**TRANSCRIPT OF INVASION DAY RALLY 2021**

*Speakers:*

* *Sue-Anne*
* *Bill Nicholson*
* *Stan Dryden*
* *Mandy Nicholson*
* *Stacey*
* *Lidia Thorpe*
* *Gary Foley*
* *Safety Marshal Meriki Onus*
* *Arika Waulu*
* *Tish King*
* *Celeste Liddle*

**TRANSCRIPT**

**Sue-Anne:**

What a great turnout. Welcome, everybody. My name is Sue-Anne. I’m a proud Wurundjeri woman. I am going to be taking you to the station today and making sure that you’re all being COVID safe, just making sure that everybody is COVID safe. Just remember, that we are one of the most vulnerable communities when it comes to COVID and to keep each other safe, keep within the marshals, look after each other. And just, as hard as today is, lets rally, get our voices heard in really calm manner. Firstly, I am going to call on Uncle Bill Nicholson. He is going to go up and do a smoking ceremony.

**Bill Nicholson:**

What an amazing turnout again. Thank you for your support. [greeting in Woiwurrung language] Bill Nicholson. The language of this sacred land, the Wurundjeri language is called Woiwurrung, changed to what I call the imposed language of this land. Welcome invaders, my name is Uncle Bill Nicholson. I stand here proud as the descendant of a long line of warriors, men and women who cared for this land. Knew the lore of the land. And knew their responsibility. That is something, as an educator today, that I am still trying to get across to people who live on our country, that we all have a responsibility to it. I would just like to say everyone again, just reiterate what we all going to [INAUDIBLE] we are trying to tell everyone before. It’s very important that we respect the COVID rules and I supposed the laws that had been put there to keep us all healthy and safe.

Remember one strong aspect of Aboriginal culture is respect and respect for Elders. If you want to feel right participating in such an important day as today. Respect that the organizers are telling us, to keep us all healthy and safe.

I would like to acknowledge my Elders past, I would not be here without them, or my family. In 1863, 18 Wurundjeri people walked this sacred land with our neighbours the Boon Wurrung there were only 22. If it wasn’t for these very special men and women we would not be here today.

The British tried everything to eradicate us after their invasion, it almost worked, but it didn't. We are still here and we continue to be on this sacred land, and teaching people their responsibilities for it.

I looked up the English dictionary the other day. The word invasion, ‘an unwelcome intrusion into another’s domain’. Did not know who wrote the rules for this invasion. A place called the Vatican. The Papal [INAUDIBLE] wrote the guidelines for the British to come here and take our land and on our people's lives.

Something that they must understand themselves and acknowledge, that the churches of this land live on our land for free, took our land and benefit from it. They have to acknowledge that because that was the old-time [INAUDIBLE] but the sense of evolutionary theory, where they conveniently put Aboriginal people at the bottom of the human race.

We would not have survived and survived on this land for 200,000 years if we were not a structured civilized people under our lore [INAUDIBLE] This is something sick. I wonder if anyone up in Canberra actually knows this one. [INAUDIBLE] invaders of their country. [INAUDIBLE] He also went on to say that the English would debauch our morality. Debauch our country. And the peaceful tranquillity that the people and their ancestors had enjoyed for thousands of years. Cook started from the day he got here. This country is so blinded to that. And all of [INAUDIBLE] disrespect and I believe the deliberate ignorance of the history of this land. If it comes from the prime minister, you can imagine how it filters down to the rest of society.

Another comment. These law fellows behind us, the imposed law, the imposed government up through the back end here through Parliament house. One of them in 1841 said, his name was [INAUDIBLE] Willis. The colonists were uninvited intruders. Aboriginals remain sovereign of the soil!

That word sovereign and acknowledgment of our sovereignty was said only six years after a fellow named Batman stood here, and not too far after the initial invasion up at Gadigal country. They knew it back then, and I really believe they know it today.

In 1872 the Pacific Islander Act [transcriber note: Pacific Islanders Protection Act 1872] actually mentioned that they [INAUDIBLE] have dominion or sovereignty over the indigenous land. To my knowledge that has never been changed. So if all imposed illegal [INAUDIBLE] Aboriginal people on these lands.

[INAUDIBLE] 200 years to [INAUDIBLE] look at all the social problems that we still suffer today. We are not born bad, we are not born to break the rules or the laws, we are not born to have all those issues. It must be something else, it’s these imposed structures that they refused to bend or break to give us equal opportunity.

They brought in a colony here, they took out the environment, they did not allow us to be part of it and that is why we still suffer today. So, to the Mob out there, keep fighting for self determination!

Just a couple of little bits of brief history of the local area. The Mindye plague, smallpox, nearly took us all out. That was before Batman got here.

Winberry the Taungurung warrior. Jaga Jaga the Wurundjeri lawman, continued to fight for their sovereign rights based on their law of the land.

People up Derrimut and Billibellary, through very wise decisions kept our people alive at the most difficult time in 1835. Billibelary's son, Simon Wonga, our first Land Rights advocate who set up Coranderrk and a lot of you Mob have connections to that very special place. Does have mixed feelings though, but it was a place that kept our families alive.

William Barak the most famous Wurundjeri elder of the past, his face is on a big building up the end of Swanson Street, our first human rights advocate.

He walked to this place a dozen times from Healesville which is about 70km away. Not because he wanted to walk, but we could not earn wages, we had no rights, but we came here with the men of Coranderrk to fight for rights.

In some ways, we still feel like we’re fighting for similar things over 130 years later. Come on Australia, wake up, can you listen to us? Listen to the same language, not hear. Hear, is just [INAUDIBLE] stuff. We want you to listen to our voice and that is why I believe we are here today with so much support, wanting our voice to be heard, and listened to, and respected.

The post-mission hero here in Victoria anyway. And New South, up in Gadigal Country. Uncle Jack Patten and Uncle William Ferguson and Victorian leader, Uncle William Cooper and others.

From 1938, the day of mourning, could not celebrate this. You know if you, one of these people that Australia likes you to be, ignorant, which I don’t think anyone here is or you would not be here.

You wouldn’t know that we've not only just been protesting this for the last couple of years, it’s been over 80 years. It is one of the first social, I think it is the first social protest in the world, was the day of mourning in 1938.

Again, can this country listen to us and hear what we are trying to say? We are not a dividing force of this land, we are trying to unite. [INAUDIBLE] is unity, bringing people together. Celebrating this day on January 26th, so-called Australia unity? It is a division from my perspective, if we can celebrate all together that is unity but we just cannot do it, we cannot do it on this day. Many Aboriginal people feel like that.

I would like to thank everyone for their support. My job at Wurundjeri is to educate this city. There’s not many of us. For the ones that do have Aboriginal education, all strength to you, all ancestral spirit to you.

It is not easy, we're up against the world of ignorance but we are here as our spokesperson of our elder's past and are all about our ancestor's past.

The culture that we are connected to was one of the most amazing you could come across. The caring of country, everyone had a place, everyone had a role.

Leadership was earned not dictated by. That is something I would like the Aboriginal community to consider. Can we go back in some form or another of cultural structure? Because this fulla building back here and the people in it also want us to go onto their structure and it divides us and brings us apart.

I talked to some of their older fellas when the community felt stronger and unified. I was too young to feel that, I want to feel it one day. So it is a challenge for the community, let us try and unify under our cultural way. We didn’t just survive here, we thrived here under that law or under that way, a challenge for our community.

Now I was asked to do, welcome to country. I just do not feel right welcoming people to the country. I think the country and the people of the country are feeling pained today, feeling sorrow today.

You know some of our special animals are dulai wurrung, proud lips, the platypus, Gurrborra, the koala. They are signs, they are disappearing. What are we gonna do about it? And there are already been animals that have disappeared off land and planet. Well, that is not part of lore, that’s against Wurundjeri and Aboriginal lore.

So, I would like to say to youse all. I would like to welcome you to this healing ceremony, we all need to heal, we all need to unite. The smoke that you see around us is about cleansing of spirit, we are a very spiritual mob, both physically and spiritually responsible to this land and to one another. So, I would like to thank youse all for coming to help heal with us.

And to the Non-Indigenous people out there, bring your friends, bring your family, listen to our story. It will help you connect to this sacred land and all the different nations that have thrived on this land for thousands of years and are still strong today. Thanks, everybody.

Let my brother boy up here where I am standing [INAUDIBLE]. He just wants to have a word to youse. Well [INAUDIBLE].

**Stan Dryden:**

Thank you, brother. I want to acknowledge the beautiful elders, past and present, and also I want to acknowledge all the people that are here today. I have noticed a lot of young people here today. My daughter is here and with all her friends, they are the future leaders of this land. Thank you.

I have been to this march many times for many years and as far as I can see, the next street down there and back that way, it is just full of people, full of a lot of good spirit. So I would like to say to you all people that are here today, please let us just have 1-minute silence for our elder's past and present, for the people who have walked on this land and suffered and were killed. Can we just have one moment, one-minute silence, please?

[silence]

Thank you. For thousands of years on this land with Aboriginal law. Over 200 years ago, white law approached this land where Aboriginal people were strong with loyalty, honour, respect and when they come with the law with guns and the religions they stopped us from speaking our language and from doing our law.

I'm speaking on behalf of John Charles in the late 1800s, on his death certificate, they said he accidentally shot himself. I'm standing here today, as a man, on his behalf to say something to the people that are here today.

We must have unity, this law has been created. Divide and conquer, and it is all about fear. Fear stands for facing, then you can recover or everybody can run. I am not running anymore either are you guys, we are here together. These women walk on this land and we teach our children, not in schools but from where we are learning, so what our brother boy just spoke about today.

We got some beautiful dance and they are going to come up, share their culture and the story through this dance. We are here to respect the people of the land and with the White law that is here today. If you are in a church or at a funeral something like that. You would take your hat off in respect.

I would like to put it to the police that is here today to take your hat off and respect the land that you're standing on right now. Can you take your hats off, please?

So that your White law. Aboriginal law always was and always will be. Have a great day. Love you all. Thank you.

 **Sue-Anne:**

Big thanks to Uncle Bill and I always learn something more when he is around and you know it is beautiful. We do need to heal and where that starts is with all of us and how we work together in moving forward.

I am going to be a pain in the ass and say to you, are you implementing the COVID plan and every time I get up here I am going to reiterate it because we can get shut down in a minute we can pass COVID onto an aunty or an uncle and it just goes through our community. I do not want that, I want everybody to be safe and I want everybody to look after each other, make sure you do what is required. Make sure you got your mask, your hand sanitizers are around as well. There are medics to the right of the stage who will be wearing a green armband. So if anyone needs a medic, that is where they’ll be.

The marshals all have the red bands if you need to find a marshal. And please listen to the marshals, they are here to get you safe. There is also a petition and let me just get that.

This April is thirty years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody but there have been over 441 Black deaths in custody since then and no one is held criminally responsible.

Racism is killing our people in custody. Our elders, mothers, fathers, siblings, and children. Fifteen of the families fighting for justice have come together and today we call on everyone here to support them by signing the petition.

This is to Aunty Sherry Fisher-Tilberoo, David Dungay JNR, Aunty Tanya Day, Wayne Fella Morrison, Joyce Clarke, Cherdeena Wynne, and her father Warren Cooper, Chris Drage, Trisjack Simpson, Gareth Jackson Roe, Raymond Noel Thomas, Stanley Inman, Tane Chatfield, and Nathan Reynolds.

Families with the prime minister to meet them for the 30th anniversary. They say this change needs to be led by us. We are coming to Canberra and we want our voices heard, so join our call to be part of history. Today, at the rally, you can see people holding this sign. Scan the QR code to sign the petition.

Get out your phone right now, open your web browser, and put in natsils.org.au/blm. This is one thing you can do today to fight for the voices to be heard and to get systemic change.

Black lives matter, it is isn’t over until there is justice for every single family, until there is an end to black deaths in custody. So make sure you see this sign and sign that petition. Thank you.

We are now just going to call Mandy Nicholson up to the stage, another cousin of mine. And the Djirri Djirri dancers are going to perform their welcome dance to welcome you to this country.

**Mandy Nicholson:**

**[**Mandy introduces herself in Woiwurrung language]

We got drowned this morning in that beautiful cleansing rain and Stacy is going to talk about the dawn service that we attended early this morning, it was beautiful.

But why I am up here to do, is, we are going to do Womindjeka Ngarrga welcome dance so you might not be able to see the girls but they are going to dance in the front here.

But what I want everyone to do right now is going to get you all involved. I am going to get you to speak in some language, in the Woiwurrung language.

On all the women in the audience put your fist up and I want your biggest loudest voice and say ganbu

**Audience:**

ganbu

**Mandy:**

I want to hear you right in the back as loud as you can. ganbu

**Audience:**

ganbu

**Mandy:**

One more time.

**Audience:**

ganbu

**Mandy:**

I want all you men to put your other fist up and say ngulu

**Audience:**

ngulu

**Mandy:**

ngulu

**Audience:**

ngulu

**Mandy:**

The women were louder, come on boys.

**Audience:**

ngulu

**Mandy:**

That's what I wanted to hear. Now, what I want you all to do is put both your fist up and the women and men together say ganbu ngulu

**Audience:**

ganbu ngulu

**Mandy:**

And I want you to say that five times louder every time. ganbu ngulu

**Audience:**

ganbu ngulu

**Mandy:**

One more time as loud as you can do.

**Audience:**

ganbu ngulu

**Mandy:**

ganbu ngulu, what you just said was one voice. We are one voice. All together. So we are gonna do our womindjeka ngarrga, honour this country that we’re on, honour our ancestors, honour strong women, we are a womens group but we also honour the men as well. This is our womindjeka ngarrga our welcome dance.

[MANDY AND WOMEN SING IN WOIWURRUNG LANGUAGE AND PERFORM WELCOME DANCE]

We welcome all of you djirraps your friends, you’re our friends, and now on to Stacey.

**Stacey:**

So this morning at 5:00 am at King's Domain we held a dawn service. It was the 3rd dawn service that we have held. The first one was in 2019, we streamed online for the first time so we had people tuning in from around the world. We had people from India, from Germany, we had people just from countries around the planet and Australia and it is really profound to think about that. It is like our voices are getting out there.

We recited some massacres, some brutal murders. There were 56 of them and these are all referenced thoroughly but they are only the tip of the iceberg, there are so many more. I hope that you can check it out on the Vic NAIDOC Facebook page. It was a very moving and respectful way to start this day of mourning.

Our old people and ancestors have been calling for this day of mourning for over 83 years, way before so-called Australia day. I think that is all I want to say at the moment about it, if you could check it out that would be great. Each massacre that was read out is directly links to every single Aboriginal person that you know that comes from Victoria. So just think about that, every single Aboriginal person you see here has survived these brutal murders.

We are survivors. So on that night, we sang a chant this morning to send these ancestral spirits off to Tharangalk which is Bunjil’s home above the clouds. We want to share that with you today and for audience participation, we just ask that you tap your heart along to the beat, the clap sticks, and we will sing the chant.

**Mandy:**

So the words to this chant are "farewell dear spirit you watch us from Tharangalk heaven, from above the clouds. We will see you tomorrow when our souls reunite." This is a mourning song, that is why we got the white ochre on our foreheads.

[MANDY SINGS WORDS IN WOIWURRUNG LANGUAGE, ACCOMPANIED BY CLAP STICKS]

Thank you ngun godjin

**Sue-Anne:**

Big thanks to the Djirri Djirri for welcoming us to the country. The next speaker is not new to anybody; it is the Black senator bringing the Black truth, Lidia Thorpe.

 **Lidia Thorpe:**

Wow. First, I will pay my respects to the Wurundjeri people and thank them for sharing their country with us. I thank them for their resistance, for almost 250 years of oppression, genocide, dispossession, and absolute denial of their existence, denial of their rights. The destruction of their country, the destruction of their water and they still call for peace and unity.

Today is Invasion day. On the 26th of January, whatever month, whatever time, a war was declared on the first people of this land. That war has not ended, that war has been going on for almost 250 years.

Yes, we still have guns pointed to our heads, we still have a boot on our necks, our babies still being stolen, our babies still being incarcerated and thrown in prisons. Ten-year-old babies are being locked up in this country. Is that something to celebrate?

**Audience:**

No.

**Lidia Thorpe:**

Well, why are people having barbecues, and beers, and shrimps on their barbie and celebrating the death and destruction of these people. First people, the oldest continuing living culture, in the world!

We can’t rely on the so-called leadership in this country. I see that racism when I am in that place. It’s real, it’s like America, there is a far-right rot in this country's parliament.

They are stoking the fire of the far-right racism in this country. That is the other pandemic, the slimy secret pandemic of racism in this country that we need to eradicate because it is killing us.

I still have my granddaughters and my daughter fighting for their rights. When is this going to end? It has almost been 250 years. We are sick of protesting, we are sick.

We need this day as our day of mourning because that is what is going to bring this country together is truth. Real leadership in this country will bring this country together and not one government yet has been able to do that. It is ups to us, the people.

We need a treaty in this country. We need an end to the war in this country and the only way we can do that is through a peace treaty. Not the one you see in Victoria, not the one you see in Queensland, not the one you see in the Northern Territory; because they talk treaty and still lock our people up, they still kill our people, they still desecrate our land and our water. A treaty means peace, a treaty means equality and a treaty means justice. Thank you.

**Sue-Anne:**

No one can tell the truth more than Lidia has, so give her a round of applause again.

We have been told once again some people aren’t wearing a masks. If you can wear a mask, make sure you have it on. Groups of hundreds follow the marshal's instructions because we do not want to stop in the middle of these and have to regroup again because of people not following the COVID plans.

The next person does not need a huge introduction, I am fangirling right now but I want to welcome you to the stage as you all will warmly, Uncle Gary Foley.

**Gary Foley:**

Greetings. I am a bit blown away but by all you mob here. It was 51 years ago today, I am sure you all remember. Fifty-one years ago today, I went to one of my earliest rallies like this, calling for justice and truth. Fifty-one years, some of us have been doing this every year calling for a brighter, awareness and understanding of Australian history. That is what this day really is all about.

This is a day that Australia chose to celebrate, an unfortunate date to choose as the reason we are all here but a lot has been said in recent times in the last year or two especially with the rebirth, if you are like of the black lives matter movement internationally.

I would like to remind you that 50 years ago there were very similar conditions to what we see today, historically. Fifty years ago there was a major international movement against racism.

The primary issue then had to do with apartheid South Africa but groups all around the world, such as us, took advantage of the fact that large numbers of Non-Aboriginal Australians suddenly appeared in the streets in 1971 demonstrating against apartheid.

Some of us challenged the anti-apartheid activism. And said, "Okay, you are demonstrating against racism. Fine.", but what about the racism here in your backyard? What about here where you may have to face up to the reality? But you are part of the problem perhaps.

Nineteen seventy-one, the anti-apartheid movement took up the challenge that we threw out to them and they started joining us in our big lands rights march in 1971.

It was the size of those rallies that made the government in Canberra nervous and laid directly into the legendary Aboriginal Embassy demonstration of that period.

Now, one of the issues, one of the major issues in 1971 that we were able to illustrate to the world about the similarities of the situation here where the number of Aboriginal people incarcerated, the numbers of Aboriginal people who were dying in custody 50 years ago.

Nothing has changed folks. Nothing has changed. What has changed, I might say, standing here looking at all you mob, is that large numbers of ordinary Australians are out here with us and supporting us in the same way as they did in 1971. That led to a significant change in Australia. The Aboriginal Embassy changed the course of Australian history. We are, again, in an epoch in a moment around history where we have the same chance again. The Black Lives Matter movement is not going away here or overseas.

In the same way overseas, the Black Lives Matter movement led to the challenging of colonial statues, and recognition of colonial-era sort of things. The same happened here in 1970 in Captain Cook's cottage, which is not Captain Cook's cottage, down here in the gardens got graffiti by Aboriginal people calling for justice. Here we are fifty years later, still calling for justice. We still do not have justice but we got a better opportunity now, at this moment in history to really affect and bring about change. The huge march that we see here are the sort of things that are going to move people who infest these gasworks up here and the gasworks in Canberra. Politicians take notice when large numbers of people make their opinions known.

So just one other aspect of history for you that you may not know, the very first national campaign against police brutality to Aboriginal people in Australia occurred in 1934, that is a long time ago, folks. The same problems, the same issues are here today. The greatest indication of our status in Australian society is the incarceration rights of our people. Aboriginal people are more jailed than any other people on earth. We must take the opportunity that the international global movement against racism and colonial things, we have to take advantage of these times.

I am not going to be here next year, maybe, or the year after. But it gives me hope to see the numbers of people that turn out to these Invasion Day demonstrations in Melbourne. It gives old blokes like me a little bit of heart and we know it gives me the understanding that we will win, folks, we will succeed.

What more can I say, folks? Maintain your rage, maintain the fight, and as I said a couple of years ago here, a word of advice from an old codger, rule number one, all politicians, except Lidia Thorpe, all politicians are lying bastards, except Lidia Thorpe. I am incredibly proud of my sister, Lidia. I have known her since she was a baby. She gives me heart and she is the exception to the rule that all politicians are bastards. Thank you.

**Safety Marshal Meriki Onus:**

Hello, it is me again, the COVID safety Marshal. We are doing really well but I just want to let people know that we are going to be funneling the crowd along Bourke Street. If you can, can you stick to the tram tracks and not move away from the crowd so we can stay contained. I dom’t like this either, but there was no way in hell that we were not going to protest today. Thank you.

 **Sue-Anne:**

Thanks, everyone. We have got one more speaker coming up, Arika Waulu, we call you to the stage. Thank you.

 **3CR Radio Announcer:**

This is your live Invasion Day broadcast crossing over to Melbourne.

**Arika Waulu:**

Ngata, ngathoo-ngat Arika Waulu. I do not know if you can sign that, but that is hello, my name is Arika Waulu. It is just overwhelming to get up here and to see so many people standing here for the last fifteen years of organizing. Yes, it has just grown from just a couple of people on these steps to what looks like thousands and thousands of people. Thank you.

[ARIKA SPEAKS IN THEIR LANGUAGE]

Hello, I am Arika Waulu. I am a sovereign Dhauwurd Wurrung, Djap Wurrung, Peek Wurrung, Keeray Wurrung language group holder. I am of the Emu Ren dreaming and the Pelican dreaming. I represent thousands of generations of sovereign mothering and I gather here today for the rights of my child and all sovereign children.

I am not going to speak very long. But I do have a special message. So all my life, I have stood on these steps for as long as I can remember with the privilege of standing to listen to Uncle Gary, who just spoke before me, and stood with my community and we have been calling out for land rights. That is my earliest memories of standing here with my people. We ended up with a native title somewhere along the line. This gave us less-

[interrupted by loud sound of aircraft flying over]

Is that the Roulettes?

This gave us less than squatters rights. So do not be fooled by a native title. We also tangoed with the government, within government strings. As treaty conversations trick us, as, my sister, Lidia, mentioned before, it is trickery. This sovereignty has not been implemented in the conversation neither has truth-telling. Still, our health declines and we bury more of our youth than any other community in the world. I am here as living proof and a result of the bloody wars. I am here for the remedy of invasion. I am here to get my land back!

The reason we have had a bloody war is for land and power. This would allow others to be a part of the growing movement so that we can all thrive together. So that our peoples can thrive on our long-awaited lands and waters, they call home.

Yes, I wanted to read out something but I think there have been enough history lessons today. I think I wanted to thank the Woiwurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Boon Wurrung and Wadawurrung language holders for holding space and keeping the resistance strong. I wanted to thank the Djirri Djirri’s for cleansing the space for us to move forward, and Bill for giving that history lesson that we all need. Yes, thank you very much. Yeah, land back.

**Sue-Anne:**

Thank you. I think I already touched on something then about our kids and Lidia mentioned it as well to have you know we have got the highest rates ever today. Over twenty thousand Aboriginal children, not living at home with their parents. It is not good enough and we all need to do something about it, it is all our responsibility. We have got someone else coming up next, but first of all, you all seems a bit mellow at the moment. So always was...

**Audience:**

Always will be.

**Sue-Anne:**

Oh, do you want the microphone? So you can start this time.

**Audience:**

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

**Sue-Anne:**

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land. I can’t hear you!

**Audience:**

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land! [REPEATING SEVERAL TIMES]

**Sue-Anne:**

Abolish Australia Day!

**Audience:**

Abolish Australia Day!

[SUE-ANNE AND AUDIENCE REPEAT CHANT, CALL AND RESPONSE]

**Sue-Anne:**

Always was, always will!

**Audience:**

Aboriginal land!

[SUE-ANNE AND AUDIENCE REPEAT CHANT, CALL AND RESPONSE]

**Sue-Anne:**

Thank you to the marshals and everyone. We're going to have a speaker now. Thank you to everybody who has followed all the marshal's instructions. If you were up here, you could see all the sea people all the way down there, you are amazing. We got this. Always was...

**Audience:**

Always will be.

**Sue-Anne:**

Aboriginal land. Always was, always will be.

**Audience:**

Aboriginal land.

**Sue-Anne:**

I cannot hear you!

**Audience:**

Always was. Always will be Aboriginal land!

[CHEERING]

**Sue-Anne:**

Okay. We are going to call Tish King to the stage who has got a few words to say.

**Tish King:**

Wow, amazing. Amazing to see so many faces in the streets. Thank you.

[TISH SPEAKS IN THEIR LANGUAGE]

Translation. Firstly, I would like to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for his blessings upon us. Good morning, good afternoon to all the families and the people of this land, which I am among. My name is Tish, and I proudly stand here with my sister, and doggo, Boo-Boo. I am a Kulkalgal woman from the islands of Masig, Kulkalgal tribe of [INAUDIBLE], the islands of the Torres Strait. I pay my respects to your elders and spirits past, present, and emerging. I acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and that we live on stolen land. I would like to acknowledge people of colour, people who are indigenous to their country, and to all the people who fight day in and day out to survive the continuing injustices from white supremacy.

I am a community organizer at SEED Mob, I proudly stand here today in the streets of Naarm in solidarity with First Nations Peoples across so-called Australia, continuing to fight for justice, for indigenous rights, and the continuing fight for sovereignty to protect our people and our sacred lands. For thousands of years, First Nations People have lived in harmony with our lands, rivers, and oceans. That is, and today is a constant reminder that in 1788, our ability to care for country freely ended. Our self-determination was severed, and our voices silenced.

Each year, on this day, I find myself mentally and emotionally taxed because we all really know what this day was back in 1788. It was an act of terror and war. Today is a day of mourning, just like our aunties and uncles have said today before us. It is a reminder of trauma that our brothers and sisters in custody, they still are dying, that our children are taken from their families and communities and that our country, our songlines, and our sacred sites continue to be raped and destroyed by private corporations like Santos and Origin Energy, Rio Tinto and the new named Bravo.

Today is not just a reminder of our trauma because everyday black fellas continue to survive colonialism. It is our inherent responsibility to continue our old people's fights for survival, our fight to exist. But this is not a new phenomenon for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people because when emergencies are happening in our communities, whether it is genocide, military interventions, or environmental disasters, First Nations People, the voices of people who are the most impacted, have always gone missing, unheard, dismissed, or ignored by the dominant cultures or decision-makers.

If there is not one, it serves only as a token of apology, or like posting a fucking black square on your social media. For them, our cultural knowledge and wisdom were not scientific enough to solve environmental solutions. For them, our communities are not sophisticated enough to organize. But enough is enough. As First Nations People, our strength, our resiliency, and our cultural responsibility to care for country and for one another drive us forward each day to keep fighting. Because if we don’t, the Morrison government will continue to give millions of dollars to allow modern corporations like Rio Tinto to destroy our sacred sites, or Santos and Origin to frack our country.

The climate crisis is an issue of social and environmental justice. Too often, those who have done the least to cause the problem are hit first and worst. The root causes of climate change are colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy, racism, and patriarchy. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at the forefront of climate impacts and fossil fuels extraction. But we can also be at the forefront of change, leading the movement for climate justice.

Now, I recently just returned back from the [INAUDIBLE] the Torres Straits where after twenty-two years of being disconnected from my country, my island home, I returned to Masig. Being there, I felt so connected, just touching the ground between my toes with a coral, the ocean felt like silk on my skin. Being among family and being able to hunt all together as one reminded me of why I fight, why I would be here to stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters.

The people of the Torres Strait do not contribute to Australia's carbon footprint, yet are the most disproportionately affected from the causes and impacts of climate change. I saw the erosion, the impact of sea levels rising. I saw how global warming has exacerbated weather events like monsoons and king tides, washing away our totems, our ancestors. I picked up my ancestors' bones, the fishes are leaving our coral reefs. My people can’t hunt. My people are being disconnected. Our dugongs have left us, our seagrasses are dying, our food security hangs in the balance. These feelings of both love and absence with the natural world are essential to understanding why we must protect it. They are essential not just for First Nations survival, but for our collective futures.

So I end with this, we can’t do it alone. Effective policy and systemic changes is required. First Nations People must have a seat at the table, it must reclaim space, it must be deliberative, and culturally safe. Our involvement must be sincere. In order to achieve real First Nations justice, we must be able to lead. This extends to respecting our sacred sites and enshrining more First Nations voices to Parliament. Standing next to our deadly auntie, Lidia Thorpe. It means reconciliation and it means treaty. It means abolish Australia Day. Thank you.

**Sue-Anne:**

This April is thirty years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody but there have been over 441 black deaths in custody since then and no one has been held criminally responsible.

Racism is killing our people in custody. Our elders, mothers, fathers, siblings, and children. Fifteen of their families fighting for justice have come together and today we call on everyone here to support them by signing their petition.

Ms. Dhu, Aunty Sherry Fisher-Tilberoo, David Dungay JNR, Aunty Tanya Day, Wayne Fella Morrison, Joyce Clarke, Cherdeena Wynne, and her father Warren Cooper, Chris Drage, Trisjack Simpson, Gareth Jackson Roe, Raymond Noel Thomas, Stanley Inman, Tane Chatfield, and Nathan Reynolds.

The families with the prime minister to meet them for the 30th anniversary. They say this change needs to be led by us. We are coming to Canberra and we want our voices heard, join our call to be part of history. So, at the rally today, you will see people holding this sign. Scan the QR code to sign the petition.

Get out your phone right now, open your web browser, and put in NATSILS, N-A-T-S-I-L-S, .org.au/blm. This is one thing you can do today to fight for the voices to be heard and to get systemic change.

Black Lives Matter isn’t over until there is justice for every single family, until there is an end to black deaths in custody. Thank you. **3CR Announcer:**

You are listening to 3CR's live Invasion Day broadcast here. We are waiting for speakers from the Melbourne rally. Please stand by.

**Safety Marshal Meriki Onus:**

I want to give everyone an update from Sydney. I think it is really important for us to show solidarity with our family across the country and I had seen this come out. We have been threatened by the police by police intimidation, saying they will smash us if we take to the streets. Instead of allowing them to incite a riot, we have advised everyone to disperse and stay safe. So I am very sad just to share that news. So we need to send a big cheer to everyone on Gadigal land. One, two, three.

**Audience:**

[CHEERING]

**Safety Marshal Meriki Onus:**

I just want to introduce to the stage Professor Uncle Gary Foley. He did do a speech at the start of the march but I do not think everyone got to hear because of the COVID restrictions. So here is again. Everyone, give him a round of applause.

**Gary Foley:**

Hello. Nothing more deadly than a good PA face. Greetings to all you people who are out there, where have you been? I hope you can hear me. Yay. It is great to see yet another brilliant turnout in Melbourne, in support of our struggle for justice. Give yourselves a big cheer, folks.

In 1988, on this day in Sydney, in response to the Bicentennial, the great masturbation of the nation. The biggest gathering of Aboriginal people in the 80,000 or more year history of this country, gathered in Sydney, in a big peaceful march to show Australia that we reject Australia Day as a commemoration and as a celebration.

For those of you who weren’t there on the 26th of January 1988, and I expect some of you weren’t. You can see tomorrow night, if you are here, on the big screen over here in Fed Square, the film called Australia Daze, D-A-Z-E, which is Pat Fiske's film about that day in Sydney. You can see for yourself on the big screen here the remastered version of that film that shows just how huge the response was in Sydney, in opposition to, not only Australia Day that year, but to the great masturbation of the nation, which was the Bicentennial celebrations in Sydney.

So at six o'clock tomorrow night, folks, on the big screen over here if you are in town, come and see the film for nothing. You can see a bit of your own history, everybody in this crowd's own history. That, as I said, was the biggest assembly of Aboriginal people from all over Australia that has ever gathered in this land. So, go on and teach yourself a bit of history, folks. It is important that everyone here on a day like this understand the context of the history of which you are part. What is happening here today will be history tomorrow, your children will learn about this when they go to school, and they will be able to tell their classmates, I was there, I might have been little, I might have been only a little kid, but I was there, and they are going to be able to say that with pride.

The only other thing I want to say, I mentioned at the beginning of the march, the context that brought about significant Australian history change in the early 1970s. As I said there was a global movement going on then, the issue was racism, the issue is racism in South Africa. But people like us here in Australia we’re able to latch onto that issue and point out to Australians that we had the same problems here. So here we are fifty years down the track, it is exactly the same thing. But the planets are aligning, the international Black Lives Matter movement, and the movement against colonial monuments. We have those issues here that we need to take advantage of the international focus to draw attention to the similarities here and advance our struggle in the same way that we did back in the early 1970s. We achieved.

I have said before that the average Aboriginal Embassy in 1972 changed the course of Australian history. With the current global climate, political climate, and the current issues continuing in Australia especially in terms of incarceration of Aboriginal people in the jails of this country, incarceration of children, the continuing issue of deaths in custody, all of these issues that we need to draw your attention to the Australian people. What we see, what I am seeing here in front of me as I look up Swanston Street, and if you see the film tomorrow night, you will see that I said pretty much the same thing in 1988. What I see looking out here are the possibilities of what we can achieve. We need to stay strong, united, continue this struggle, continue drawing attention to the issues that confront us in Australia until such day as we have justice.

In closing, again, as I look up Swanston Street and look out on all you wonderful people out there, I got to say yet again how proud I am of the warriors of the Aboriginal resistance, the organizers of this rally here today. Give them a big cheer, folks.

And now that it started raining, I am going to get off the stage. Thank you, folks, and thank you for coming today.

**Sue-Anne:**

Once again, thank you. Uncle Gary Foley. We have Celeste Liddle, who is coming up now and has a few words to say I think, just a few.

**Celeste Liddle:**

I do not have many words to say. This is the second Invasion Day where I have tried to follow Gary Foley on the stage. I tell you what, that is intimidating. I was not at the Sydney 1988 rally, but I was at the Canberra one, and I remember a chant from that, that I am going to revisit now, which was Land Rights Now, Bicentennial bullshit. Tell you what, there is what, twenty-three years since and they are still talking bullshit, thirty-three.

Anyway, I am an Arrernte woman from Central Australia. I wanted to acknowledge the lands which we are on today, the Wurundjeri people, the Bunurong people, the broader Kulin nations for allowing me to live on these lands. I have lost count of how many Invasion Day rallies that I have been to. It is a bit of a tradition for me to actually try and guess the crowd. Last year, and now, before the rally, I put out to the media that there were two hundred thousand, and some of them ran with it. So let's go with five hundred thousand here this year.

I am really, really proud to see the efforts that everyone has gone to, to socially distance, to ensure the community is safe, that whilst we are here marching for justice, marching for land rights, that we are also keeping each other safe, and trying to ensure the health of the next generation. Invasion Day for me is a bit of a time always to reflect on community and those that are here with us today, but also those that are no longer with us.

One of my heroes, when I was at uni, I met this woman called Lisa Bellear. I could tell from the crowd that she has inspired a lot of other people and she died far too young. Far, far too young. But if she were here, she would be running around taking photos of you all. She would be in the crowd, she would be getting photos, and then she would give them back to you. So this woman, who was one of the most amazing community activists that I have ever met, save for the organizers of this rally, is still inspiring so many people today.

So rather than actually talk much because you have all heard my talks for years, you have seen my articles, you have had to read a lot of stuff. I wanted to read out a short poem by Lisa Bellear. It was written in the year 2000. I am probably going to get the candour wrong a bit and everything, but I will give it a go. It is called Conversations, aka Unfinished Business.

"Conversations through the phone raise issues that still impact Indigenous Australians. There is also a message of hope, imagination, creativity, art, dance, music, and inventive conversations. Positive expressions of Indigenous survival. Mr. Prime Minister, the Mayor, young folk, warriors without treaties, the wider community. The message is always, even though we smile, land rights, sovereignty, no more crap, ignorance and unabated racism."

Thank you.

**Lidia Thorpe:**

One more before we go. It is time this nation tells the truth, it is not a lie anymore. The secret is out. We are on stolen land. We made a treaty in this country to resolve the war that was declared on our people almost 250 years ago. If you want to be part of a treaty, then you need to show up, you need to sign up, and you need to help unite this nation and get rid of the racists like we just saw earlier. Rid the racism, it is time for the treaty. No more bullshit, invalid justice. No more change the date. No more Uluru statement. No more constitutional recognition. No more Survival Day. This is Invasion Day. This is our day of mourning and we need a treaty! It will not be the last time you hear from me because when I am in Canberra next week, they will hear exactly the same thing that I am saying to you now.

[END]