

EBONY ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER INSTITUTE LTD

TRUTH, JUSTICE, HEALING – NATIONAL ROUND TABLE SUMMARY

24 March 2021

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Ebony Truth Telling, Justice and Healing National Roundtable was held in Melbourne on Wednesday, 24 March 2021. The purpose of the event was to provide a shared platform for key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to voice their vision on a national framework for truth, justice and healing. The Roundtable was an opportunity to present the Ebony Truth Telling, Justice and Healing Project discussion paper to our key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and advisors. Ebony's goal is to ensure truth-telling is well thought out with purposeful and intentional social policy change, to ensure a greater future for our next generations. Representatives from the three state/territory treaty commissions presented their findings to date, through a considered truth-telling agenda.

AGENDA

- 'Welcome to Country Ceremony' by Aunty Joy Wandin-Murphy, Wurundjeri
- Introduction to Ebony Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Institute Ltd and our work to date
- Panel discussion - "Why is truth telling important and why is it important to you?" Facilitated by Eugenia Flynn
 - Guest speakers – Hayley McQuire, Dr Aunty Mary Graham and Adam Kahane
- Panel discussion - "What frameworks are you drawing on to facilitate Truth and Healing at a local level? Facilitated by Taryn Lee
 - Guest speakers - Dr Jackie Huggins (QLD), Steve Rossingh (NT) and Troy McDonald (VIC)
- Closed Session: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders only.
 - Implications and strategic clarity on next steps
 - Input to a project plan for truth telling, justice and healing.

KEY OUTCOMES

- PREPARATION – how?
 - Criticality of readiness and preparing for the truth properly to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and a culturally safe political context for truth-telling.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices must be preferenced in planning for truth telling
 - Truth is told in a way that activates and supports non-Indigenous allyship.
 - Importance of bearing witness (Karen Mundine)
- POWER – who?
 - The terms of reference for this work must be Aboriginal Terms of Reference from the outset, particularly to ensure First Nations Peoples are not cast as victims (Dr Aunty Mary Graham).
 - Importance of addressing fundamental power imbalances in the formation and implementation of truth-telling
 - Truth telling must be centred and led by Indigenous peoples and communities.
- PURPOSE – why?
 - "Telling the truth is necessary, but not sufficient" (Adam Kahane) – participants strongly agreed that telling the truth is not enough – it requires justice and healing as well.
 - Importance of having answers to the 'so what?' question – what does justice and healing look like after the truth is told?
 - There must be a very clear answer to the question "truth telling": to what end? (Craig Ritchie)
 - Importance of seeing that the next generation inherits healing rather than more injustice.
 - Truth telling must be considered as a critical part of nation building and sovereignty.

PARTICIPANTS

The Ebony Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Institute Board

Andrew Gargett - CEO, First Peoples' Assembly Victoria

Ian Roberts - Executive Chair of the Annamila Foundation

Jade Colgan - CEO, Cathy Freeman Foundation

Jamie Lowe – CEO, National Native Title Council

Janine Mohamed – CEO, The Lowitja Institute

Jidah Clarke - Koori Youth Justice Taskforce

Karen Mundine - CEO at Reconciliation Australia

Rona Glynn-McDonald - CEO, Common Ground

Aunty Joy Wandin-Murphy -Senior Kulin Nation Elder

Adam Kahane – Director, Reos Partners, Collaboration Facilitator

Tony McAvoy, Barrister

Hayley McQuire - National Coordinator & Co-Founder at National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition (NIYEC)

Dr Jackie Huggins AM FAHA - Co Chair, QLD Treaty Advancement Committee

Steve Rossingh – Director, Northern Territory Treaty Commission

Troy McDonald – Assembly Member, First Peoples' Assembly Victoria

Catherine Freeman OAM – Olympic Gold Medalist & Co-Founder and Director of the Cathy Freeman Foundation

Craig Ritchie - CEO, AIATSIS Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Justin Mohamed - Commissioner for Aboriginal Children & Young People

Louis Anderson Mokak - First Nations Advisory Working Group

Dr Mary Graham – Associate Professor, University of Queensland

Professor Patricia Dudgeon – Chief Investigator, Transforming Indigenous Health & Wellbeing

Andrew Meehan - General Manager - Policy, Research & Gov Affairs, Reconciliation Australia

NEXT STEPS

Ebony is partnering with AIATSIS to deliver a Truth, Justice and Healing framework and will begin meeting with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. For more information please contact us at admin@ebonyinstitute.com.au or visit our website at ebonyinstitute.com.au.



*Group photo of Ebony Board and participants of the Truth, Justice and Healing National Roundtable courtesy of Photo Studio Australia
Back Row (L to R): Steve Rossingh, Justin Mohamed, Gregory Phillips, Jade Colgan, Craig Ritchie, Aunty Joy Wandin-Murphy, Troy McDonald, Jidah Clarke, Louis Mokak
Front Row (L to R): Ian Roberts, Andy Gargett, Jodie Sizer, Dr Jackie Huggins, Taryn Lee, Eugenia Flynn, Jamie Lowe, Hayley McQuire, Catherine Freeman
On screen/zoom: Karen Mundine, Adam Kahane, Dr Aunty Mary Graham, Rona Glynn-McDonald, Indi Clarke*