
Post-Normal Reconciliation – Using Science to reframe the Reconciliation Agenda

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I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we are meeting tonight, and personally wish to thank them for their kindness and hospitality toward me during my time here in Canberra. They have been part of our Torres Strait Islander community celebrations; our parties and I have spent many a time thinking about how much I have learned from each and every one of you. I pay my respects to you, yours and my Elders and to those who have come before us. I wish to thank you Matilda House for your generous welcome to country and acknowledge my family and friends. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Professor Lawrence Cram, Acting Vice-Chancellor, ANU, Professor Michael Dodson, Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies and Chairman of Reconciliation Australia for the introduction, Directors and staff of Reconciliation Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive and to you the audience for being here, and allowing me the great honour and privilege of addressing you this evening about an issue close to all our hearts, reconciliation in Australia.

If I could first in the spirit of reconciliation, dedicate this oration to some of the very special non-Indigenous people in the audience who have helped me both personally and professionally and for whom I have the upmost respect for their sense of community and inspirational teaching. Firstly to Sonya Kerwick, a wonderful woman who shares the lives of my dogs and makes it easy for me to be out in the world. To Mary and Phil, salt of the Earth people who have only shown me the practical kindness as those who have grown up with a love of productive country and personal resourcefulness can; to the teachers at the Fenner School and those participants of the Human Ecology forum here at the ANU who introduced me to science in a way that made permissible my worldview in the Academy; and to my dear friend Emeritus Professor Valerie Brown. My life is richer for knowing you all.

The ideas I want to express in this oration are provocative, and I take my role as a provocateur very seriously. Before I get to the body of my speech, I just want to outline for you where the journey is going to take us tonight. I will tell you how I came to appreciate and use the sciences, in particularly those in the ecological tradition and a form of science that includes aspects of uncertainty in the framing of complex issues referred to as post normal science methodology. Until recently, I was accepting of our current Australian based reconciliation activities – what I refer to in this speech as 'normal reconciliation' - but I will describe some of the regional uncertainties made me decide that we need to look beyond normal reconciliation. I refer to this new body of work, which is attentive to the lessons from sciences of many cultures - 'post normal' reconciliation; an extension, or a 'beyond' what we are currently doing, not because it is interesting, but because we must. I will then touch on what Earth system, environmental and quantum sciences have to offer this agenda, and show where there are synergies with the sciences of Indigenous peoples from three continents across the world.

Now I have about half an hour to do this so if you could please appreciate that this is an abbreviated version of a body of work that will probably interest me for the rest of my life. Even as I set out a new way of viewing reconciliation, I concede it is beyond me to also provide the strategies needed to get there, or how this new agenda is to be enacted in this lecture. I firmly believe that provocation is only one side of the conversation; people need to be able to respond.

Responses happen after an act of listening. So, in order to better respond to the ideas presented here tonight, I ask you to please to listen with an open, relaxed mind. Tonight, it is your imagination that I am speaking to and in order to evoke your imagination it is imperative that we suspend ourselves from the normal encumbrances that we use to anchor ourselves into our everyday comfort, into relationships, into identity, into society. It is your inner self that I seek to engage in this conversation.

For it was my inner self that was stirred through engaging with science. Whilst I maintain a respect for the contributions of traditional Western science, I became keenly attuned to the work of Earth system, environmental and ecological scientists who have tested new waters and are often only tentatively accepted by the established scientific community. Some of these scientists are themselves concerned with challenging the assumptions that have underpinned traditional scientific views. Others are finding increasing unison with the voices of Indigenous peoples and ecological philosophers highlighting that achievements in science, technology, industry, commerce and finance have brought humans into a new age at the expense of much of the diversity of life and the life-enhancing processes of the Earth. From within these sciences, we find ways to be concerned with and celebrate the importance the integrity and the mystery of diversity of life, in all its forms, in the entire world. The diversity in the arctic and tropical regions, its oceans and continents, in its mountains and valleys, its forests and deserts, its rivers and their floodplains all give Earth its endless wonder and its functional integrity. Drawing on these sciences we might say that the planet is a singular reality composed of diversity beyond all our understanding and description. We can also say that people like us invested in western liberal societies are prepared to forsake it and in fact have to levels that are unacceptable and have caused devastation not only to the diversity of the planet, but the diversities of First Peoples.

How I came to be engaged with science is this - After two decades of working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, I gained a position which provided stewardship for the largest collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artifacts, language recordings and documents in the southern hemisphere at AIATSIS. Working in this position I became saddened by the disappearance of cultural and linguistic knowledge and biological diversity in Australia. This loss has been precipitated by the comparatively recent colonization of Australia's First Peoples and land. There were prior to colonization over 300 languages in existence. It has been stated by leading ecologists that linguistic diversity corresponds to a living diversity of cultures and ecosystems. This said, we can deduce that there were over 300 ecosystems in Australia, and the knowledge and languages that maintained those ecosystems in a state of equilibrium for over 50 000 years, held by the First Peoples, have been erased through modern Australian knowledge and political systems. This was a powerful awakening for me, one that I could not ignore, even if I tried.

I started looking for questions and answers to find ways in which to communicate our Indigenous peoples' role in caring for the diversity of the planet and how this worldview

had been reduced to a collection in AIATSIS. I thought about the interaction of Indigenous peoples across the world at war not with humans per se, but human thoughts and actions that reduce the planet to a place subject to human control. I started to seek the questions and answers that could make this conversation possible. Interestingly I did not find them in the Humanities – humanist scholars tell us this school of thought provides for the expansion of humans' quality of life. Yet this centering of value is so extensively human it distorts the place and role of humans in eco systems. There are very few places in the academy where I could openly discuss the relationship between human and other species health and well-being AND promote that human health is dependent on healthy functioning ecosystems and all the life those systems contain. I found the questions and answers I required in human ecology, a science that ties humans to nature in ways that promote a reciprocal relationship – we are touched by what we touch. We are shaped by what we shape. We are enhanced by what we enhance. This is the basis of Indigenous peoples' sciences, and evident in Earth system, environmental and ecological science.

All of these sciences combined have given me an appreciation of the physical processes at work in the Universe as never before, and they have also given me a profound critique of the devastation wreaked by human beings, particularly those of us who live in industrialized nations around the world. I have reviewed literature that describes the entire Universe as an interdependent system. Earth system scientists and physicists working on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Geosphere-Biosphere Program along with Peoples' movements are promoting the transition from the scientific technological phase into the ecological phase of the human-Earth relationship. And, being true to my custodian of country heritage, I am compelled to go with them. They have provided enough evidence – we have to be terrified by what we have done, but not without hope.

At the commencement of the 21st century, I am mindful of the fact that we are looking to secure our First Peoples' economic, environmental, social and cultural futures in an unprecedented period of change in the world. We are losing bio-diversity and have damaged our waterways. A great number of species are facing extinction. The holders of the oldest ecological knowledge in the world are being forced to participate in education, political and modern systems that have little regard for that knowledge, and almost always no regard for their country. When we lift our gaze beyond this shore, we see that we have the largest number of adolescents in the history of our species, many of whom are living in poverty. India and China are becoming the most powerful technologically advanced countries in the world. Globalised, multinational companies have larger budgets than some countries. Our country is at war, our region in conflict. That we are in the midst of a crisis is now well understood. Not only does the reconciliation agenda have to do with Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people, but with people and the country that supports us. Reconciliation should also concern Australia's place in the Asia Pacific region, so profoundly are our futures entwined.

I think we all know, that in order to truly reconcile, we need to take stock of where we are, who we are and where we want to be in 100 years time. We need to start with the story of Australia how it and its people came to be, we need to reconcile our hopes for the future within this country and with others in the Asia Pacific region. We need a long term and inclusive view, we then need to purposefully craft a new story around that view and use that story to build new ways of living, new ways of being, and new ways of having relationships. It is an extension of the reconciliation agenda we have in Australia, a view 'beyond' where we are now. The realization of this story, and our collective commitment to achieving the aspirations

inherent in this story, is the vision for my post-normal reconciliation agenda. A post-normal reconciliation agenda is only possible because of our efforts to achieve reconciliation to date. It is our thinking and imagination that makes such reconciliation possible. The realization of reconciliation was an idea, a concept a few years ago. And we have nurtured it along to what it is today. Ideas are at the heart of this realisation.

Let me speak of what normal reconciliation is. Reconciliation as a term, as a legacy, as an experience, is largely dependent on acts of forgiveness. Who can forget the truth and reconciliation councils in South Africa? Who can forget the Bringing them Home Report that captured the stories of separation and pain, of resilience and of apology? Reconciliation as a term is transformative, oft used as a tool of negotiation and peace making. It is different to other negotiation or peace making strategies due to the fact that the essence of reconciliation is the voluntary initiative of the conflict parties to acknowledge their responsibility and guilt. The interactions that transpire between the parties are not only meant to communicate one's grievances against the actions of the adversary, but also to engage in self-reflection about one's own role and behaviour in the dynamic of the conflict. The aim of such interaction is that, in the final analysis, each of the parties acknowledges and accepts his or her responsibility and out of such recognition seeks ways to redress the injury inflicted, to refrain from further damage, and to construct new positive, relationships.

In Australia, normal reconciliation seeks to improve the 'lot' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is stated as the country's unfinished business. Reconciliation as a practice has been rightfully constructed as a social norm – to recognize and give value to First Peoples, to understand the meaning of our cultures and to foster stronger relationships between mainstream and Indigenous Australia. These are important goals and have become important to a great many number of people. Reconciliation Action Plans, the Sea of Hands initiatives, the Sorry Books, the Bridge Walk, Journey of Healing groups, and Reconciliation Week are heart felt activities that have garnered support for reducing the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and works toward building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and other Australians. These relationships allow us to work together and generate success that is in everyone's best interests.

Achieving reconciliation in Australia has involved raising the awareness of and knowledge about Indigenous history and culture; changing attitudes that are often based on myths and misunderstandings, and encouraging action where everyone plays their part in building a better relationship between us as fellow Australians. Reconciliation Australia's ambition is to eliminate the glaring gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and other Australian children. The organization states that the life of an Indigenous child is likely to end significantly earlier than a non-Indigenous child's. The Board has stated that this is not acceptable in an affluent country like ours. And I agree.

Now, whilst these 'normal' reconciliation activities are critical, the spaces in which reconciliation occurs is more often than not structured by humans, and about human concerns. 'Normal' reconciliation tends to be enacted within policy, in organizations, in gatherings of humans, outside parliaments, around meeting tables, in schoolrooms, on streets and in legislation and in protests and poems.

Rarely does reconciliation happen in natural environments that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have asserted time and again, are the mainstays of our culture. Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people have asserted that we are not separate to country, that we are imbued with it, we have responsibilities for it even when we are not born on country, it is our homeland, our heart land; filled with songlines; alive for us in ways that are often beyond the comprehension of people who are not profoundly connected, or from country. If normal reconciliation activities were to happen in the natural environment, or a first Peoples' context; then the activities and ways of participating in reconciliation I imagine would be different. Could we have a Sea of Hands in a forest? A Reconciliation Plan in ecosystems, on country? Would we have a Bridge Walk of a million people across rivers and wetlands? Would we ask for democratic rights in the middle of a ceremony acknowledging a young person's coming of age?

No? Then what would we, together do, in the process of reconciliation in a First Peoples context?

Whilst 'normal' reconciliation aims to displace the privilege of mainstream Australia through democratic means, it is difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to engage fully in the language for and about reconciliation because it is difficult to not react or be conciliatory to the 'colonial project' in this country. I was asked during the preparation of this speech, "Kerry, how can I reconcile with them when they have all the money and all the best land and I have nothing?" Another told me that she felt hated, how can we reconcile with people who hate us. In the oft-used language of reconciliation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still need to 'close the gap', to 'overcome our disadvantage', to 'be successful' in ways that structure our entry into modern Australian society first as 'clients', then as 'independent and valued' citizens of Australia, then as 'consumers'. We are to want what everyone else wants - to take up our rightful place in a mainstream middle class and enjoy all the benefits and resources that Australia and credit card companies have to offer.

What is problematic about positioning First Peoples in this lineal trajectory toward a reconciled Australia is how we are 'viewed', and how we have adopted that 'view' of ourselves in relation to everything else. Understanding this view led to me ask questions in an effort to re-frame where we are at, and where we might go to with reconciliation in the future. Those questions were:

What would happen if we removed indigenous and non-indigenous categories, what would we be? Why are we so heavily invested in these descriptors? What would happen if we took the view that the sickness that permeates our Indigenous society is a symptom of the way life is lived in modern Australian society? Is there a relationship between these two things, modern wealth and Indigenous disadvantage? What would happen if the disconnect between modern Australian society and the ecosystems in which they have arisen is so profound, that the country is so raped, pillaged and plundered that, because of our sensitivity to country, we have no choice but to be sick? What is it that the rest of Australia has to give up in order to gain a relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? What is it we have to give up? And what is there to gain? What do we have to be open to in order to change?

These re-framing questions and their answers move the experience of reconciliation out of the colonial project into new spaces and new opportunities. This is the space that can lend itself to post reconciliatory discussions, holding onto parts of our reconciliation story that are instructive, but opening to new conversations, creating new ideas and new realities.

Now, remembering that reconciliation should engage us in self-reflection about one's own role and behaviour, and we have reframed reconciliation to look beyond our current normal reconciliatory practices to take a long term view, and we have shifted reconciliation outside of the colonial practice by moving into a First People's context; that context being land; we do have a new space for post normal reconciliation – not only to reconcile between Indigenous peoples and fellow Australians, but to reconcile us all with the natural systems in which we live and to reconcile with other species with whom we spend our time on Earth.

The vision for a post-reconciliation agenda should be that the full fluorescence of the world in all its magnificence is here for future generations. In normal reconciliation we will carry out the improvement in the circumstance of our lives AND in post-normal reconciliation we will be part of the global infrastructure that facilitates a transition from a period of human devastation to a period of time when all humans are present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner. This is the natural trajectory for reconciliation, a fluid movement between reconciling people, to reconciling people and the planet.

Such a process of reconciling people with the planet has no human historical parallel. Humans prior have not dealt with anything comparable to the toxins in the air, the water, the soil, or with the immense volume of chemicals dispersed throughout the planet. Nor were they dealing with the extinction of species or the altering of climate on a scale such as our present concern. In order to ensure the planet is available for future generations we have to reconcile our older knowledge traditions with our modern ones and reconcile our views about, then act on how to live within the very structure and functioning of the planet itself.

This transition is difficult to be sure, however there is precedent in thinking how to achieve this. In 1962, Rachel Carson published the book *Silent Spring* which played a large role in articulating ecology as a subversive subject – as a perspective that cut against the grain of materialism, scientism and the technologically engineered control of nature. The book argued that uncontrolled pesticide use was killing not only animals and birds, but also humans. Its title was meant to evoke a spring season in which no bird songs could be heard, because they had all vanished as a result of pesticide abuse. She made it clear she was not advocating the banning or complete withdrawal of helpful pesticides, but was instead encouraging responsible and carefully managed use, with an awareness of the chemicals' impact on an entire ecosystem.

In 2010, another Silent Spring has evoked my imagination, my people. The **Deepwater Horizon oil spill** in the [Gulf of Mexico](#) which flowed for three months is the largest accidental marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry. The spill stemmed from a sea-floor [oil gusher](#) that resulted from the April 20, 2010 [Deepwater Horizon drilling rig explosion](#). Having killed 11 platform workers and injured 17 others, the leak was stopped by capping the gushing [wellhead](#), after it had released about 4.9 million barrels, or 185 million gallons of [crude oil](#) into our ocean on 15 July 2010. This silent spring event caused extensive [damage](#) to marine and [wildlife](#) habitats as well as the Gulf's [fishing](#) and [tourism](#) industries.

Every attempt was made to protect hundreds of miles of beaches, [wetlands](#) and [estuaries](#) from the spreading oil. Scientists have also reported immense underwater plumes of dissolved oil not visible at the surface. The [U.S. Government](#) has named [BP](#) as the responsible party,

and officials have committed to holding the company accountable for all cleanup costs and other damage. After its own internal probe, BP admitted that it made mistakes that led to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. This oil spill, this deepwater horizon silent spring, exists because of our current human reliance on petroleum.

In the modern world most of us go through our lives concerned with the day to day issues of making a living and hanging onto our particular lifestyle. I have this image behind me so you can see how much the basis of this particular lifestyle was spilled into our oceans, and hope that it might herald a new era of reconciliation. One in which we take account of what we are doing to the planet, where we'll listen a little bit more closely, look a little bit more deeply and can find, often with little effort, extraordinary reasons to change our way of seeing and understanding the world that will lead to lasting change... we might consider for example undertaking a change in how we use petroleum or coal and our view of our place in the world:

From "We need electricity to be comfortable and maintain our way of life" to "producing electricity is pumping billions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, leading to global warming and extremely destructive weather patterns". From "Being able to drive where and when we want at cheap cost is freedom!" to "Our driving habits are feeding the destruction of the planet." From "All of nature is here to serve mankind" to "Humans are no more or less important to the planet than any other life form."

The ideas encapsulated in post normal reconciliation make possible the new ground in the new stories needed for our time – the myths of our cultures, our paradigms, our beliefs – that form the core of what we tell ourselves is 'reality', both now and in the future. Stories, in this context, are anything we add to our original experience that alters what we think is going on, or changes how we think about things. Change we must, and change we can. In fact every time a culture has been transformed – from what it was before and for better or worse - it has been because of an idea, an insight, a new understanding of how things are, and what is possible. Ideas precede every revolution, every war, every transformation and every invention. And whilst it was in the political and social sciences I found the language with which to build the story, I have used the environmental, Earth science and quantum physics stories of ourselves, our planet and our the Universe as the inception point from which to build a post normal reconciliation agenda.

Humans will have to choose to live in a mutually enhancing relationship with the larger community of life systems and take responsibility for the functioning of these systems. From Thomas Berry, James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis with the Gaia Theory, Vladimir Vernadsky and his theory of the bio sphere, Will Steffan and his work on the Anthropocene: a great deal of the evidence from a range of sciences states that social and economic goals must be achieved within the capacity of the bio sphere of the Earth and that we must challenge the key normative questions facing our modern consumer societies.

Quantum physics (the New Physics) describes the Planet as forming part of a highly integrated, coherent system that implies that at a deep and fundamental level the seemingly separate parts of the Universe are connected in an intimate and immediate way. Laszlo developed a theory in which different things at different locations in space and different points of time are linked – particles, atoms, molecules, organisms, ecologies, solar systems, entire galaxies, as well as the mind and consciousness associated with some of these things – regardless of

how far they are from each other and how much time has passed since these connections were created between them. Capra felt that concepts in physics have the potential to render a profound change in our worldview, from the mechanistic conceptions of Descartes (pronounced day-Cart) and Newton to a holistic and ecological view, similar to that of Indigenous peoples, mystics and sages of the ages.

Each of these scientists and the fields from which they emerged have developed a sensitivity to the structuring and functioning of life and understand our Earth as a series of interconnected systems that extend far beyond the planet and into the Universe. In reaching out to a global community, these authors have relied upon a growing universal necessity for a cooperative worldwide approach. They have presented new ways of restoring meaning and value to the human community as members of the Earth community to reinstate an intimacy with the natural world.

Viewing the natural world as life producing, as a place of diversity in which humans are obligated to harmonize our aspirations with others in a living organism is a perfect position from which to practice true reconciliation. Indigenous peoples have scientific and philosophic traditions that build upon common spiritual rituals, social organization and ceremonial observances that can celebrate that the foundations of the world are unified; a unification derived from the experience that all of creation is interrelated. This holism is an essential requirement for peaceful co existence among people on Earth and is integral to our current and future philosophies. Our new story, the post normal reconciliation dream is premised on the fact that we exist in an interconnected life system. Indigenous philosophies show that it is possible to learn to be in the world in reciprocal relationships with all things, through cooperation and constraint, interdependent thinking, morality and action. Scientific evidence indicates that our planet is a one-time endowment, profoundly inter related with the constant energy source provided by the sun and now more than at any other time in history, humans need to understand and respond effectively to our own human role within this new information.

Because of this scientific evidence, from Indigenous peoples, Earth system sciences, quantum physicists and environmentalists I ask you to imagine this:

There is no difference between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. We all belong to the human species. There is no difference between the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. It is all human knowledge. There is no physiological difference in our brains in how they function. We generate human knowledge. There is evidence to demonstrate conclusively that there is no separation between us as people, and there is no separation within the natural systems in which we live. We are already, at a bio-physical level, reconciled.

What is different is the energy context that gives rise to that knowledge. Modern Australia's knowledge is founded in fossil fuel. Indigenous peoples' knowledge is founded in sunlight. The stability of sunlight as an energy source has seen the capacity of Indigenous people to hand down knowledge of how to live in country generation after generation. Petroleum as an energy source makes us oblivious to our natural environment. We are at a point where we can transition from this petroleum based energy context and it is a moment of significance far beyond what any of us can imagine.

Understanding ourselves as deeply and profoundly connected means that there is no one race that can lay claim to indigenous wisdom; "It lives deep in the heart of every living creature... anyone who remains deeply aware of the rhythms of the natural world can remember it. I can say this because the languages and beliefs of our collective ancestors were not embedded in colonial thinking and were not used to construct privilege. And because of this, I urge you to imagine this – we are all Indigenous, to this Universe. We are already reconciled, not only between each other, but with every other being with which we live our lives. And as such, we all have custodial responsibilities, we have to reify the eco systems in which we live, make subordinate our human individual requirements and practice personal development by responding to the needs of our whole community – including those in other species. This is task of the post reconciliation agenda.

What we have to reconcile then are a set of complexities and tensions that are becoming the primary tension in human affairs. We have to reconcile developers and ecologists on the state of our natural world. The economic tensions between empires and colonies is shifting to village peoples of the world with their organic way of life and transnational corporations with their industrialized agriculture. The Murray River fiasco should never have happened. What we have to reconcile no longer belongs in divisions based on political party or social class or ethnic group. What needs to be healed is a division based on the human as one of the components within the larger community of the planet Earth. We cannot mediate the present situation as though there were some minimal balance already existing that could be slightly modified – the violence already done is on a scale beyond acceptability. And again, Indigenous peoples in Australia are most vulnerable to the effects of these tensions, as is the land over which we care.

To make this post normal reconciliatory program a reality, we need new tools for new problems. One such tool is also found in the sciences – post normal science is a method focusing on aspects of problem solving that tend to be neglected in traditional scientific and indeed in policy development: uncertainty, value loading, and plural legitimate perspectives. Post normal science includes these uncertainties in the framing of complex issues and provides an opportunity for extending more and different people's participation in decision-making. The shift to post-normal science or other methods for dealing with uncertainty and complexity is a necessity. To adopt such a method is a critical change in this country because it allows the emergence of new strategies in which the role of Indigenous science and new sciences are appreciated in their full context. We need these methods to infiltrate not only our economic system, but government, jurisprudence, the medical profession, religion and education. Industry in the interests of promoting human development is producing a recession of the most basic resources of Earth. We must adapt and adopt new ways of living. We never thought of ourselves as capable of doing harm to the very structure of the planet or extinguishing the living forms that give the world its grandeur. So much now depends on our decisions about our way into the future. So, what's it going to be my people?

So to bring this to a close, I have offered my ideas tonight to both provoke and stimulate. I have discussed the need to expand the current reconciliation agenda, established between First Peoples and other Australians into its broadest articulation, into a post-normal reconciliation agenda. I do this not to denigrate what has been achieved to date in current reconciliation practice, or to say that our work in this realm is finished. It is not. For example there will be a referendum in about two years' time to include the First Peoples and in the Constitution and I expect to be front and centre in that discussion and I want you all behind me!

But beyond these actions, there is an expanded reconciliation agenda because we all have a role and a responsibility to protect the health of ecosystems and all who reside in them. I have spoken tonight about the synergies between Indigenous peoples' science and the science of Earth System Scientists, Environmentalists and Ecologists and the need to build a reconciliation agenda not between people, but between people and living systems. It is these interdependent systems that give us life, that give us reverence, gives us a story in which we can all celebrate nature and the deep mystery of things in a meaningful way. We have a chance to embrace the opportunity presented here tonight, to change the soul of the modern world, not just technologically, not just to get higher wages, or to even get physically improved conditions for Indigenous peoples but to change our inner world, to have a vision of a world transformed through stories that we created to positively impact on each other and the planet, for all of our sakes.

The full fluorescence of the world might have already happened, maybe it is receding in its grandeur, and the thought of that makes me bereft beyond words, but it is also my incitement to action. We have a chance to understand ourselves in our world through ecological scientific endeavour, to transform our reconciliation practices and together join with different groups of people, purposefully, meaningfully join together to make Australia and the world a better place.

All that I have offered here tonight has been offered constructively and in a spirit of reconciliation and is a celebration of the greatest articulation of our lived experiences. I have hope in my heart about the future my people, and this hope is for us all. Because when the world quiets to the sound of our own breathing, we all want the same things: comfort, love and a peaceful heart. Thank you so much for listening.

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