. And I've spoke to  
 some art historians. They agree with me that that's around the time in the various  
 areas Australian cultural identity came to be. You know, and a lot of it was to do  
 with droving, which meant it did, and was part of what we were doing. So it's not -  
 30 I'm saying that this is the period where the, the Australian identity started, and it's not  
 being recognised. Now I've tested it with five art festivals. Yeah, I've had to open a  
 few. And even the Minister for Regional Arts for Victoria, Jane Hall, said to me, you  
 know, you might be on to something the way all these people are going yes about  
 what you're saying, and are clapping and cheering it. And I go, oh, really? Okay. I  
 35 said, well, why can't you raise it? She says, I'm not high enough. You know, The  
 system, the government system, Labor system, call it whatever you like, but it's  
 pecking order. You get the smaller ones to prove yourself before you can go up the  
 ladder. Or you stay where you are.

40 So I believe by asking for an Australian Inheritance Act, Cultural Inheritance Act,  
 the public would agree. I believe I use examples such as, well, you know, we used to  
 be able to call UGG boots, UGG boots, but now we've got to pay some American to  
 do it, because he came and seen us using that word and went over back to New York  
 and corporate incorporated UGG boots under the international - what's it called?

45

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Trademark.

**LARRY WALSH:** Yeah. Trademark. So Australia can't use it anymore. What would happen if someone started doing that to all the iconic Australian expressions or Australian arts? What if they decide that Vegemite was a word that they could use when it's been only used in Australia? So I mix up talking about things that the modern non-Aboriginal Australian talks about, or knows about, and some of their iconic things. Yeah, I go I'll prove it to you when I start singing the man from no -  
 5 Yeah, I start singing Clancy of the overflow. That's one of the first Australian poems nationally, and one of the first Australian things that has, later on was turned into a song. And when they go - and you want proof, I sing the first verse of the Wild  
 10 Colonial Boy. I'm not a singer, but I sing it so they have to put up with me singing. And it goes, born and raised in Ireland. And if you look at some of the early songs, Hey Ho, We're Bound for South Australia.

And I don't say they're convicts. I just say there's your first migrants. So I know how to make sure I'm not getting the right wingers going. You're calling us convicts? No, you're just another migrant. So it's Language is important. I always say language has power, used correctly. So I'm pretty sure if Labor doesn't want to do it, or if the Liberals are going to keep raising they want to change the Heritage Act, I'm pretty sure the counterargument will one, Labor might agree to go to election with it, the  
 15 cultural inheritance. Two, it also means a change to the Heritage Act, and it recognises our past because it means they've got to change our act too. Now, where that comes in, is that I've known my grandmother used to even teach people, my grandfather used to carve and teach people. My grandmother learnt off her mother, great grandmother. So there's a history of Aboriginal communities having old men  
 20 and old women who knew these old ways, and today we have people practising them as part of revival, like - and there's no recognition that, well, sometimes I go look at the boomerang. It's made in bloody Asia now. So I'm saying there's no protection for both Australian and Aboriginal people of our cultural inheritance. And what I use now and then with fish people, especially those that fish in the bay. All right, what's  
 25 that old wives tale you say? When the wattle flowers fall, it's time to fish for snapper?

I have a problem with that. What? One, you didn't have wattle or tea tree. Two, you didn't have snapper. So what the hell are you talking about? You're talking about,  
 35 you learned off the Aboriginal. You've stolen one of our sayings, and some of them go, oh, you might be right. Fish groups are very right wing, but that's okay. I don't hate them. And so what I'm saying is there is enough people out there we could convince if - because if we start calling it (indistinct 00:36:12), they, the right wingers and the Liberal Nationals will oppose it. Makes it twice as hard if you call  
 40 Australian cultural inheritance. There's no act that covers it. So you say that belongs in your heritage act. Actually, it overrides your heritage act. So that should be the important part. So if we could do that the right way, we could make the Heritage Act change, and it counters some of the Liberal argument. Because you get a politician up there and ask them the first Australian song they know. And I'll tell you, they'll all  
 45 go to Wild Colonial Boy. Oh, so you're singing songs about migrants. It's the easiest way to beat them, play their game, but play it just at a different, slightly different strategy. I believe, though, with the two election, with the election next year, I don't



think Labor would do the change as if it was recommended both by treaty and or Yoorrook to the living entities. But if we can get Labor to try it with the Greens and the Teals, and we've already armed the Greens and the Teals, then Labor might go with it, because they're definitely going to try at times to go, oh, we can't do much  
5 about that because it's a federal.

But no, the states decide what is their cultural heritage. And no, it doesn't say cultural heritage, only the Aboriginal one does. But every time they try and change it to make it stronger, Labor goes no. I know because now and then I might talk to people that  
10 are involved there on the quiet. And I do that because I am not working in those areas the same way they are. Matter of fact, Lenny Clarke even said to me when they were looking for new members, come and join the Heritage Council. No, no, that'd be too obvious. I don't want to be - look, you got to understand, I don't need or want to be a somebody. Otherwise, I could have done that years ago. And for me, I'm at  
15 the age where it's just passing ideas on that I have looked at over the years. And to see what the - see how it goes with the young. It's taken me 18 months to convince the organisation I'm in, for them to finally get the idea of what I'm up to by wanting their constitutions changed.

20 See, I believe this is the biggest problem, that we're all making recommendations and we're all going to the government, but we're not helping ourselves. By helping ourselves, all we need to do is in the case of a RAP or a Land and Waterways Council, just add to - We're not taking away all those responsibilities under the act. We're just adding to it. And you're allowed to, because when I worked in the legal  
25 service, I helped a few people with incorporations for organisations. I helped ACES with theirs. I helped ACES, I helped ACCA with the change - (indistinct 00:40:37) Act - it's all easy. You know why the (indistinct 00:40:42) Act was so easy? So many people as teenagers got into trouble that they were getting knocked back, both Aboriginal and white. I had non-Aboriginal people coming up to me going. I was in  
30 the orphanage too, and I had to go for it because my brother still can't get certain jobs because of that criminal record and everything. So it works if it's something that you can interest the public in. The environmental groups would join us in pushing for this change. Don't want the big national park, because it means you can't go in, and no offence to other areas, but some of the - still and they're not very many pristine areas  
35 where we could regrow our forests and waterways, is not being done because there's no - if we can change that cultural inheritance, it means we can demand, because that's where all our culture came from - demand funding for more forest street repair, for more waterways repair.

40 I'm the - myself, another one of the protagonists on fighting the developer and the government on draining one of our waterways to build hydroelectricity. Again, it's because there is no proper act to protect it. If I could get it under cultural inheritance, If we can get cultural inheritance up, it would give us the opportunity to press for those type of things. And our mob's looking at 40% us, 40% of local communities,  
45 and 20% of government as a path to - because I mentioned the river to locals in the area and they go, what? Do you mean they could - because they're small towns. What, You mean that could affect our economy? Yeah, don't you make your money

more off people coming up fishing and camping? Yeah. Well, you're going to lose your profit. Oh, well if you need a hand. Thank you. So we know we can swing it that way. But I do believe if we can get the first one, which is the cultural inheritance, it will change also, the federal act. or so I'm being promised, inquiry if it comes up. So we need to change, firstly, the Heritage Act to cultural inheritance, because if we can't win the first two because they may have to go into a state or federal election, we can work on them, but the cultural inheritance will be the easiest to get through.

10 We don't call it the Aboriginal Cultural Inheritance Act. We just call it the Australian Cultural Inheritance act. because like I have this belief, and a lot of other now historians, because I've been talking about Facebook for years - that man from Snowy River, I reckon he's blackfella. And a few now historians have gone actually, Banjo Paterson as a kid, that's where he used to go for holidays, because his family had people living up there that they go to their school holidays and Christmas holidays. So he would have run across the black stockman. Here's the catch though, when he wrote it, I always thought, why is he calling him a lad? He's not saying that about all the others, but that was in some other things when white people referred to Aboriginal, and they didn't want to call them Aboriginal, they'd say lad or, you know, because of their size In some areas. Little short-arses like me. I hate to admit it, but that's where I believed it was about Aboriginals. And I even said that yeah, the earliest painting I've seen in the drover's life, why was her back turned? Why can you only see the back of her, not face on? Could it be because we do know a lot of stockmen did marry Aboriginal? Could it be that that one was Aboriginal? And Leah Purcell, or was it? I forget she did exactly that.

30 Played the drover's wife. And she wants to do The Man From Snowy River as an Aboriginal too. That's the harder one to get funding for. I know, I keep my ears to the grounds because I'm also an advisor on Ilbijerri theatre. So I hear what's going on in the theatre world. It's funny though, I'm going to do a play next year for the first time. My first 30 years. Oh, yeah. Oh, man. Thanks to getting the files, it says in one of them I'm an associate member of a bike gang and go, what? No, no, I went on, I got a lift with some bikers once. I was at a mate's place, and they these blokes called in on bikes because they all went to school together, and he said, oh, can you give Larry a lift? He lives near yours. So I got a lift, somehow either the police were out in the front or must have seen me and then assumed I'm an associate member of a criminal bike lot. I mean, man, keep me - I got, give me a break. I was also mates with a bloke who was the Victorian six hour production bike champion, and he's a millionaire now. Why don't you, why don't you give me an associate member with him? But what I'm getting at is that for me, the whole thing revolves around being one step always behind.

45 And how can we go on the front foot and be positive. How can we make something work for us. So we put up three. Well, that was my idea. If the first one gets through, which is the cultural inheritance, it makes it possible the next time, if not this time, to get the other two, which is the living entities. Whilst I strongly believe in it, and some of the younger members now have treaty, I've made sure they got it, because

I'm uncertain whether I'll get through the government or not, because the federal legislation overrides the state. So - and I don't see Albanese taking the chance to be honest with you. I always said he was a dodgy used car salesman from the first time I met him. Anyway, for me, it's what is possible. And the easiest one, because it can be sold to the Australian public, is a Cultural Inheritance Act. Especially if it's just called Australian Cultural Heritage Act. Then when it comes to the Aboriginal, they have to challenge the Aboriginal one to Aboriginal Cultural Inheritance Act. That's my strong belief that can get through. If you're on the other two, because I know it's 60%, but when you start sitting in Parliament negotiating, it may not end up the way you want it. So at the same time, if they accept it's part of that, the next generation, that will be part of the people that are still on treaty or, or are part of the people who joined treaty or whatever, they'll be aware of the whole act that they should be going for.

And they may see, oh, they got this bit. We might be able to do that bit now. I always think to myself, well, if it don't work, what if what if I make sure everyone knows so that there's a possibility in the future, someone can do something to make it work. I would rather tackle the three at once to get them to the public attention. I am certain of the cultural inheritance, because every time I talk about it, white artists, Aboriginal artists, they go oh, that makes sense. Well, you bloody write a song about it one of you buggers. No, I mean, they think sometimes I'm a bit out there, but I even said to Adam Briggs. Briggsy, could you write a new song about belonging to the waterways and belonging to the forest? Oh, I did a bit in one of my songs. No, I want a full song, because it's not about a group having it, the idea. It's how do you promote around Victoria and around Australia? I always say that if it hadn't been for two songs, that helped me a lot - one was Bob Randall's A Brown Skinned Baby, and the other was Archie Roach's Took the Children Away. Without those two, our possibility of getting stolen gens up may never have happened.

It needed something that got all of Australia's interests. This is why I'm trying to persuade these bloody musicians to write a bloody song. It'll help. They don't understand, I think what I'm up to - are like a lot of people when you suggest something, and you only want them to play, they're wrong, that's where it gets hard. I used to have problems sometimes when I was explaining something to people that we should do, that someone would go off on their own and go, I can do that. And oh, you ruined it. Hell, I had a blue with some of your uncles over that one day. They were on my side, but because of what I was proposing, 1 or 2 of them went up to some of the people that were against it and going we back what Larry said. And I got a - Jim said, Larry, I've just got a complaint about you. What complaint? That people are bullying people to get your way. What? I said, no, I haven't talked to anyone about it. They were at the meeting, so maybe people acted on their own, I don't know. I'm not saying they were doing the wrong thing, because in my opinion - Well, why don't you tell them the truth? They're the dealers, and we know they are. If we want to get changed into, get people to understand that they've got to clean their needles and all that. Otherwise they could end up with worse problems.

And Health Service. Oh, no, no, no, no, no. The organisations. Oh, no, no, no, we

don't have a drug problem. But of all things, the three biggest drunks were going, but if we see someone using them, we'll tell them off and I go oh, you're fucking kidding. I might have sworn, I go you're kidding. If a drunk walked up to me and I was a junkie, trying to tell me that I should give up drugs, I would fucking ignore youse.

5 And that's what started that letter of complaint about me. So Jim going, okay, you didn't threaten them? No. And you didn't know that they were threatened. That's the first I heard, you just telling me. And he could see by the look of me face I was not lying. So it happens to me now and then. You give a full idea, And the funny thing is, I don't mind at times when people run with it, because they may be in a better

10 position than me to do something. Because at my age, I just did 15, 100 K's last week, and it took me three days to recover. I mean, I mean, I went from my house down through Melbourne over to Colac down to bloody Warrnambool. A day later up to Swan Hill, a day later, down to Melbourne, a day later up to Eildon. It was just sort of like - so I'm not good for running around the state. It has to be people with

15 more energy that they understand what I'm trying to do.

And it doesn't necessarily. Yeah, I don't care if they're the one that gets in the papers or they're the ones that get in the local newsletters or whatever about it. Because if they understand what it's about and they see where it can benefit, then I'm okay with

20 it. I've never ever - and it's not that I'm a humble man, don't get me wrong. It's nothing to do with humility. It's I've never seen myself as wanting to be the person you go to. You know, like when I was doing stolen gens, I got asked three times about some other statements people were making about some other shit. And I'm going, well, hold on, I know nothing about this, so I got nothing to say. Whereas

25 normally it's to try and provoke. So for me, it's no, I don't need that. I got, you know, like, I have a plan for when I retire, I retire. I don't need someone saying, oh, here's a so and so who did so and so, what's your comment on this? I don't need it. For me, the people today have a better education. They have a better understanding of certain politics, whereas I'm a little bit. Yeah, but I think like you, and that can sometimes be

30 my problem.

It's - things change, and if I'm not up to date with all the changes, Then I only concentrate on the areas I know a bit about, and therefore the other areas I will make recommendations on change, or talk to people about - is it possible to change? Don't

35 ask me about housing. I've done that, squatting. Yeah, like last time I tried to register for housing, they wanted to send me the latest report. I'm going, fuck no. I'm trying to get a house here. So no, fuck you. Because it is true, you can't be expected, no matter who you are, to know everything. I know a few areas and them areas is all I'm interested in trying to see if people can help change. You know in law, they joke

40 about the Jim Berg Act. It's not called the Jim Berg Act, but they joke about it in that sense because this is the man that started it all, you know? And, Jim, I reckon Jim would agree with me that it is time to change. But you know as we run into each other every now and then, and we give each other hugs and things, and we have a joke, I think he knows what I'm up to because he's heard me talk about the museum,

45 or the museums talked about it. So I figure if he was against it, he'd already told me. And I don't think he will be. I think he'll see it as what he learned from his uncles and aunties, and I learned from other uncles and aunties that you change what you can,

and you leave gap for the next generation to add to it.

And it's time to just look at those ideas, and I do believe for me the heritage acts we need to change first to get away from the fight the Liberals and them want, by  
 5 arguing we change it to an Australian Cultural and Heritage Act. It would put a spanner because if they were against it, they would lose some of their own supporters. That's the important thing, why I choose to just call it -

10 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** Now, with the other two, I think there is a little sections that the government may agree to, but not the whole lot. And I do believe they'll say, oh, if they don't want to agree to it at all, they'll go oh that's a federal thing. But if we can get that national inquiry into the heritage change, then it opens the door to also  
 15 discuss living entities. Oh, and it's been already done in the Commonwealth. New Zealand went to visit Ecuador. They've now got a river living entity. Canada went to visit Ecuador. They've got one. Two African countries went to visit Ecuador. They've got one of those living entities.

20 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** True.

**LARRY WALSH:** So even if they oppose it, there's a fact that you can go well, Oh yeah, by the way, France has too, but that's for a different reason. France regrew after the Second World War a lot of its forest areas, and now it's got a protection on them.  
 25 Very similar to the living entity. So all I'm saying is that there's a few countries that you can look at and see where and how it's working. I don't want to be a spokesperson for a river. I don't want to be a spokesperson for a forest. I want to sit back and go, Yeah how's that going? You're doing the talking, not me. Well, no, I'm a good talker. But I'm being honest, I think at my age there has to be people with a  
 30 bit of experience. So, yeah, these days, I call someone 40 young. That's my age. So for me, it's about let's push all the way and we can get away with it, the Australian cultural inheritance.

35 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** And then let's push the other two, and see which one the government may accept bits of. But in the end, if we get enough people on it - I don't even mind, Marjorie Thorpe read about the cultural inheritance that been going on about, Aboriginal inheritance. She told her daughter, Lydia - Lydia's PA came to see  
 40 me. I go no, no, hold off. Because this is about whether treaty can do it or not. She said if they become a federal level, don't just go on about Aboriginal, I want that heritage thing to become about Australia. And you know the joke you can use? Fancy Aboriginal looking after all of Australia's heritage, all of Australia's cultural inheritance. So she's holding off for the moment. I don't know how long I can keep it  
 45 to that, because we're not exactly friends. Her mum and I are, that's the joke. It's the age gaps and all that stuff and the way she operates, and I prefer to, if possible, get everyone to agree, or get a majority. I, in my younger days, have used threatening

language in politics because I'm being threatened. I have used whatever in my younger days. But now it's about okay, we got some changes through in my generation. Maybe some of the changes we're after will come through in while I'm still around, but maybe some of it will have to be the next generation pushes it through. Because what do they say? I've had my five minutes of fame. You know, I don't need it. And I feel I'm better at encouraging people than, you know, like, over the years, I've had 20 people with NAIDOCs. They offered me one, but I said, no, no, I'm not retiring yet. Because for me, I don't think I need any of it. I see other people that need it, and deservedly so. Like sometimes someone said, one day someone said to me, well, why haven't you agreed yet? I said, oh, there's ten people in front of me. Every time they go, there's ten people in front of me. Even if one of them's done or add another name to the list.

Because for me I'm more for those that did something like whether it's foster kids, raise them to be good families, whether it's helping local communities, and the stuff some of those people have done. I sometimes see myself on a community level, but sometimes because I look at state issues, I look at it slightly differently. I still look at it, how will this affect my community? But I look at it like if it affect my community, how will it affect other communities? And I try and keep the relationship because in my early days I was working statewide. On some issues, not on everything thank god. Just like in the legal service. Oh, so-and-so's going on leave for six weeks, can you go down for a couple of weeks before to get to know the area? All right, you're sending me there are you, to fill in for however long they had leave. you know it's funny, but when I first met that Jason Kelly, he came up and said, (indistinct 01:08:56). G'day. He says, my nan used to have your picture on the wall, ah, Aunty Alice Kelly. A lot of people don't know that when she was trying to get Lake Mungo returned that I went with her, and she spoke on hers, and I at the time, Tiga Bayles was running the New South Wales Land Council, and Tiga Bayles and I had run into each other a couple of times. Positive times.

And so, what are you doing here, Larry? Oh, Aunty Alice has asked me to be her support. Oh, what do you think? Well, I'm hopeful you all go yes. That was just my little bit, and helped her with some of the stuff. So it's funny how some of those people decide to get a picture with me and put it on the wall. That's why I avoid places now, because I'm sick and tired of going, and someone got my nan, or my pop had your picture. Oh, did they? Because then I got to learn who they are, you know? And like, when I was down in Warrnambool, I met this young girl and she told me about mum. I go ah, she was the first Aboriginal prison worker. Oh, you know that? Yeah, yeah, because I worked in the legal service at the time. We'd talk to each other now and then because she might see that someone had no resources for when they got out, and so she talked to me or talked to Jim, you know, whichever one of us to see what we could do. And we'd usually handle it. So yeah, I liked your grandmother, you know? So it seems like that, that only because I see a photo of me with their grandparent, and I go sorry, my memory's not going to take in a whole bunch of another hundred new faces. I'm not that good.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** You want to talk to us also about this Citizenship Act stuff?

**LARRY WALSH:** Right.

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**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** You want to unpack that for us?

**LARRY WALSH:** Yes. Well you see the referendum only said to include  
Aboriginals in the census and make laws on behalf of Aboriginal people.

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**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** The 67 referendum?

**LARRY WALSH:** 67.

15 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Sorry just to be clear, for the record, yes.

**LARRY WALSH:** Yes, 67 referendum. It had nothing to do with citizenship. But in  
1968 there was an Aboriginal fellow by the name of Lionel Rose, who was going to  
be fighting in Japan. So the joke was because of the Commonwealth, he didn't need a  
20 passport. No, this is the truth. Because of the Commonwealth, he won the  
Commonwealth Championship. He didn't need a passport to go to England to do that.  
But to go to Japan, he needed a passport. And it's recorded in one of the  
documentaries where Jack Rennie, the trainer, said we had trouble getting Lionel a  
25 passport because there was nothing in the Act to cover Aboriginals, so it had to go to  
the feds. Now when they were passing, because back then the only two other people  
that had that special sitting of Parliament, one was Albert Namatjira, and that was for  
three months, the other passport. And there was another Aboriginal, I forget who  
they were. So there was no - unless it went through Parliament. Now my belief is  
30 when they were passing, they go, oh wait, the world press will be there. Why don't  
we, because we don't want to look like a racist country, why don't we make this act  
inclusive of all Aboriginal people? Now, my understanding of the Aboriginal, not the  
Aboriginal - the Citizenship Act is you're supposed to apply for it. I'm not sure that  
what they did was legally - well, if there was a white person who wanted to oppose it  
and Aboriginal person would oppose it, they could have taken it to the High Court  
35 and maybe won.  
So, like to cancel it.

Nobody wanted to cancel Lionel Rose going overseas and winning the world  
40 championship, man. Nobody - so for me, it relies on Lionel Rose having to go  
overseas, they passed an act for everyone without - because of the way Jack Rennie  
talked about it, in the 40th anniversary document - documentary of the 40th  
anniversary of the fight, where he says, we had difficulty to get Lionel to go to Japan  
because he had no passport. So in actual fact, I believe if every Aboriginal accepts  
their citizens, fine, but I don't yet. I still call myself a dual citizen. One day when I  
45 retire, I might get myself an Australian - go to Australian ceremony, because that's  
what a lot of people fought for the right to be Australians. They went to war and all  
for it, and I have nothing but respect for that. But I also believe that Lionel Rose isn't

getting the due recognition. Sure, he's getting it for the championships and the International and national stuff he did. But that important piece of legislation that men and women for over a century have fought in every war just to become Australian citizens, and then were denied it when they came back.

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So I don't mind in that sense that. You know, one day I was talking to someone about it and they said, well, what do you think? I said, I don't know, maybe one day I'll have to go to a citizen's ceremony. He said, if you do, I'll join you. But his argument is correct technically, because if you read that act. It says only if you serve the government can you be an automatic citizen. Or you have to apply, and I don't think any Aboriginal has realised, anyone born after 68 is fine, they're coming. But I don't think they realise they don't really have a piece of paper if someone wanted to challenge it. That's a weird one. I'm not saying it's right or wrong, I'm saying I think he's right in the sense of, technically they couldn't do that, but I don't know if anyone wants to argue it for me. You know, I can't imagine myself living in any other country anyway. You know, I'm Australian. But, you know, for me, there's that technicality of whether it was right to do that, whether it was legally right to do that. If they'd said all armed services Aboriginal, they had that right. They should have. If they covered it without speaking to anyone, just gave us all citizenship, I don't know if that was 100% correct. And I mean that in the legal sense, not in the parliamentary sense. It's that because the only two ways I know to be a citizen is a apply, or you're in the armed services defending the country, and I wasn't defending the country.

I didn't go to Vietnam or any of them. But that's because I had a criminal record, so I couldn't go anyway. Some of my mates went. I even helped one get a - when he was doing bad on the streets here, back in the 80s. I even stood up for him to get housing. Got him one. Bugger, I've got other people housing, I haven't got my own\ . I know the system well. How to get it for other people, but me? No. All I'm saying is that there's this catch 22 there. Do they - Well, maybe they do a one around Australia where they go, okay, all your people raise your hand and say, yeah, I'm of Australian. Or I swear, I'll take the Queen out -

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** You know, take the King out, but I swear allegiance to Australia. I'm okay with that. Because as I say, I am an Australian, but I'm not sure how that stands because I'm not sure that they had the right to do that. Maybe they could argue they did because the referendum gave them the right to make laws. It's just never been clear to me why? Why now? Oh, it's because of Lionel Rose. And I really feel that's not being recognised. I mean, you know, I'm for having heroes but - and Lionel Rose was a hero throughout that bloody period and after. But it was done because of him, and I don't think that is recognised anywhere. And that, to me is the important thing, that while we all think of this man as a fighter and a contributor to the community, he may have single handedly created the biggest change to Aboriginal people in Australia just by wanting to go to Japan. I love it.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Thanks Uncle.



**LARRY WALSH:** Yeah, that's why I feel Uncle John is right on one hand, because you're supposed to apply. Or like a lot of people of that period, they thought if you're in the Army, Air Force and Navy, you'll be granted citizenship straight away. But for the Aboriginal people, that didn't happen. However, it makes me wonder, would it have happened if Lionel Rose didn't have to go overseas? So that's why it's that question to me. Is it still, is it legal? Or was it legal. Or, if it was ever challenged with the government - just point to that, well, you gave us the right to make laws on their behalf. But to get two houses of Parliament sitting in the one day just to pass one act. And I think it was also to cover up the fact that they were going to give it to only one bloke, Lionel Rose. Because that's international headlines for Australia. And I think someone there said, you know what will look like, won't you. We give a special one just for this one bloke? That'll make us look like a racist country. That is my opinion why it was done. But I do believe Uncle Johnny Lovett is right in raising it, because most people born after that, they're fine, they're covered because they're born citizens.

I just wanted a ceremonial - not me, but a ceremonial acknowledgement of us being citizens. I think for those old men and old women who were unsure whether they still are or not, even just the telling the story of how they got it, and having a ceremony or a day to go right, why don't we acknowledge when we did get citizenship? We acknowledge NAIDOC. We acknowledge stolen gens. But the 67 referendum to make us citizens. Lionel Rose made us citizens. And he probably didn't realise it himself. That's the - And knowing him, he would have just shrugged and just smiled and, oh I did that, oh yeah. You know, and that's what I mean. He wouldn't have seen it as a big deal. But I think we're always talking about his sporting achievements, but we forget the one political thing he did was cause us to become citizens. And that to me is why I think it's important that we acknowledge that for a lot of Aboriginal born - and if you like reach their teen years or reach their 20s or 30s, they're the ones that are uncertain.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** So that'll, that'll through the transcript, that'll come strongly across as a recommendation. I was going to say Mr Larry Walsh, but, you know. I want to bring it back to you, though Unc. Because I know we're running out of time. And because you have been a strong advocate for language, song, culture, but I want to kind of take you to what you want to share with us about -

**LARRY WALSH:** Well, that's why I think this changing the to inheritance also means that there's a possibility we can expand the programs that exist. Like I know, for instance, VACL even though I'm not on it, my daughter was on it for a while. Some of my nieces and nephews have benefited from it, learning their own song and dance language. But I believe the only way to get it paid for - we need to run more camps, school holidays, blah, blah, blah. There's not the funding the way it works, because it's accepted that, a lot of the stuff we're doing, you got more chance of getting some funding under Arts. Not much, but some. The Federals fund the language, but again, that's limited. So the state puts nothing into our revivals. And for me, having to go out of my way to ensure my children could learn these things to

have to - And by the way luckily for me, because I was working with people who were involved in trying to recreate old stories in modern ways, I was able to get my children to learn to dance traditional steps. So that's what I mean about how - I was in a right position to do that. I see it now, today I go, oh, yeah, there's about 5 or 6  
5 people who speak there out of 100, you know? They can't run the programs because they haven't got the money. They can only work one on one.

It's good that they can do that, but I don't think it needs to be a central body. I think it needs to be regional bodies having funding to look after their language, their song,  
10 their dance, and their art. Because, like, some of the tools we might use, because we're a mountain river, are different from the woods in Western District, which are basalt, coastal, different woods. So their clubs would have different shapes to ours. Because of that, that's why I say it - it also needs to be regional rather than just a statewide handling everything. Maybe the statewide gets the funding, and then  
15 passes it to the regions, or resources to the regions. Whether that be, oh yeah, there's a few old books in the library your mob should look at. Oh there's someone that did a study, blah, blah, blah. We need a resource place for all those things. But I do believe they need to be regional on the grounds of my region is not the same as the Gippsland region. Not the same as Western District region. Not the same as Murray  
20 River region. Different soils, different woods. Some plants similar. You know, like we all got, you have daisies of some type. All those are similar, but what we make things out of at times were different because of our woods. And you know, like, I still haven't seen a reed spear yet. And yet there's - they were talked about.

25 There are other things I haven't seen yet, like people making - apart from the one that was done for the museum in the 1990s. I haven't seen a big revival of our canoe making. Some of the huts that we used to live in. You know, if we had our own campsite and could put some of those huts together, there's your permanent campsite. So it's all those things because they're interconnected. While you're learning carving,  
30 you're also getting, say, some of the older carvers would tell you stories while you were learning. Same with weaving. In the old days, the older women would tell the younger women. And you know what? When the women start weaving, they remember those stories. Or when the fellas start carving, they remember those stories because it's while they're working on it. So the minute they're working on it again  
35 they go, oh yeah, I remember that, you know? So it's interconnected to our old ways, but also our future paths. And I think for me, our modern artists who use some of the traditions, don't get the same recognition as non-Aboriginal people still doing things the British way, if you like. Or the, oh, these days, Italian, Greek ways. It's not knocking - it's just like some of those cultures have adapted and changed and a much  
40 better recognised than we are. I mean, Look at wogs out of work. And there's always iterations of it all the time as a comedy. Theatre wise, not so much TV anymore, but theatre wise, and even movie wise. Fancy a bloke that's not Italian writing about they're a weird mob. Why this writer writing about an Italian, they're a weird mob, and getting an Italian to play the role.

45

But that's what I mean. We started taking on other bits of all these cultures that have come in, whilst we've tried to keep our own, and our culture isn't about exclusivity.

It's our culture is about, as I said, you're weaving or you're carving and you're learning other things because of the conversations you're having. You're making a canoe. You're learning if there were still enough canoe makers, some of the old stories that way. And a bit about the country you're going to be canoeing on. You're learning with it. You're learning that there's only certain times of the year that you. Well, like we only do stringybark a certain time of year, and only a certain way, because if you do it the wrong way, facing the sun, you're killing the tree. If you do it at the back of the tree where the sun don't hit and in the right season, then you don't damage the tree. So it's all those things you learn doing them.

Like, my family now is one of the, I think, three that actually do make string a lot in our region. I don't know about other regions, but they would have used the same materials, if not very similar materials. Like we use stringybark to make string. Stringybark's throughout various parts of Victoria, and they probably used to do it too. Can't find any (indistinct 01:35:36) in my area. They make all their bloody eel traps and everything out of. But because it's not in our area, it's more a Western district plant. I'm okay with that because that means they're learning something about their local plants. And again, the seasons are nearly the same until, when you pick them, and how you treat them. You pick them nearly six weeks before you're going to use them, because you let them dry out, and then you put them back in water to loosen them to do the weaving. So what I'm saying is, you know, it's learning all those things. I got my wife, who's non-aboriginal to learn, so she could teach our daughters. And my wife, she doesn't get the same recognition, but she's okay with that because she's not Aboriginal, but she doesn't mind teaching other families that are Aboriginal to weave, because what - who she learned of was that it's not only learning how to weave, but it's a responsibility to make sure others learn.

And my oldest girl will sit down with people and do that. Because that's what she's learned. It's a responsibility to ensure this craft is not forgotten. Although they do try and do some modern stuff with it. And I go - it's not that I'm a traditionalist. It's more to do with well, I get families coming to me about, oh, that art's good, and that Art's - but your own taste. You know, I look at it, like they used to talk about Turbo as a painter. I got - I don't understand. He was well accepted, but for me, nah, that's not my type. You know, I can understand other people might appreciate it. Had my wife trying to argue with me about it once. She goes, don't you see the good stuff I got? Nah, nah. She's gone you - I said, look, it just doesn't grab me. Some art does. Some art doesn't. And he doesn't grab me.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** But that's the individual taste.

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Correct.

**LARRY WALSH:** So my daughter, sometimes what she does, I'm err - But other people go, oh that's good. I go, is it?

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** Because I look at it from my point, not from theirs.

5 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

10 **LARRY WALSH:** But at the same time, this is why I think if we can force that change of cultural inheritance, it will open the door to be able to say, well, cultural inheritance includes language, song, dance, painting, carving, traditional rights to plants. Like, what do you call it? Well, I gave that example, like in the Western District, there's a plant they use. In my area we don't have that plant. So we don't go looking for a plant in someone else's area that is not ours. So what do you call it? Not copyright, but -

15 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Cultural appropriation?

20 **LARRY WALSH:** Yeah. Yeah. And some of that goes on because there are no clear Cultural inheritance rights. I also think why I want the entity is because I believe it gives us control of what plants are used. What plants are - we don't want them wiped out because they have a use in our communities. And we don't want every community jumping in and grabbing them, thusly destroying what we've got. You know, and also some of those traditional cultural heritage practices. And I do mean, like, you know, trying to make stone axes again, for instance. There is a technique to that, making stone spearheads, there is a technique to that. And you know, and we've  
25 only got limited amounts of materials we use. It's a finite resource, not what do you call it? Perpetual resource. It's a finite. So we've got to pick it at the right time of the year, we got to use it at the right time of the year, and we can't allow people to just wander in and go, oh, so you use that for that, and then all of a sudden we've got trees or plants dying out because of overuse.

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And that to me is where we need control of the use. What do they call it? If I have a medicine that I use, and all of a sudden someone's seen it, analysed it, and then incorporated it or whatever and turned it into something that then they get the right to go and pick all these plants out of the bush that might only grow at certain time of  
35 the year. And they have the right, and we don't get to say yes or no. So, Jeffrey Kennett, this is true. He was trying to sell off all the native Victorian plants to overseas people to examine for medical purposes or whatever purposes. The one that - and yet, I think by now, when Jeffrey did it, it had limited life. I'm not sure that needs to be checked, because it still may mean some plants that belong here - they've  
40 incorporated even if they're not using it. Even if they're not using it, so if a future use is found, they can use that plant, then come back to Australia and grab as much as they bloody like. And that again would destroy a part of our cultural inheritance and cultural heritage. So I believe cultural heritage and cultural inheritance are tied together. One affects the other. Only the wording's wrong. See, I was watching a  
45 show the other day where what do they call it? That show where it's all in England, where they bring out all these artefacts, or - this is what my grandmother left me in that.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Antiques Roadshow?

5 **LARRY WALSH:** Yes. And the other day, the bloke said because it was from the World war, Battle of Britain. And he put it, this is our heritage. This is not just your family's heritage, this is England's heritage. So the way they use heritage is different from the way we use heritage. This is why I believe we need to change the wording.

10 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

15 **LARRY WALSH:** And we need to make it clear we're not forgetting our past, we're not wiping our past off, but all of those things are only part of the whole of our inheritance. Well, except for big white boats. Did you know when you look at the Heritage Acts of Victoria, it only covers three things. Old ships, old buildings, and in some cases, squatters market streets. We've got bloody trees that are hundreds of years old that aren't covered, you know? Yet squatters street can be. We've got birthing trees. We've got trees where people gathered to, whether it be for the fruit or for their nuts, or whether it be for the medicines, or whether it be to make string, or all these things that are old, but they're not covered because we're not squatters. You know, so let's look at - oh the MCG is covered. And now the Sydney Opera House is covered, all big white monuments.

25 It sickens me that in a way I have to change, and we as Aboriginal people have to change their act to get our own change. Because the old excuse, oh we can't do that for you unless we do it for the rest of - health services, we got them. We were the test case and even though we started, oh we can't just fund you, we've got to fund the rest of. And it's always -

30 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** So we've got to aim some parts of our legislation at the rest of Australia.

35 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** I think -

40 **LARRY WALSH:** I'll get the environment vote on the two of them after. I'll get that. I have no problem. All the environment movement will support it. I will have problems, and most of us will, with the state government accepting that. If they did, and I'm saying it's an if, they have to negotiate with Parliament. But if they did we're negotiating it with Parliament, we have the chance with the Teals and the Greens as in the political party.

45 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I think you've laid out that proposal really clearly around that, the heritage acts, the inheritance, the -

**LARRY WALSH:** They belong together -

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** The environment movement, that's right -

**LARRY WALSH:** They belong together, but for them it will, with their heritage and cultural inheritance.

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**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

**LARRY WALSH:** They belong together.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's right.

**LARRY WALSH:** Now, to get the other two, you have to get the first one.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

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**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

20 **LARRY WALSH:** Because they all back each other. And if it does become an election issue, the living entity, I just want a few people who make sure they understand how it works there so that lawyer could come and talk. Because they'll have to sell it to both the Teals and the Greens, which could give the 60%, but it will be watered down. There's no doubt about that. But it will mean that - who knows, after our time, the next mob will go we could change that, we can add to that.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And build on it.

**LARRY WALSH:** We can build. I am suspect that it'll get all the way through.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

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**LARRY WALSH:** And I do believe that, but I do believe the first step is change the Heritage Act to inheritance.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

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**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah. We've got a couple of minutes left, any other closing messages? And we can do another one of these if you go away -

**LARRY WALSH:** No, but I do wish -

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**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Everything will be documented, just to be clear -

**LARRY WALSH:** I do wish you to meet Dana at -

45 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Environment Victoria -

**LARRY WALSH:** Greenhouse.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

5 **LARRY WALSH:** Yeah. I've talked to Anthony Kelly, who knows her, and he's had a yarn with her. She's willing to talk, except she's stuck on this idea of the great national forest. That's all right. I don't mind, because if we get the changes we want, she'll even dream better.

10 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

15 **LARRY WALSH:** She just at that moment wants to see. And what they don't understand is under the federal act, it would shut us out of the forests. That's why I'm not for it. It's not that, I like the idea in theory, but in practice it means that we'll have no say. And we don't want that. We want our own say, because we've got some areas that are pristine that we need to get into, to get seeds to plant, to regrow. If they lock us out from that, then the forests are only going to get worse. And we don't want that. We want to -

20 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Deadly.

25 **LARRY WALSH:** We want to, you know, a 10, 20, 30 year plan. We're working on 100 years, but we want to get the first ten years right, you know? Because it could take up to 100 years for some of these trees to mature. So we need to get the first bit right, which is, what of the small plants we need to put in now? I don't want to be blocked by federal government legislation. If we can do it right in Victoria, it will become within not the next election for feds, but the following for feds. So I give it eight years to become the environment stuff to make it an issue throughout Australia.

30 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

35 **LARRY WALSH:** But the heritage inheritance, I believe, can be done if one state does it, other Aboriginal groups will look at it and go, oh shit, we could do that here. And I would love it if we did it first, only because we're good at when we do it first, you know, like -

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

40 **LARRY WALSH:** We set the path as we could see it, knowing that we're leaving the path open enough for the next -

**COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Generation.

**LARRY WALSH:** Yeah.

45 **COMMISSIONER LOVETT:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I think that's a good spot to finish it up. I might press stop on the recording and just say -

**<THE RECORDING CONCLUDED**

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