‘This subject will not go away’: Memorialising frontier conflict in South Australia

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Abstract

The history and memory of colonial violence is, in the words of one resident of Elliston in South Australia, a 'subject [that] will not go away' until it is addressed. Memories of frontier conflict have long been present in local communities and have only become more visible and more contentious as non-Indigenous Australians have increasingly come to re-evaluate the country's colonial history. Attempts to acknowledge histories of frontier conflict in recent years have seen memorials emerge at the local level, often only after significant debate and collaboration between Aboriginal groups, community organisations, and local councils. This thesis explores recent efforts to memorialise and commemorate colonial histories of frontier conflict between European settlers and Aboriginal peoples in South Australia.

Using a case study approach, the thesis considers various way frontier violence has been memorialised around the state. Its case studies address: commemorations of contact between settlers and Aboriginal women on Kangaroo Island prior to formal colonisation in 1836; the erection of a memorial to the Waterloo Bay massacre in Elliston; the Kaurna Naming Project initiated by the Adelaide City Council; and the state Labor government's commitment to erect statues and monuments honouring Aboriginal leaders. The thesis's final chapter compares these local and state-level engagements with how the history of frontier violence has been and is being represented in key national institutions of memory, namely heritage lists managed by the Commonwealth government, the National Museum of Australia, and the Australian War Memorial. The thesis argues that memorialisation in South Australia is an evolving social process which may contribute to broader processes of reconciliation in Australia by facilitating a wider recognition of past injustices.

Thesis Statement

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

I give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Signed: David Milazzo

Date: 8 July 2024

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Introduction: Memorials, Memory, and South Australian Settler Colonialism

My time working on this thesis has been framed by several attacks on memorials around the world. Shortly after I began in 2020, a statue of the philanthropist and slave-trader Edward Colston in the United Kingdom was torn from its plinth by protesters and rolled into Bristol Harbour.[1] As I approach the end of this thesis in early 2024, several statues and monuments to the British explorer Captain James Cook in Melbourne have recently been damaged by unknown activists. On 25 January 2024, a statue of Cook in the suburb of St Kilda was sawn off at the ankles and the words 'the colony will fall' was daubed in red paint on the plinth.[2] A few days later, on 28 January, a stone monument dedicated to Cook located in the suburb of Fitzroy North was pushed over and spray-painted with the words 'cook the colony.'[3] The following month, *The Guardian (Australia)* reported that a bronze statue of Cook was 'toppled outside the explorer's namesake cottage in the heart of Melbourne.'[4]

Both the toppling of the Colston statue in the United Kingdom and the series of attacks on monuments to Cook in Australia occurred within a context of societal tension over the ongoing legacies of imperialism and racism. Colston's statue, for instance, was attacked during the global anti-racism protests of 2020, which were connected to the broader Black Lives Matter movement. These protests originated in the United States of America following the murder of African American man George Floyd by white police-officer Derek Chauvin, but the protesters' calls for a redress of enduring racial injustices resonated with marginalised communities around the world.[5] In the countries of the former British Empire, including the United Kingdom itself, the 2020 anti-racism protests expanded to incorporate ongoing debates over the history of colonisation. In particular, the protests re-energised discussions about the appropriateness of memorials erected to valorise the 'great men' of the empire who—like Colston—had profited from the marginalisation and dispossession of others.[6] Colston had been a controversial figure in Bristol prior to the protests, but earlier requests for the City Council to modify Colston's monument so that it would publicly acknowledge his

[1] "Edward Colston Statue: Protesters tear down slave trader monument," *British Broadcasting Corporation,* 8 June 2020, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52954305.
[2] Emily Wind, "Captain Cook Statue sawn off and Queen Victoria monument defaced in Melbourne on eve of 26 January," *The Guardian (Australia),* 25 January 2024, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/jan/25/captain-cook-statue-toppled-in-st-kilda-on-eve-of-26-jaunary.
[3] "Captain Cook monument toppled in Edinburgh Gardens in Melbourne's north, days after vandalism spree," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* 28 January 2024, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-28/captain-cook-monument-toppled-edinburgh-garden/103398688.
[4] Adeshola Ore, Benita Kolovos, and the Australian Associated Press, "Captain Cook statue outside Melbourne's Cook's Cottage toppled amid spate of attacks," *The Guardian (Australia),* 27 February 2024, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/27/captain-cook-statue-toppled-melbourne-cooks-cottage-fitzroy-gardens.
[5] Penelope Edmonds, "Monuments on trial: #BlackLivesMatter, 'travelling memory' and the transcultural afterlives of empire," *History Australia* 18, no. 4 (2021): 802-803.
[6] For instance, debates about the memorialisation of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Oxford—exemplified by the statue of Rhodes on the façade of Oriel College—had been prominent since 2016 after the Rhodes Must Fall movement had spread out of South Africa and had entered the United Kingdom. Zofia Stemplowska, "The Rhodes Statue: Honour, Shame and Responsibility," *The Political Quarterly* 92, no. 4 (2021): 630.

involvement in the slave trade had not led to change.[7] Following its unsanctioned removal by anti-racism protesters, historian and journalist David Olusoga argued that the toppling of the statue was both unsurprising and necessary considering the 'heel-dragging and obfuscation' that had characterised official responses to criticisms of the monument.[8]

Similarly, the attacks in 2024 on monuments to Cook began in the lead up to Australia Day. Australia Day has long been contentious within Australia as it is held on the anniversary of the establishment of a British penal colony at Sydney Cove in 1788. For many people, this date represents the commencement of the Australian settler colonial project, and the continued celebration of the day symbolises the country's failure both to critically examine its colonial past and to address the ongoing disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[9] Protests have occurred on or around Australia Day for decades, and activist have vandalised statues to colonial figures before, but the attacks on Cook's monuments in 2024 held particular significance because of the rejection of the federal referendum to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament in the Australian Constitution three months prior. Although those who voted 'no' to the referendum were motivated by a range of diverse opinions, the use of misleading claims and appeals to ignorance by the official 'No campaign' caused many Indigenous people to question settler Australia's willingness to engage with reconciliation processes in good faith.[10] In this context, it is unsurprising that some activists appeared to vent their frustrations with the current state of Indigenous affairs in Australia by seeking to demolish memorials honouring Cook as a symbolic figure of colonisation.

These two recent examples of protest movements targeting memorials during periods of debate over the politics of racial injustice speak to the loaded nature of commemorative spaces. Historian Pierre Nora famously pointed out that monuments and memorials are 'sites of memory' which 'by dint of human will or the work of time have become a symbolic element

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[7] Tim Cole, "After the fall, where?: Relocating the Colston statue in Bristol, from 2020 to imaginary futures," *Journal of Historical Geography* 82 (2023): 160.

[8] David Olusoga, "The toppling of Edward Colston's statue is not an attack on history. It is history," *The Guardian,* 8 June 2020, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/08/edward-colston-statue-history-slave-trader-bristol-protest.

[9] Tamara Lipscombe, Peta Dzidic, and Darren Garvey, "Coloniser control and the art of disremembering a 'dark history': Duality in Australia Day and Australian history," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2019): 323-324.

[10] Gabrielle Appleby, Paul Kildea, and Sean Brennan, "How do the 'yes' and 'no' cases stack up? Constitutional law experts take a look," *The Conversation,* 30 August 2023, accessed 15 March 2024, https://theconversation.com/how-do-the-yes-and-no-cases-stack-up-constitutional-law-experts-take-a-look-212364; Hannah Ritchie, "The Voice: Australians vote No in historic referendum," *British Broadcasting Corporation,* 15 October 2023, accessed 15 March 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-67110193; Shirleen Campbell, Chay Brown, and Connie Shaw, "The 'No' Voice result showed us we need to prioritise truth-telling in Australia," *The Conversation,* 6 March 2024, accessed 15 March 2024, https://theconversation.com/the-no-voice-result-showed-us-we-need-to-prioritise-truth-telling-in-australia-218518; Bhiamie Williamson, "The failed referendum is a political disaster, but opportunity exists for those brave and willing to embrace it," *The Conversation,* 14 October 2023, accessed 15 March 2024, https://theconversation.com/the-failed-referendum-is-a-political-disaster-but-opportunity-exists-for-those-brave-and-willing-to-embrace-it-213755.

of the memorial heritage of any community.'[11] Yet, commemorative spaces are more than just locations where humans go to remember the past. As historian Sabine Marschell points out,

> commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary [are] society's most deliberately designed, official, lasting, and emblematic cultural products codifying memory. Their role is to induce purposeful remembrance in the interests of forging a particular historical consciousness and shaping collective memory upon which group identity can be based.[12]

In this way, commemorative spaces invariably make certain claims about the past along with assertions about the nature of society in the present, and may even attempt to illuminate a path towards a particular vision of the future.[13] As the attacks on Colston and Cook demonstrate, this may lead to conflict when newer generations come to identify long-standing memorial sites as being symbolic of the problematic ideologies that created current-day structures of inequality. In other instances, conflict may arise over the creation of new monuments, especially when different groups within society disagree over interpretations of history or the necessity of acknowledging certain aspects of the past. In either case, commemorative spaces are fruitful subjects of study because the way in which they engage with the past reveals many of the priorities and tensions within modern societies.

This thesis investigates commemorative spaces in South Australia that relate to histories of colonial violence and the contemporary politics of reconciliation. Since 2000, South Australia has seen a proliferation of regional memorials established which acknowledge violent colonial histories. South Australia is not unique in this respect; as narratives of frontier violence have become more visible and non-Indigenous Australians increasingly come to re-evaluate formerly orthodox narratives of benign settlement, there has been a growth in diverse and ongoing memorial initiatives designed to promote Indigenous histories and cultures across Australia.[14] However, processes of memorialising the colonial past in South Australia may be of particular interest in light of the fact that South Australia has traditionally maintained a claim to be more progressive regarding Aboriginal rights than the rest of Australia.[15] Despite this claim, South Australia had the second highest percentage of 'no votes' of any state during the federal Voice referendum.[16] This thesis considers a selection of South Australian

[11] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xvii.
[12] Sabine Marschall, *Landscapes of Memory: Commemorative Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 2.
[13] Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., "Power, Politics, and Contestation," in *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 249.
[14] Amanda Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence: Reconciling with the Australian frontier," in *Aftermaths: Colonialism, Violence and Memory in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific*, eds. Angela Wanhalla, Lyndall Ryan, and Camille Nurka (Otago: University of Otago Press, 2023), 39.
[15] Robert Foster, "True Lies: South Australia's Foundation, the Idea of 'Difference,' and the Rights of Aboriginal People," in *Foundational Fictions in South Australian History,* eds. Carolyn Collins and Paul Sendziuk (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2018), 65.
[16] Daniel Keane, "South Australia rejects Voice to Parliament as overwhelming majority backs No vote," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* 14 October 2023, accessed 15 March 2024, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-14/south-australia-votes-no-in-voice-to-parliament-referendum/102977312.

commemorative markers to explore the current state of collective memory in the context of current trends and debates about regional, national, and global reconciliation processes. By doing so, it draws on the academic fields of memory politics and settler colonialism to tell the story of how memories of the past and historical-informed identities have shaped and been shaped by commemorative spaces.

A note on Terminology

Before discussing the academic field of memory politics, it is important to acknowledge distinctions between terms such as 'monument', 'memorial', and 'commemorative space', as well as other phrases used to describe markers of memory. All, to a certain extent, describe an object, structure, location, or space which acts to focus memory or to aid remembrance, and these terms are often used interchangeably in common parlance. Nevertheless, Marschell notes that 'it is important to keep in mind … that some individuals, including scholars, heritage officials, artists, architects, and interested members of the general public, hold strong and often divergent views about the distinctions between the … terms, and that this fact invariably colours their reading of the respective memory markers.'[17]

Art historian Arthur Danto's distinction between 'memorial' and 'monument', discussed in the context of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, is one of the more well-known definitions in the scholarly literature. Danto describes monuments as structures which embody triumphalism, heroism, and ritualised celebration while memorials are characterised by their focus on reflective mourning, often in service to communal healing and reconciliation.[18] Danto's distinctions between these terms may be analytically useful when discussing controversies around commemorative spaces, especially when sites 'originally built in a monumental spirit are now defended as memorials' as philosopher Gary Shapiro points out.[19] Yet, the boundaries between monuments and memorials may not be as clear as Danto's definition implies. Anthropologist Michael Rowlands notes, for instance, that many 'memorials' also possess the characteristics of 'monuments' and may reframe acts of mournful or reflective remembrance as heroic celebrations of collective values.[20] Further definitional difficulties arise when one notes the tendency—discussed in greater depth below—of different groups within society to project their own divergent memories onto commemorative spaces so that mournful 'memorials' for some may be celebratory 'monuments' for others.

Another definitional approach might be to distinguish memorials, monuments, and other terms describing commemoratives sites depending on whether they describe a general or a

[17] Marschell, *Landscapes of Memory,* 12.
[18] Arthur Danto, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *The Nation* 241, no. 1 (August 31, 1985): 152.
[19] Gary Shapiro, "Public Art: Monuments, Memorials, and Earthworks," in *A Companion to Arthur C. Danto,* eds. Jonathan Gilmore and Lydia Goehr (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2022), 364.
[20] Michael Rowlands, "Remembering to forget: Sublimation as sacrifice in war memorials," in *The Art of Forgetting,* eds. Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999), 130; cited in Marschell, *Landscapes of Memory,* 12.

specific concept. For example, the academic textbook by Martin Kerby et al. *A Possession Forever* (2021) states that 'memorial is a broad term that can encompass any effort at commemorating an event or person', whereas a 'monument' is defined 'in more narrow terms to describe a built structure which commemorates—though not always celebrates—an event or person.'[21] Within this framework of understanding, terms such as 'commemoratives sites/spaces', 'memorial sites', or 'sites of memory' might be conceptualised as non-specific mnemonic devices, which may include physical memorials but may also refer to abstract or non-temporal processes such as commemorative toponyms, memorial performances, and days of remembrance. However, as with Danto's definitions, not all scholars agree with these generalised definitions, and some seek to further distinguish between commemorative sites, commemorative spaces, commemorative places, and so on.[22]

While recognising these debates about terminology, this thesis adopts a broad definition of memorial practices and commemorative spaces. Specific sites of memory will be referred to as a 'monument' or a 'memorial' in accordance with the term used in their official name. Elsewhere, the term 'memorial' or 'commemorative site/space' is used in its wider sense, as described in *A Possession Forever.* Rather than types or definition of memorial or commemorative space, the focus of this thesis is on processes of memorialisation and the politics of memory.

The 'Memory Boom' and theories of memorialisation

This thesis is situated within the vast and expanding academic field of memory politics. International scholarly interest in this field reflects the fact that the politics of memorialisation transcends national frameworks, and it is not uncommon for localised instances of public contestation over commemorative spaces to trigger interconnected, global protest movements.[23] For instance, the assault on Colston's statue in Bristol, in addition to being sparked by the global Black Lives Matter movement, added fuel to the fires of pre-existing debates over the appropriateness of certain statues in a variety of countries, including to Cecil Rhodes in South Africa and the United Kingdom; to King Leopold II in Belgium; and to colonial politicians and explorers in Australia.[24] The international nature of these debates may demonstrate the fact that, as Marschell points out, 'the treatment of contested existing

[21] Martin Kerby, Margaret Baguley, Richard Gehrmann, Alison Bedford, Samara Rowling, and Nikki Anderson, *A Possession Forever: A Guide to Using Commemorative Memorials and Monuments in the Classroom* (Brisbane: University of Southern Queensland, 2021), 4.
[22] Marschell, *Landscapes of Memory,* 12-13.
[23] Penelope Edmonds, *Monuments on trial,* 803-804.
[24] Penelope Edmonds, *Monuments on trial*, 801-802; Aamna Mohdin, "Fall of Bristol's Colston statue revives Rhodes campaign in Oxford," *The Guardian,* 8 June 2020, accessed 15 March 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/08/fall-of-bristols-colston-statue-revives-rhodes-campaign-in-oxford; "George Floyd protests: The statues being defaced," *British Broadcasting Corporation,* 10 June 2020, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52963352; Nick Baker, "As 'racist statues' topple around the world, Australia is being urged to address its own monuments," *SBS News (Australia),* 10 June 2020, accessed 15 March 2024, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/as-racist-statues-topple-around-the-world-australia-is-being-urged-to-address-its-own-monuments/g59pu67wy.

monuments and the design of new commemorative markers' has become a highly complex process in the modern world, especially as states navigate 'shifting socio-political power relations, new discourses about cultural representation and the global trend towards the "democratisation of history."'[25]

Contemporary academic interest in processes of memorialisation may be a consequence of the international 'memory boom' that has been ongoing since the late 1970s.[26] As historian Mary Fulbrook points out, this 'memory boom' occurred

> in at least two senses. Among historians and social scientists there has been a heightened interest in what may roughly be designated as 'collective memory'; and in the wider public sphere there has been an apparently heightened historical consciousness, evident in north America and in eastern as well as western Europe.[27]

Within non-academic circles, this rising historical consciousness in the late twentieth century was partly due to the growing commercialisation of public history and partly a response to emerging national anxieties over the darker aspects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 1980s and 1990s saw significant re-interpretations of history—which exposed traumatic histories, raised questions about national wrongdoing, and undermined older triumphalist narratives—play out on academic, political, and public stages. In Western Europe, for instance, governments and the general populous grappled with the history of World War II, especially after widely publicised academic debates such as the *Historikerstreit* in West Germany and the 'Paxtonian revolution' in France demonstrated the breadth and depth of European involvement in the Holocaust.[28] Similarly, the rise of new post-Soviet states in eastern and central Europe at the end of the twentieth century raised questions about how best to recall these countries' involvement in the project of communism.[29] Meanwhile, in many states of the former British Empire and in Latin America, discussions about the legacies of imperialism and colonisation were partly driven by the adoption of 'reconciliation' as government policy and the establishment of official 'Truth Commissions' aimed at uncovering historical injustices.[30]

Public and governmental engagement with the legacies of history in the late twentieth century occurred alongside, and partly prompted, academic interest in theories of memory and processes of remembering. In particular, Fulbrook notes that the memory boom revitalised the theory of 'collective memory' as a defining concept within historical memory

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[25] Marschell, *Landscapes of Memory*, 4.
[26] Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.
[27] Mary Fulbrook, "History-writing and 'collective memory'," in *Writing the History of Memory,* eds. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 65.
[28] Grzegorz Nycz, *Memory Politics in the Shadow of the New Cold War* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), 20-21 and 83-85.
[29] Stefan Berger and Bill Niven, "Writing the history of national memory," in eds. Berger and Niven, *Writing the History of Memory*, 143.
[30] Penelope Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation: Frontier Violence, Affective Performances, and Imaginative Refoundings* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 9 and 14-16.

studies.[31] Stemming from the works of sociologists Emile Durkheim and Maurice Halbwachs in the early twentieth century, the theory of collective memory emphasises the central position of history and memory in group identity, whether that be at the national, regional, or local level. Durkheim argued that all societies required a sense of connection and continuity with the past and that collective groups used symbols and rituals to provide individuals with a sense of collective unity.[32] Building on Durkheim's work in his foundational book *On Collective Memory* (1925), Halbwachs coined the term 'collective memory' and explained that beliefs about what came before—regardless of the accuracy of such views—informed and reinforced present day thoughts, actions, and identities.[33] In doing so, Halbwachs noted that both identity and memory were located within and limited by a framework of collective social discourses, which could be shaped and influenced by external factors.[34]

Halbwachs's theories remain prominent and have raised important questions for historians interested in memory and its impact on society. Reflecting on these concepts in *Varieties of Cultural History* (1989), historian Peter Burke noted that:

> Given the fact that the social memory, like the individual memory, is selective, we need to identify the principles of selection and to note how they vary from place to place or from one group to another and how they change over time. Memories are malleable, and we need to understand how they are shaped and by whom.[35]

Pierre Nora's frequently cited concept of *Lieux de Memorie,* or 'sites of memory,' highlights monuments, memorials, and other commemorative spaces as one significant influence on the malleable collective memories of society.[36] Nora identified connections between memory and place, and argued that modern memorial sites implicitly direct processes of remembering by representing and stressing particular narratives of the past. Controversially, Nora contrasted apparently modern 'sites of memory' with historical 'environments of memory.' While the former, he argued, were artificial sites which compartmentalised acts of remembering into dedicated rituals and spaces, the latter described a situation where 'the past' was experienced by people throughout their everyday experiences. Because of this, Nora suggested that modern memorials and rituals of remembering had more to do with expressions of social power than they did with genuine processes of memory.[37]

Nora's theories contributed to an understanding of memorials as sites that institutionalise memory, and this notion has proven especially useful to scholars interested in the ways in which governments, political groups, and influential peoples exploit narratives of the past. As historians Stefan Berger and Bill Niven point out, narratives of the past are quite often told in

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[31] Fullbrook, "History-writing and 'collective memory'," 66 and 68.
[32] Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of the religious life: A study in religious sociology,* trans. Joseph Swain (New York: Macmillan, 1915).
[33] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* trans. Lewis Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 40.
[34] Fulbrook, "History-writing and 'collective memory'," 68-69.
[35] Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 46.
[36] Nora, *Realms of Memory*, xvii; Marschell, *Landscapes of Memory,* 5.
[37] Pierre Nora, "Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 4-7.

ways that justify the rule of those currently in power.[38] Especially when repeatedly and systematically articulated—for instance, in museums, school curriculums, or commemorative sites—narratives of the past may direct collective memories towards an overarching historical 'grand narrative', which may become culturally dominant and may make invisible alternative or subaltern experiences. Niven and Berger point out that the utility of this process for powerful groups does not necessarily mean that they intentionally manipulate the historical record. Nor do they claim that such groups disbelieve the histories they disseminate. Rather, they simply point out that 'there is often a convenient symmetry between the promotion of these [historical narratives] and the acquisition, consolidation, and extension of power.'[39]

To a certain extent, there is value to acknowledging the connections between memorialisation and the perpetuation of power, especially because memorials often embody hegemonic social and political structures. As literary scholar Richard Crownshaw points out, 'memorials, like other cultural expressions of a group's or society's memory, are never … just mediated by the forms they take.'[40] Memorials are also influenced by the beliefs and ideologies of those who authorise their construction, and are thus limited by the social, political, or cultural systems that are dominant at the time of their creation. Crownshaw states that this has been especially notable 'where monuments have been created in the name of national identity', but, significantly for this thesis, it is also particularly visible in the context of settler colonial states.[41] Marschell notes, with reference to South Africa, that the erection of colonial era 'monuments were often linked with cartographic practices and notions of mapping, implicitly legitimating claims to ownership of the land or supporting ideologically stereotyped assertions about its native inhabitants.'[42] Likewise in Australia, as scholars have argued, colonial authorities repeatedly utilised commemorative spaces to reinforce the legitimacy of British settlement, and colonial era monuments invariably reflected settler identities at the expense of Indigenous histories.[43]

However, collective memory should not be understood as being static, monolithic, or as a structure solely imposed from the top-down.[44] As Burke strongly argued:

> It would be unwise to follow Durkheim and his pupil Halbwachs too closely … and to discuss the social function of the social memory as if conflict and dissent did not exist.

[38] Berger and Niven eds. *Writing the History of Memory,* 6-7.
[39] Berger and Niven, eds. *Writing the History of Memory*, 8.
[40] Richard Crownshaw, "History and memorialisation," in Berger and Niven, eds., *Writing the History of Memory*, 220.
[41] Crownshaw, "History and memorialisation," 220.
[42] Marschell, *Landscapes of Memory,* 6.
[43] Jenny Gregory, "Dark Pasts in the Landscape: Statue Wars in Western Australia," *Public History Review* 28 (2021): 34-35; Bruce Scates, "Set in Stone?: Dialogical Memorialisation and the Beginnings of Australia's Statue Wars," *Public History Review* 28 (2021): 76-77; Tom Lawson, "Memorialising colonial genocide in Britain: the case of Tasmania," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 4 (2014): 446, 452, 455; Stephan Gilchrist, "Surfacing Histories: Memorials and public art in Perth," *Artlink* 38, no. 2 (2018): 44.
[44] Duncan Bell, "Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity," *The British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2003): 68; Berger and Niven, *Writing the History of Memory,* 56;

> … Given the multiplicity of social identity, and the coexistence of rival memory, alternative memories (family memories, local memories, class memories, national memories, and so on), it is surely more fruitful to think in pluralistic terms about the uses of memory to different social groups, who may well have different views about what is significant or 'worthy of memory.'[45]

Indeed, critical theorist Homi Bhabha famously argued in *Nation and Narration* (1990) that collective memories both depend on and are threatened by alternative stories of the past, and are thus constantly being written and re-written in a quixotic quest for narrative coherence.[46] Alternative interpretations of the past—especially those held by foreign or subaltern communities—are threatening because they may contain information that contradicts assumptions that are foundational to the community's grand narrative. However, Bhabha, who was exploring collective memories in the context of nationalism, noted that these alternative narratives were an inescapable reality because they arose from out-groups whose existence was a necessary counterpart to the community's sense of in-group identity. Bhabha thus noted that although communities may view their own collective memories as unchanging and representative of a singular grand narrative of the past, in reality this narrative continually evolves and is never universal in its scope.[47]

Niven and Berger state that, in general, historians have 'moved away from the idea that there is one, centrally driven or dominant collective memory, arguing for a more nuanced and differentiated approach which takes account of the sheer variety of memories within a society.'[48] This recent reinterpretation of the phenomenon of communal remembering has caused some academics to abandon the term 'collective memory'. Jay Winter, for instance, states that 'the loose usage of the term "collective memory"—framed to mean virtually anything at all—… has persuaded me to abandon the term whenever possible.'[49] Similarly sociologist Duncan Bell speaks of 'narrative mythscapes' rather than 'collective memories,' because, in his view, communal narratives of the past are formed via the compilation and homogenisation of diverse individual memories into historical myths that are passed down through the generations. Such 'mythic narratives' may be represented as a community's 'history,' but this story may not always neatly align with the memories of individuals or subgroups within that community. Thus, Bell notes that while there is often a 'governing narrative', which may be endorsed by those in power, there are also 'counter-narratives' that can vary from, challenge, and eventually even displace the prevailing governing narrative.[50]

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[45] Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History,* 55.
[46] Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration,* ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 297.-299.
[47] Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 298.
[48] Berger and Niven, eds. *Writing the History of Memory*, 9.
[49] See: Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 4-5.
[50] Bell, "Mythscapes," 63.

Other historians and sociologists have explained the workings of memory in similar ways. Historian and Jewish-studies scholar Yael Zeruvabel spoke of 'countermemories' which 'directly opposes the master commemorative narrative'.[51] Meanwhile, historian John Bodnar in his book *Remaking America* (1992) suggested the term 'vernacular culture', when describing the phenomena of small groups of citizens developing local commemorative practices which reflect their own interpretation of historical events, often in contrast to 'national' or 'official' histories.[52] Regardless of the terms used, these scholars characterise memory as being in a constant state of negotiation, struggle, and change as different interpretations of the past come into contact with one another. It is this more fluid, and often contested, interpretation of collective memory that this thesis adopts.

A heterogeneous perspective on collective memory demonstrates in several ways that commemorative sites do not always serve the narratives of the powerful. Firstly, as Berger and Niven argue, the diversity of memories in society means that although some memorials may be built to reflect interpretations of history expedient to elites, nonetheless 'it would be difficult to prove how far such images actually penetrate the minds of citizens, or how far they mesh with existing views within society.'[53] Secondly, society's variety of collective memories means that the meanings associated with certain memorials may vary depending on the beliefs of the people who engage with them. Historian Jay Winter describes collective memory as a performance, which acts as 'both a mnemonic device and a way in which individual memories are relived, revived, and refashioned.'[54] Memorials and other commemoratives spaces are one domain in which memory is performed, but there is no guarantee that the performance will assert the same themes when conducted by different groups, especially as society itself evolves with time. The irony of the memorial is that while its original constructors may seek to immortalise certain concepts, memorials can come to represent ideas entirely different from those that were originally intended.

In fact, some memory scholars, such as historian Gary Baines, have pointed out that although 'commemorative acts are invariably premised on the assumption that we have an obligation to remember,' sites of memory may equally engender a process of forgetting.[55] Philosopher and novelist Robert Musil famously noted in 1936 that 'there is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument,' because they typically recede into the background of everyday life

[51] Yael Zeruvabel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 10.
[52] John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 6.
[53] Berger and Niven, eds. *Writing the History of Memory,* 8.
[54] Jay Winter, "The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe,* eds. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 11.
[55] Gary Baines, "A Duty to Remember (and forget?): A Transnational Perspective on Commemorating War," in *War and Memorial: The Age of Nationalism and the Great War,* eds. Frank Jacob and Kenneth Pearl (Boston: Brill, 2019), 23.

and go unnoticed by most people most of the time.[56] Building on this idea, more recent scholars—especially those interested in the memorialisation of the Holocaust such as literary scholar Andreas Huyssen—have argued that memorials may act to desensitise people to the significance of the histories they are actually designed to recall.[57]

This concept raises important questions for this thesis around the memorialisation of subaltern or non-orthodox historical narratives in public spaces. On the one hand, the generalised 'invisibility' of monuments may limit the influence and impact of new memorials designed to challenge established governing narratives. From this perspective, it can be argued that creating memorials to give voice to contested histories may unintentionally blunt their disruptive potential in society, especially if they are deployed in place of apparently more active processes of remembering.[58] On the other hand, the continued erection of such monuments may contribute to a subconscious 'normalisation' of subaltern collective memories among the wider public, which may in turn 'de-normalise' previously hegemonic narratives of the past. Indeed, scholar of cultural architecture Sue-Anne Ware argues that these interlinked processes of normalisation and forgetting inherent to commemorative spaces may well be central to the 'transformation' of memory which allows society to first address traumatic histories and ultimately move on from them.[59]

Further, although memorials in public spaces may go unacknowledged during much of their existence, they may become highly visible during periods of discussion or debate over history and identity.[60] Jewish-studies scholar James Young explores these moments of memorial activation and uses the concept of 'anti-monumentalism' and 'counter-monumentalism' to discuss community responses to commemorative sites that no longer accord with their self-image. Anti-monument movements—such as the toppling of Colston's statue in Bristol or the removal of statues to Stalin following de-Stalinisation—seek to remove structures and symbols which apparently uphold themes or ideologies that have become problematic.[61] By

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[56] Robert Musil, *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author* (Hygiene, CO: Eridanos Press, 1987): 480; cited in Werner Fenz, "The Monument is Invisible, the Sign Visible: Monuments in New Perspectives," in *Does War Belong in Museums?: The Representation of Violence in Exhibitions,* ed. Wolfgang Muchitsch (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 173.

[57] Andreas Huyssen, "Monumental Seduction," *New German Critique* 69 (1996): 184; Andreas Huyssen, "Memory Culture at an Impasse: Memorials in Berlin and New York," in *The Modernist Imagination: Intellectual History and Critical Theory,* eds. Warren Brechman, Peter Gordon, Dirk Moses, Samuel Moyn, and Elliot Neaman (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 152-153.

[58] Huyssen, "Monumental Seduction," 198-200; James Young, "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4, no. 1 (1989): 63-64.

[59] Sue-Anne Ware, "Anti-memorials and the Art of Forgetting: Critical Reflections on a Memorial Design Practice," *Public History Review* 1, no. 1 (2008): 74-75.

[60] Sabine Marschell, "Targeting Statues: Monument 'Vandalism' as an Expression of Sociopolitical Protest in South Africa," *African Studies Association* (2017): 204.

[61] Questions about whether to remove memorials to Stalin have waxed and waned over time, but have been ongoing since Khrushchev denounced the former Soviet leader in 1956. This occurred both in the Soviet Union itself as well as in post-soviet and former Warsaw Pact states after the collapse of the USSR. See: David Satter, *It Was a Long Time Ago, and It Never Happened Anyway: Russia and the Communist Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 124 and 198-199; Alberto Frigerio, "The Fate of Statues of Stalin in post-Soviet

targeting symbols of formally dominant regimes in this way, historian Jenny Gregory notes that anti-monument movements often 'become emblematic of social unrest'.[62] Young contrasts such anti-monument movements with counter-monuments, which are sites that are intentionally designed to encourage ongoing engagement with controversial histories and engender discussion around society's diverse and evolving collective memories.[63]

Established memorials may become counter-monuments through the affixing of new plaques or through the changing of the environmental context in which a monument is located.[64] In the Australian context, historians Bruce Scates and Peter Yu use the term 'dialogical memorialisation' to describe the process by which monuments become counter-monuments. Using the example of the Explorers' Monument in Fremantle and its ongoing re-evaluation since the late 1980s, they argue that dialogical memorialisation may transform symbols 'of racism and division into an active platform for what is often styled "truth telling and reconciliation."'[65] Importantly, Scates and Yu note that dialogical memorialisation goes beyond the attachment of plaques and involves both continued 'reworkings of the commemorative landscape' and a wider conversation in the community about the past.[66] However, this process may be more easily achieved with some memorials than with others. As historian Stephan Gapps has suggested, certain memorials are so deeply imbued with dominant and domineering historical narratives that their ability to be transformed is highly limited. Regarding the imposing, larger-than-life statue of Captain James Cook situated in Sydney's Hyde Park, Gapps asks:

> Can adding to or changing the wording on a plaque really decolonise a statue of Captain Cook? … Won't the captain remain steadfast, continuing the job he was given by those who built his statue, and continuously searing the open wounds of those who were dispossessed by his historical actions?[67]

Accordingly, Young's concept of monuments, counter-monuments, and anti-monuments is highly relevant to this thesis, especially as Indigenous rights movements in Australia have

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Countries: Some Critical Reflections on the Management of Contested Heritage," *Heritage and Society* 12, no. 2 (2019): 139-142.

[62] Gregory, informed by the anthropologist Katherine Verdery, especially focuses on anti-monument movements targeting statues. She argues that because statues 'are erected to preserve a memory that serves the interests of a particular group, often by representing leaders and heroes,' their eventual destruction 'can be a way of recasting national history.' In making this point, Gregory references a long history of attacks against statues, including the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue in Bagdad in 2003 and the removal of statues to Francisco Franco in Spain after his death in 1975. Jenny Gregory, "Statue wars: collective memory reshaping the past," *History Australia* 18, no. 4 (2021): 564-566; Katherine Verdery, *the Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Post Socialist Change* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1999), 5.

[63] James Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today, *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992): 271-272.

[64] Young, "The Counter-Monument," 295.

[65] Bruce Scates and Peter Yu, "De-Colonizing Australia's Commemorative Landscape: 'Truth-telling,' Contestation, and the Dialogical Turn," *Journal of Genocide Research* 24, no. 4 (2022): 489.

[66] Scates and Yu, "De-Colonizing Australia's Commemorative Landscape," 507.

[67] Stephan Gapps, "Keep them, counter them, or tear them down? Statues, monuments and the smoothing over of historical injustices," *History Australia* 18, no. 4 (2021): 831.

come to incorporate discussions about the removal or modification of colonial era statues and memorials. Yet, it is also important to recognise that Young's theories, like many theories of memory and memorialisation, primarily explore memory politics within a European context focusing on the World Wars and the Holocaust. These events have been at the centre of a significant amount of scholarly research, including in Australia where the relationship between memorialisation and institutionalised narratives of the past have been richly analysed in relation to the memory of the Anzacs. This research—including Ken Inglis's influential work *Sacred Places* (2005)—is highly informative, but sometimes overlooks the influence of Australia's settler colonial nature on its processes of memorialisation.[68] Yet, as Walter Hixson, Anna Johnston, and Alan Lawson argue, the memorialisation of collective memories in settler-states is particularly complex precisely because of the nature of settler-colonialism as a historical phenomenon.[69] Accordingly, any discussion about the memorialisation of frontier violence in South Australia must be located within the distinctive framework of settler colonialism.

Settler colonialism in South Australia

The history of frontier violence in South Australia exists within a much larger, interconnected, and international history of colonialism, especially as it relates to European global expansion and settlement. Between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries, imperial powers in Europe asserted control over territories on all six of the world's inhabited continents. Many of these were little more than short-lived imperial outposts, but others were major colonies, established and dominated by European settlers and which eventually evolved into modern, independent states. Although there were and are important differences between settler societies—shaped, among other things, by when and where the original colony was established and by whom—they also share a range of common political traits, economic structures, and cultural views.[70] The concept of 'settler colonialism' explores and explains these similarities, noting that 'the fact that settler societies resemble one another in several respects is not a consequence of conscious imitation but of separate efforts to resolve very similar problems,' as historian Donald Denoon argues.[71]

One of the 'problems' faced by settler societies was the existence of Indigenous peoples who already owned, tended to, and lived off the land that was claimed for colonial settlement. Consequently, at some point in the past, all settler colonial states attempted to remove,

[68] Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian landscape* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003), 478-479.
[69] Walter Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 11-12; Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson, "Settler Colonies," in *Companion to Postcolonial Studies,* eds. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Roy (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 364-366.
[70] Anne Combe, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 2-4.
[71] Donald Denoon 'Introduction' in *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies,* ed., Lynette Russell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 3.

displace, or dispossess Indigenous populations so that new communities could be established.[72] This differentiated settler colonialism from other forms of colonialism, where existing populations on the imperial periphery were kept in place and exploited for the economic or political benefit of the metropole. Of course, settler colonial states also exploited Indigenous peoples to enrich the empire, but this was not settler colonialism's primary goal. Rather, as historians Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen point out, drawing on historian Patrick Wolfe's famous phrase, settlers were motivated by a 'logic of elimination,' because they 'wished less to govern indigenous peoples … than to seize their land and push them beyond an ever-expanding frontier of settlement.'[73]

Under 'conventional' forms of colonialism the ruling empire may eventually withdraw or be overthrown and the peoples of the periphery might be liberated from imperial hegemony.[74] In settler colonial states, though, imperial hierarchies and systems of power were often able to persist even after the empire's collapse or departure, largely thanks to their original formation through colonial settlement. Historian James Belich observes that settler colonialism invariably involved the 'long-range migration' of massive numbers of settlers to distant lands, where the cultures and social structures of the 'motherland' were reproduced. This, he argues, led to 'the creation of new societies.'[75] Thus, unlike other migrants, settlers avoided assimilation into pre-existing societies while still developing emotional connections to, and a sense of ownership over, the territories they now occupied. Influenced and aided by the 'logic of elimination,' settlement therefore resulted in the enduring dispossession of Indigenous peoples, whose own connections to place were systematically ignored, overwritten, and regarded as illegitimate by settlers.[76] For these reasons, Wolfe famously argued that colonisation under settler colonialism 'is a structure not an event.'[77]

As a large and continually growing body of scholarship shows, British colonisation in Australia entangled European settlers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a structure of settler colonialism from the moment of first contact. For Indigenous Australians, this resulted in disruptions to traditional life, the loss of cultures and languages, and displacement from Country as settlers sought 'the elimination of the native.'[78] Settler colonial policies were pursued first by the imperial British government, then by the various Australian colonies after they gained self-rule, and finally by state and federal Australian governments following federation. Broadly speaking, these governments facilitated the initial advance of land-hungry settlers into Aboriginal territories, as well as the removal of many Indigenous peoples to

[72] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism,* 4-5.
[73] Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 2; Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and miscegeNation: discursive continuity in the post-Mabo era," *Social Analysis* 36 (1994): 93; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-388.
[74] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism,* 5.
[75] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World, 1783-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21-23.
[76] Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," 388.
[77] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: the politics and poetics of an ethnographic event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 2.
[78] Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," 389; Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4.

reserves and Christian missions, the exploitation of Indigenous Australian workers in the agricultural and pastoral industries, and the imposition of discriminatory and assimilationist laws.[79] Colonisation was often backed by physical violence perpetrated by official forces acting with governmental authority, but violence was also committed by 'unsupervised' settlers acting on their own initiative, sometimes illegally. Similarly destructive were the various 'reforms' adopted by Australian governments 'that entailed cultural genocide, including national campaigns removing children from their families.'[80] In this way, colonisation extended across the whole Australian continent and at times 'proved genocidal in its effects,' as Hixson claims.[81]

Violence and dispossession are prominent threads within the broad tapestry of Australian settler colonialism, but, as historian Peggy Brock points out, 'Aboriginal people's experiences of colonisation … varied depending on when they were colonised and how.'[82] Contact was not always physically violent and nor was Aboriginal dispossession necessarily the intention of the various colonial governments, even if this was generally the result. British and later Australian policies, laws, and cultural viewpoints shaped interactions between settlers and Aboriginal peoples, and these varied at different times and in different locations.[83] Likewise, as this thesis explores in the context of memorial practices, the reactions of individuals and communities to colonial impositions varied. In some cases, as considered in chapter two, Aboriginal warriors forcefully resisted settlement. In other situations, as seen in chapter three, Aboriginal peoples adopted a more diplomatic approach and may have assisted European settlers.

In part, Aboriginal experiences of colonisation varied because the various colonial governments were not able to maintain total or uniform oversight over interactions between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples, as discussed in chapter one. In the context of North America, historian Richard White points out that settlers often moved into Indigenous lands ahead of imperial authorities and that this sometimes led to the creation of a complex 'middle ground' between the colonisers and the colonised.[84] The extent to which a genuine middle ground formed on the Australian frontier is debatable, with historian Henry Reynolds arguing that the kind of hybrid society described by White never truly arose within Australia.[85] Nevertheless, historians Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, drawing on Reynolds, point out that 'a key characteristic of the Australian frontier … was the uncertainty of Britain's effective occupation' which meant 'British sovereignty was only of "a qualified and limited

[79] Peggy Brock, "Introduction," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath: A history of Aboriginal South Australia,* eds. Peggy Brock and Tom Gara (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2017), xviii-xix.
[80] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 8; Dirk Moses, "Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History," in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2004), 4.
[81] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 8.
[82] Brock, "Introduction," xviii.
[83] Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence: The History and Memory of South Australia's Frontier Wars* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2012), 2-7.
[84] Richard White, *The Middle Group: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xxvi.
[85] Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia (New Edition)* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 18.

order".'[86] Interactions between Aboriginal peoples and European settlers on the frontier thus inevitably involved accommodation, cooperation, and intimacy as well as conflict and rivalry, especially when isolated or vulnerable settlers could neither dictate to nor ignore Aboriginal populations.[87]

These differing experiences highlight the complex, multifaceted nature of colonial history and reveal the agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during colonial encounters in Australia. Yet, it may be significantly easier to identify particular instances of complexity through regional studies which explore the varying and specific forms of settler colonialism. Nettelbeck notes that frontier violence was 'by definition a regional phenomenon, where hostilities and contestations over occupation of country took place between settler and Indigenous groups who lived in close proximity and often knew one another, at least by reputation.'[88] Thus, while there are valuable insights to be gleaned from national or global histories which identify settler colonialism's commonalities, the finer details of local histories are equally valuable and may raise unique questions.[89]

South Australia's colonial history, for instance, is somewhat unique for Australia in that its colonisation was planned in the 1830s when the British Colonial Office was dominated by reformers and humanitarians seeking to introduce protections for Indigenous peoples throughout the empire.[90] As such, Foster notes that South Australia 'was a colony predicated on ideals of religious and political freedom, including a more liberal approach to Aboriginal rights and protection.'[91] Many of the colony's founding documents appeared to demonstrate this. Most notably, *The Letters Patent* (19 February 1836)—which gave royal authority to the creation of the colony—openly acknowledged the rights of Aboriginal peoples in the colony, including rights to land.[92] Similarly, in his first Proclamation (28 December 1836)—announcing the start of British governance over the Province of South Australia—Governor John Hindmarsh noted his duty

> to take every lawful means for extending the same protection to the Native Population as to the rest of His Majesty's Subjects, and of my firm determination to punish with exemplary severity, all acts of violence and injustice which may in any manner be practised or attempted against the Natives, who are to be considered as much under the Safeguard of the law as the Colonists themselves, and equally entitled to the privileges of British Subjects.[93]

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[86] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence*, 7.
[87] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 14.
[88] Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence," 42.
[89] Mark McKenna, *From the Edge: Australia's Lost Histories* (Melbourne: The Miegunyah Pressm 2016), Xvi-xix; Amanda Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence," 48.
[90] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence*, 1-2 and 16-25; Paul Sendziuk and Robert Foster, *A History of South Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 15-16.
[91] Foster, "True Lies," 65.
[92] "Letters Patent establishing the Province of South Australia," in *South Australia's Foundation: select documents,* eds., Brain Dickey and David Howell (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1986), 75.
[93] Robert Gouger, "Proclamation by His Excellency John Hindmarsh, Knight of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphie Order, Governor and Command-in-Chief of His Majesty's Province of South Australia," *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register,* 3 June 1837, 1.

In reality, South Australia was as much shaped by the logic of settler colonial 'elimination' as the other Australian colonies. The apparent recognition of Aboriginal peoples as British subjects did not prevent their dispossession, mistreatment, or murder. Brock eloquently explains this 'discrepancy between intention and actuality,' arguing that it resulted from

> settlers' determination to acquire land for their own use, but also to their ignorance of Aboriginal rules of conduct and formalities, and lack of interest in trying to understand the societies they were supplanting ... When colonists ventured out to establish themselves on Aboriginal land many did not take … care to understand and respond to Aboriginal greeting protocols or acknowledge their proprietary rights, leading to conflict and violence.[94]

Significant academic research, especially by Foster and Nettelbeck, has documented a repeated pattern of violence between settlers and Aboriginal peoples in South Australia, including examples of illicit poisonings, extrajudicial killings, and officially endorsed massacres.[95] Likewise, the edited collection *Colonialism and its Aftermath* (2017)—drawing on research by historians, anthropologists, linguists, and the lived experiences of Aboriginal Elders—shows that the 'logic of elimination' generally prevailed in the colony, or, at the very least, slowly reshaped its humanitarian ideals into coercive policies of management and control.[96] More recently, the newly launched web map 'The South Australian Frontier and its Legacies' combines academic research with oral histories to paint a picture of interpersonal and cultural violence within the colony.[97] Despite this reality of violence, though, the assertion that Aboriginal peoples held legal rights as British subjects remained official rhetoric in South Australia throughout the nineteenth century. Consequently, those responsible for perpetrating violence on the frontier remained careful to claim they were acting according to the rule of law.[98]

In some ways, the enduring myth of humanitarianism and the rule of law in South Australia echoes narratives of denial told by settlers globally which 'elided their actual historical role as invaders and conquerors of colonial space.'[99] Scholars have noted that distortions and denials of history were 'endemic to settler colonies,' and historian Bain Attwood argues that instances of 'denial in the remembering of a past' often echoed and reflected 'denial at the time of that past.'[100] For instance, Attwood points out that the theory of occupancy—which

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[94] Brock, "Introduction," xvi-xviii.

[95] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence,* 5-7; Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster, *In the Name of the Law: William Willshire and the Policing of the Australian Frontier* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2007), 31-35; Robert Foster, Rick Hosking, and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian frontier and the violence of memory* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2000), 9.

[96] Brock and Gara, eds., *Colonialism and its Aftermath,* xix-xxiii and 27-61.

[97] "The South Australian Frontier and its Legacies," outcome of the ARC Linkage Project LP190100561 'Reconciling with the Frontier: Accounting for Colonial Conflict', University of Adelaide, State Library of South Australia, History Trust of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, Reconciliation South Australia, South Australian Museum \, accessed 12 June 2024, https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/4755c59ae93447a9b0acf9b2b0b265f6/.

[98] Nettelbeck and Foster, *In the Name of the Law*, 31.

[99] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 12.

[100] Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 11; Johnston and Lawson, "Settler Colonies," 365; Bain Attwood, "Denial in a Settler Society: the Australian Case," *History Workshop Journal* no. 84 (2017): 24.

acknowledged Aboriginal peoples as the original peoples of the Australia while stating that they 'were not actually in possession of it'—was recognised as a legal fiction even by early settlers, who nonetheless invoked the theory to claim 'they were not dispossessing anybody.'[101] Later, by the middle decade of the nineteenth century, the sharp decline in the Aboriginal population since colonisation was attributed by settlers to 'natural causes' or 'savage customs' rather than to the consequences of well-documented colonial violence, introduced disease, and forced displacement from Country. Such narratives of denial, Attwood contends, helped obscure settler responsibility for 'the dispossession, destruction, and displacement of Aboriginal people' and soothed any sense of collective guilt they may have felt.[102]

Distortions about the treatment of Aboriginal people during colonisation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to later 'historical denials' and the development of a generalised structure of 'forgetting Aborigines', as historian Chris Healy puts it.[103] National histories of Australia that emerged in the mid-twentieth century largely ignored the presence of Aboriginal peoples beyond a certain point in time. When they were discussed, Aboriginal peoples were often relegated to the peripheries of colonial settlement or dismissed as being a 'stone age people' doomed to 'fade away' due to their inability to keep pace with historical progress.[104] Forgetting was a national trend, but it also occurred at the regional level. In South Australia centennial celebrations in 1936 depicted Aboriginal peoples as 'primitives' who disappeared shortly after European arrival.[105] Scholars explain the forgetting of the mid-twentieth century by pointing to a number of factors, including the epistemology of academic history at the time, scientific racism, and the influence of enlightenment ideas about progress and nationalism.[106]

In 1968, anthropologist W.E.H Stanner famously labelled this structural forgetting as the 'Great Australian Silence' and he condemned the 'history of indifference' towards Aboriginal people in Australian memory and culture.[107] Historians today question the totalising scope of the 'Great Australian Silence.' Historian Ann Curthoys, for instance, notes that Stanner's claim 'too often … is taken to imply a kind of historiographical periodisation where there was no Aboriginal history before Stanner's own lecture and an end to the silence after it.'[108] In fact, frontier violence was widely acknowledged in the nineteenth century and partially remembered in the early to mid-twentieth century via a process Foster and Nettelbeck describe as the 'Great Australian Whispering.'[109] Further, as Skye Krichauff, Mark McKenna,

[101] Attwood, "Denial in a Settler Society," 25.
[102] Attwood, "Denial in a Settler Society," 28-29.
[103] Chris Healy, *Forgetting Aborigines* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), 192.
[104] Anna Clark, *Making Australian History* (Melbourne: Vintage Books Australia, 2022), 44-50.
[105] Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster, "Commemorating Foundation: A Study in Regional Historical Memory," *History Australia* 7, no.3 (2010), 58-61.
[106] Anna Clark, *Making Australian History,* 44-53 and 173-183; Attwood, "Denial in a Settler Society," 27.
[107] William E. H. Stanner, *After the Dreaming: 1968 Boyer Lectures* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1969), 24-25.
[108] Ann Curthoys, "WEH Stanner and the Historians," in *An Appreciation of Difference: W.E.H Stanner and Aboriginal Australia,* eds. M. Hinkson, and J. Beckett (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2008), 247.
[109] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence*, 142.

and others have pointed out, accounts of frontier warfare and massacre sometimes held a strong presence in the local historical memories of regional settler-descended communities even in Stanner's time, although the extent to which this applied depended on a range of factors.[110] Likewise, focused as he was on national narratives told by historians, Stanner overlooked the historical consciousness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, many of whom had been engaged in a number of lively, historical-informed protests since 1930 at the very least.[111] However, Stanner's overarching point that Aboriginal histories were not being discussed at a national level held broadly true, and this silence, alongside longstanding historical distortions regarding events on the frontier, helped legitimise settler possession and perpetuated Aboriginal dispossession.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, calls for recognition of Australian settler colonialism and the country's history of frontier violence have become intertwined with movements for Aboriginal rights. These gained momentum in the latter half of the twentieth century, especially after the successful 1967 Referendum—widely but inaccurately remembered as having granted Aboriginal people voting rights—reframed Aboriginal cultures as 'different from', rather than 'inferior to', settler culture in the minds of white Australians.[112] Shortly thereafter, new revisionist histories began to emerge depicting Aboriginal resistance to, and cooperation with, Europeans 'from the other side of the frontier.'[113] These new histories coincided with growing political campaigns for Indigenous rights that were themselves 'necessarily grounded in the past.'[114] By the 1990s, Attwood writes, activists in Australia were drawing 'on a discourse of truth and reconciliation that had been forged elsewhere, most notably South Africa' in their pursuit of Aboriginal rights.[115]

Recognition of past injustices remains an important part of Australia's Aboriginal rights movement in the twenty-first century. Notably, the concept of 'reconciliation'—which 'necessarily has a potent relationship with the past, from which it cannot be unmoored'—has become central to ongoing efforts to address Indigenous disadvantage, as historian Penelope Edmonds points out.[116] And yet, as reconciliation projects continue to face challenges around the world, some Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and activists argue that settler colonialism's enduring structure of indifference and hostility to Indigenous people means that historical recognition on its own will never facilitate decolonisation.[117] Concerningly, Edmonds relates that 'reconciliation as a state-based and top-down social program' may

[110] McKenna, *Looking for Blackfella's Point,* xviii-xx, 60-63, and 106-109; Skye Krichauff, *Memory, Place and Aboriginal-Settler History* (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 67-69.
[111] Heather Goodall, *Invasion to embassy: land in Aboriginal politics in New South Wales* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 230-4.
[112] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence*, 167-168.
[113] Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*, 14 and 22-23.
[114] Attwood, "Denial in a Settler Society," 36.
[115] Attwood, "Denial in a Settler Society," 38.
[116] Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation,* 10.
[117] Tom Clark, Ravi de Costa, and Sarah Maddison, "Non-Indigenous People and the Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation," in *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation: Non-Indigenous People and the Responsibility to Engage,* eds., Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, Ravi de Costa (Singapore, Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2016), 1-2; Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 2-3.

actually undermine efforts to advance Aboriginal rights if it is deployed 'as a poor symbolic substitute for actual and substantive reparations.' [118] Recognising that these criticisms exist and acknowledging that there may be limitations to contemporary reconciliation initiatives is important, especially in light of growing discourse about the right of Indigenous peoples to refuse involvement in settler nations.[119] However, it is equally important to recognise that many Indigenous peoples do have a genuine desire for reconciliation and have done much political and emotional labour to advance that cause. Further, demands for structural reform do not preclude calls for public recognition of past injustices. The 'Uluru Statement from the Heart', for instance, identifies 'Truth-Telling' as one of its three demands alongside the establishment of a 'Voice' and the negotiation of treaties.[120]

As sites of public memory, memorials which speak to histories of settler colonial violence provide a space where forms of truth-telling and reconciliation might occur. The interconnection between acts of remembrance and the politics of reconciliation are explored by academics both internationally and within Australia. For instance, Marschell's book *Landscapes of Memory* (2010) describes the transformation of South Africa's commemorative landscape following the end of apartheid and the benefits and tensions that arose as a consequence.[121] Similar themes are explored in research focused on memorialisation efforts in other settler colonial states, including Canada and New Zealand. In these countries, reconciliation has involved a re-evaluation of certain national myths concerning settler treatment of Indigenous peoples.[122] In the Australian context, *Places of Reconciliation* (2021) by historian Sarah Pinto examines the ways in which Indigenous history and culture have been brought into central Melbourne through the creation of commemorative markers and public art installations.[123] Additionally, numerous articles have been written on memorials and their role in ongoing efforts to reassess Australia's colonial history, as exemplified by the special issue of *History Australia* on 'Re-storying monuments' published in 2021.[124] By exploring the ways in which settler colonial societies are coming to terms with the past through memorial practices, this field of scholarship brings the literature on memory politics and memorialisation together with research on settler colonialism.

[118] Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation,* 8.
[119] Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation,* 17-18; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks,* 108-109.
[120] "Uluru Statement from the Heart," Uluru Statement, 2017, accessed 23 May 2024, https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/.
[121] Marschal, *Landscapes of Memory,* 2-3.
[122] Amanda Nettelbeck, "Remembering indigenous dispossession in the national museum: The National Museum of Australia and the Canadian Museum of Civilisation," *Time and Society* 21, no. 1 (2012): 42-43; Adriana Boffa, "The Question of Residential Schools in Canada: Preserve, Demolish, or Repurpose?," *Canadian Social Studies* 49, no. 1 (2017): 12; Tony Ballantyne, "Toppling the Past?: Statues, Public Memory and the Afterlife of Empire in Contemporary New Zealand," *Public History Review* 28 (2021): 3.
[123] Sarah Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation: Commemorating Indigenous History in the Heart of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2021), 20.
[124] Alessandro Antonella, and Nancy Cushing, "Re-Storying monuments: forum introduction," *History Australia* 18, no. 4 (2021): 748.

Scope of this thesis

This thesis is nested within this scholarly intersection between memorialisation and settler colonialism, and it contributes to a growing field of research into South Australia's memory culture. Within this field, Foster and Nettelbeck have examined South Australia's shifting understanding of, and engagement with, its colonial history most prominently, and Nettelbeck has studied in closer detail memorialisation in some of the state's regional museums.[125] Other regional studies, including by historians Skye Krichauff and Rebe Taylor, have discussed processes of remembering in regional communities across South Australia, especially as they relate to memories of contact between settlers and Aboriginal peoples.[126] The edited collection *Sharing Spaces* (2006)—which grew out of the Sharing the Space Conference held at South Australia's Flinders University in 2002—also provides insights into the connections between memory, politics, and reconciliatory dialogues from academics and Aboriginal Elders.[127] Regarding memorials and memorialisation, Gavin Malone has examined existing commemorative spaces in Adelaide from the perspective of a cultural geographer.[128]

My thesis contributes to this literature by exploring recent or ongoing local efforts to memorialise histories of frontier violence between European settlers and Aboriginal peoples in South Australia. Drawing on a selection of case studies from around the state, this thesis raises a number of questions about the changing politics of reconciliation and its expressions through memorial practices. How have accounts of the frontier, as depicted in public memorials, changed over time? To what extent and in what ways might public memorials contribute to processes of reconciliation in Australia? Through what processes do communities create commemoratives spaces to narratives of frontier violence, what shapes those narratives, and how are they contested?

The evolution of South Australia's public recognition and memorialisation of frontier violence over time is explored in the first chapter on commemorative processes on Kangaroo Island. Kangaroo Island was not inhabited by Aboriginal people when it was first occupied by white settlers, but it was used as a base by European and American sealers who took Aboriginal women from the mainland to act as their 'wives'; the island was thus an early site of colonial contact and conflict. The changing ways in which the sealers and their 'wives' have been remembered at different times in South Australia's history echo similar trends elsewhere in the state. Some important work has already been done by Rebe Taylor in this area, but her focus is primarily on the nature and evolution of private memories on the island rather than their depiction in public memorialisation.[129] By exploring the shifts in memorialisation of

[125] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence,* 181-185; Nettelbeck, and Foster, "Commemorating Foundations," 54-61; Amanda Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1118-1123.
[126] Rebe Taylor, *Unearthed* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2008), 4-13; Krichauff, *Memory, Place and Aboriginal-Settler History,* 5-30.
[127] Gus Worby and Lester-Irabinna Rigney, *Sharing Spaces: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Responses to Story, Country, and Rights* (Perth: Australian Research Institute, 2006), 1-3.
[128] Gavin Malone, "Ways of Belonging: Reconciliation and Adelaide's Public Space Indigenous Cultural Markers," *Geographical Research* 45, no. 2 (2007): 158-159.
[129] Taylor, *Unearthed*, 5.

Kangaroo Island's early colonial inhabitants, this chapter examines a local community's evolving relationship with their past and the diverse and changing ways Aboriginal experiences of colonisation are brought into a regional story.

Chapter two explores efforts to construct a memorial to the 'Massacre of Waterloo Bay' near the town of Elliston on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula. According to oral history, in the late 1840s or early 1850s Aboriginal people were driven off the cliffs at Waterloo Bay to their deaths by local European settlers. Since at least 1970, Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists have advocated for this event to be memorialised. However, due to a lack of written documentary evidence within the colonial record, there has been significant speculation as to whether such a massacre occurred in the fashion commonly related and the erection of a memorial has always been contentious. Nevertheless, in 2017 a 'reconciliation monument' was erected by the District Council of Elliston which explicitly memorialised the massacre. In this chapter, I argue that the erection of the 2017 'Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial', after a series of complex negotiations, demonstrates growing community awareness of the limitations inherent in the colonial written record. I also argue that, in this case, the community's commitment to reconciliation contributed to a memorial built around a more accommodating approach to historical memory.

Chapter three focuses on memorialisation efforts in an urban setting. The primary focus is on the City of Adelaide's Kaurna Place Names project, but it also briefly explores the South Australian state government's plan to erect statues to Aboriginal figures. Whereas Elliston's 'reconciliation memorial' faced difficulties due to disputes over the historical record, the Kaurna Naming Project contended with the fact that Adelaide's Kaurna heritage has been obscured by the construction of the settler colonial city. The project therefore raises questions about the decolonising potential of Indigenous place naming within an urban environment, especially when one considers the longstanding social construction of 'indigeneity' as being non-urban and incompatible with city life.[130] Further and similar questions about the extent to which these forms of memorialisation reform urban colonial spaces have appeared in the context of the state government's plan to use statues to restore depictions of Aboriginal figures to South Australian landscapes. This chapter explores these questions as they relate to these two commemorative projects, but also argues they should be considered in the context of a wider Indigenous-led movement acting to raise awareness of Adelaide's Aboriginal heritage.

Conversations about how and in what ways histories of frontier conflict might be represented in public commemorative spaces are occurring not just at the regional level, but also on the national stage. Chapter four shifts focus from South Australia to examine recent trends at the national level by exploring representations of frontier violence within three national platforms of memory—the federal heritage lists, the National Museum of Australia, and the Australian War Memorial. As this chapter demonstrates, although these national spaces are starting to represent histories of frontier violence within Australia's national history,

[130] Evelyn Peters, "'Urban' and 'Aboriginal': an Impossible Contradiction" in *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism,* eds., Jon Caulfield and Linda Peake (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 60.

processes of commemorative recognition still appear to be somewhat more restrained at the national level than they are locally. Although the overall focus of this thesis is on memorialisation in South Australia, by considering commemorations of frontier violence within spaces of national memory in chapter four, this thesis places local contemporary memorial initiatives within a larger historical and spatial context.

Chapter One: Memorialising Foundational Narratives on Kangaroo Island

In their 2010 article 'Commemorating Foundations', historians Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster examined 'at closer range the historical memory of Australian settlement and its counterpart of Aboriginal dispossession' as it was recalled in South Australian remembrance practices.[1] Drawing on historian Chris Healy, they argued that 'the history of Aboriginality … [was] there all the time, but it appear[ed] and disappear[ed] for complex reasons' during state commemorations of colonial settlement.[2] In this way, they demonstrated that, first, regional stories of settlement could be more flexible than narratives on the national scale, and, second, that public memory could change over time in response to evolving social and political circumstances.[3]

Nettelbeck and Foster explored South Australian regional narratives, but they did not explore commemorations on Kangaroo Island. This is noteworthy as Kangaroo Island's regional history is unique in several ways. Firstly, Aboriginal people were not living on the island when it was first encountered by European sailors and navigators in 1802. Secondly, South Australian Company settlers landed on Kangaroo Island on 27 July 1836, five months before they relocated to Adelaide and officially proclaimed the establishment of a British colony on 28 December 1836. Thirdly, unlike the rest of South Australia, the island had been permanently occupied by white settlers for several decades prior to the arrival of the South Australian Company in 1836. And finally, Kangaroo Island was a site of colonial violence before the official beginning of South Australian colonisation because the pre-1836 settlers kidnapped and enslaved Aboriginal women from Tasmania and the mainland to serve as their 'wives'. This history means that commemorations on Kangaroo Island can potentially celebrate earlier colonial 'foundations' than those memorialised by the rest of the state, and historical memory on the island may diverge significantly from the mainland.

This chapter explores the evolution of Kangaroo Island's memorial practices as they relate to its history from 1802 to 1836 to consider how the island's commemorative practices have changed alongside broader shifts in memory culture across the country. It examines commemorative events on the island during four periods: the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the state centenary celebrations in 1936; the state sesquicentenary celebrations in 1986; and the state 'Encounter 2002' commemorations in 2002. By exploring these periods, the chapter demonstrates the ways in which the island has asserted and celebrated its unique regional history, while also, more recently, had to come to terms with the reality that it was a location of Aboriginal slavery in Australia.[4]

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[1] Amanda Nettelbeck, and Robert Foster, "Commemorating Foundations: A Study in Regional Historical Memory," *History Australia* 7, no. 3 (2010): 54.

[2] Chris Healy, *Forgetting Aborigines* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), 192; cited in Nettelbeck and Foster, *Commemorating Foundations,* 55.

[3] Nettelbeck and Foster, *Commemorating Foundation,* 54.

[4] Chester Schultz has argued that the relationships between Islanders and Aboriginal 'women who were "obtained" there by abduction or … sometimes by trade and negotiation' varied depending on context. According to Schultz, to view all Aboriginal women on the island only as 'slaves' 'does not allow for complexity,

Kangaroo Island's history, 1802 to 1836

Between 1802 and 1836, Kangaroo Island sat at an intersection of imperial interests from several states. In most histories, the British navigator Matthew Flinders is generally considered to be the first European to 'discover' the island during his 1801-1802 voyage to survey Australia's south coast aboard the *HMS Investigator*.[5] Flinders named the island after the endemic subspecies of the western grey kangaroo that he encountered when he landed on 22 March 1802. In contrast to the mainland, Flinders noted 'the extraordinary tameness of the kanguroos [*sic*] which allowed themselves to be shot in the eyes' and he accordingly named the land 'Kanguroo [*sic*] Island.'[6] The docility of the kangaroos correctly suggested to Flinders that the island was uninhabited. Aboriginal people had once lived on Kangaroo Island, but by the start of the nineteenth century it had been uninhabited for several thousand years. Indeed, the island was known in the Kaurna language as Karta Pintingga, meaning Island of the Dead.[7] Flinders's encounter with the island, however, began a new period of history during which Kangaroo Island would once again be inhabited.

Shortly after leaving Kangaroo Island's eastern shores on 8 April 1802, the *HMS Investigator* encountered a rival French ship. The ship—named *Géographe*—was under the command of Nicolas Baudin, who had been selected by Napoleon's government to map the Australian coastline. Despite the fact that Baudin and Flinders both believed France and Britain to be at war, the two ships came together peacefully at a harbour on the mainland that Flinders consequently named Encounter Bay. Here, Baudin and Flinders shared charts and exchanged information about their respective expeditions. The mutual respect and hospitality shown by the two men towards each other despite the spectre of war in Europe is an account repeated on plaques, in local history books, and even in advertising.[8] For instance, the website for Southern Ocean Lodge, which sells luxury accommodation on Kangaroo Island for upwards of 3,000 dollars a night, references this moment. On its history webpage, it notes that the 'encounter was made remarkable as both [Flinders's and Baudin's] respective countries were at war – or so they thought … Nevertheless, the two rival maritime explorers met peacefully

for the recorded variations and shifts in the relationships between Islanders and Aboriginal women.' See: Chester Schultz, *Feet on the Fleurieu, Language on the Land: Aboriginal women and men, their communities, and Kangaroo Islanders: the story of the earliest guides, explorers and interpreters around Fleurieu Peninsula (South Australia): Book 1: March 1802 – January 1837* (Adelaide: MediaCom Education Inc, 2023), XV and 26.

[5] Colonial author W.H. Leigh claims to have been shown a tree marked with the words 'This is the place for fat meat, 1800' and asserts this as proof of English-speakers on the island prior to Flinders. See William Augustine Leigh, *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels, with Adventures in the new colonies of South Australia* (1839; reis., Mison's Point: Currawong Press Pty Ltd, 1982), 126; this point is also made by Rebe Taylor, *Unearthed* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2008), 337.

[6] Matthew Flinders, *A voyage to Terra Australis; Undertaken for the Purpose of Completing the Discovery of that Vast Country and Prosecuted in the Years 1801, 1802, and 1803* (1814; reis., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 169.

[7] Schultz, *Feet on the Fleurieu, Language on the Land*, 14.

[8] Jean Fornasiero, and John West-Sooby, "A contested coast? Revisiting the Baudin-Flinders Encounter of April 1802," in *Foundational Fictions in South Australian History*, eds. Carolyn Collins, and Paul Sendziuk (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2018), 13-15.

and respectively [*sic*].'[9] In reality, both expeditions were aware of the possibility of encountering a naval vessel belonging to the rival country. Each captain held a passport that granted them immunity from attack and guaranteeing safe harbourage in the ports of the other.[10] It would have been more remarkable if the two ships had run out their guns and exchanged fire.

In many ways, the peaceful encounter between the British and French ships at Encounter Bay revealed the complexities of European imperial interests in the south Pacific at the time. Baudin's voyage undoubtedly represented a threat to the fledgling British colonies of New Holland. As French Studies scholars Jean Fornasiero, Peter Monteath, and John West-Sooby point out, France had long sustained a strong presence in Oceania and had even claimed possession of the west of Australia in 1772.[11] French settlement failed to eventuate, but France's imperial interests continued as the French empire sought greater knowledge of the Pacific, in part to facilitate its commercial and colonial enterprises.[12] Baudin's voyage was tied to these goals, and his presence in Australian waters spoke to the possibility that France might try to compete with Britain over the continent. Indeed, Fornasiero and West-Scooby note that Baudin's chief zoologist, François Péron, drafted a report exploring approaches for the invasion and capture of the settlement at Port Jackson.[13] Yet, like Flinders, Baudin was officially on a scientific endeavour and, at the time, there was an entrenched cultural belief within the European scientific community that the pursuit of knowledge transcended national rivalries.[14] So, despite belonging to rival nations, both men were apparently united in the goal of advancing the principles of the European Enlightenment and its forms of knowledge. As historian Tony Ballantyne notes, engagement with the Pacific through scientific voyages like Baudin's and Flinders's often acted to 'orientalise' the non-European world and provided apparently 'natural' justifications for European hegemony and colonisation.[15] Thus, the peaceful encounter between Baudin and Flinders represented a victory for European imperialism as much as it symbolised an ideal of scientific cooperation between men from hostile states.

Flinders directed Baudin to Kangaroo Island and the evening after their meeting the *Géographe* was anchored off the island's coast. Initially, Baudin did not stay; he sailed on to survey the mainland. However, he returned nine months later with the intention of

[9] "Baudin, Flinders, and the Discovery of Kangaroo Island," *Baillie Lodges*, accessed 8 May 2024, https://baillielodges.com.au/blog/baudin-flinders-and-the-discovery-of-kangaroo-island/.
[10] François Péron, *French designs on colonial New South Wales: François Péron's memoir on the English settlements in New Holland, Van Diemen's Land and the Archipelagos of the great Pacific Ocean,* trans. and eds. Jean Fornasiero, and John West-Sooby (Adelaide: The Friends of the State Library of South Australia, 2014), 323; Fornasiero, and West-Sooby, "A contested coast?," 15-16.
[11] Jean Fornasiero, Peter Monteath, and John West-Sooby, *Encountering Terra Australis: The Australian Voyages of Nicholas Baudin and Matthew Flinders* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2011), 6.
[12] Fornasiero, Monteath, and West-Sooby, *Encountering Terra Australis,* 7-8, and 384-385.
[13] Péron, *French designs on colonial New South Wales*, 251-259.
[14] Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby, "The Narrative Interruptions of Science: The Baudin Expedition to Australia (1800-1804)," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 49, no. 4 (2013): 459.
[15] Tony Ballantyne, ed., *Science, Empire, and the European Exploration of the Pacific* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), xvi-xxi and 322.

circumnavigating the island so as to 'leave nothing to be desired for the safety of navigation.'[16] Baudin then remained at Kangaroo Island for a further month while his crew used lumber from the island to rebuild a longboat which had been destroyed in the Bass Strait. Thinking of potential future settlers, the French released livestock onto the island and one French sailor carved a message onto a rock at a beach on the north-east coast. The message read: 'Expédition De Decouverte Par Le Commandant Baudin Sur Le Géographe 1803.'

Twenty-four days after departing Kangaroo Island in 1803, Baudin encountered the American brig *Union* and its captain Isaac Pendleton at King George's Sound in Western Australia. Pendleton and his crew of thirty men had been contracted by a New York Company to harvest seal skins to supply the lucrative Chinese-American fur trade. He had been lured to Australia by Britain's growing sealing industry centred on Van Diemen's Land and the Bass Strait.[17] Baudin recorded that 'so far he had not been lucky' and so he urged Pendleton to travel to Kangaroo Island where seals could be found in abundance.[18] After receiving charts from the *Géographe*, Pendleton sailed to Kangaroo Island and moored in the narrow channel by the mouth of Pelican Lagoon. After a week of successful hunting, Pendleton left a crew of sealers behind on Kangaroo Island to continue harvesting skins while he sailed on to the Bass Strait. Although they were not permanent settlers, the crew of sealers left by the *Union* were the first non-Indigenous people to stay for an extended period of time on the island. They built a small settlement with a brush hut and a fenced garden of vegetables.[19] Over the winter period, during the sealing off-season, they used local timber to construct the first European ship built in (what would become) South Australian waters—a twenty-foot schooner named *Independence.*

Just as Pendleton had been drawn to Australia by the success of British sealing in Van Diemen's Land, the American reports of abundant seals on Kangaroo Island attracted cohorts of sealers from other countries. Sealing was one of Australia's first large-scale extraction industries and it served to support the imperial project. Historian Rebe Taylor writes that seal skins and furs were a readily available commodity which 'could be traded in the overseas markets for cash and goods needed in the new colony.'[20] It was a highly competitive industry which drew in a range of ethnically diverse men serving on French and American ships, as well as British ones. Sealing also encouraged exploration and unofficial colonisation as sealers sought to locate and monopolise new zones of extraction. For these reasons, Mark McKenna has described the sealing industry as 'the lawless vanguard of European imperialism' in

[16] Nicholas Baudin, *The Journal of Post Captain Nicholas Baudin Commander-in-Chief of the Corvettes* Geographe *and* Naturaliste *Assigned by Order of the Government to a Voyage of Discovery,* trans. Christine Cornell (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1974), 460.
[17] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 13.
[18] Baudin, *The Journal of Post Captain Nicholas Baudin,* 488-489.
[19] Jean Nunn*, This southern land: a social history of kangaroo island 1800-1890* (Adelaide: Investigator press, 1989), 20; cited in Taylor, *Unearthed,* 14.
[20] Rebe Taylor, "Savages or Saviours? – The Australian Sealers and Aboriginal Tasmanian Survival," *Journal of Australian Studies* 24, no. 66 (2000): 73.

Australia.[21] As the home of a number of large fur-seal colonies, it is unsurprising that Kangaroo Island became drawn into this network of imperial exploitation.

The sealing ships routinely left gangs of men to live for short periods on the island, but over time some men established themselves more permanently. By 1826 a village of unofficial settlers was established at Three Wells River. While reporting on rumours of escaped convicts living along Australia's south coast, *The Australian* reported in 1826 that 'Thirty men and forty black women' were living on Kangaroo Island and had 'contrived to make themselves quite comfortable in their snug retreat.'[22] The leader of this small community and the self-proclaimed 'Governor' of the island was probably a man named Henry Wallen.[23] Other men known to have lived in the village or close by included John 'Abyssinia Jack' Anderson, William Day, William Walker, James Allen, James Everett, and James Kirby.[24] Outside the settlement at Three Wells River, a man named Thisby lived at Pelican Lagoon, and gave his name to the nearby Mount Thisby.[25] A small community could also be found at Antechamber Bay where Nathaniel (Nat) Thomas and George 'Fireball' Bates lived. As Taylor has detailed, the personal story of each man differs but all share certain commonalities. Colonial newspapers at the time tended to claim that they were escaped convicts living in the wilds to evade the law, but most appear to have been sealers who arrived on the island and decided not to return to their sealing ships.[26]

In this period, the men who lived on Kangaroo Island were part of a multi-national colonial community, rather than an exclusively British one. The men who stayed there, whether permanently or temporarily as part of a sealing gang, often had experience working beyond Australia. 'Governor' Henry Wallen, for instance, had been sealing in Aotearoa New Zealand in September 1817. He left after coming into conflict with a Māori community.[27] Additionally, although the majority of the men who established themselves on Kangaroo Island likely had an English background, there were notable exceptions. Abyssinia Jack is sometimes depicted as an African American man, although Taylor argues that he was likely to have been English. She notes that he was probably confused with another man, John 'Black Jack' Anderson, who was certainly African American.[28] Black Jack was known to have held some authority, as he supposedly led the American sealers present on the island.[29] These non-British men are not especially well remembered today, but their presence reveals a complex, multi-ethnic picture of imperial engagement with Kangaroo Island that is more detailed than simple narratives of British colonisation might imply.

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[21] Mark McKenna, *Looking for Blackfellas' Point*: *an Australian history of place* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002), 33.
[22] *The Australian,* 9 March 1826.
[23] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 25.
[24] John Stanley Cumpston, *Kangaroo Island 1800-1836* (Canberra: Roebuck Society Publication, 1970), 70, 110, 127, 131, 171; cited in Taylor, *Unearthed,* 25-26, 28.
[25] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 28.
[26] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 24-29.
[27] Cumpston, *Kangaroo Island 1800-1836,* 53; cited in Taylor, *Unearthed,* 25.
[28] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 25.
[29] Cumpston, *Kangaroo Island 1800-1836,* 168.

This multi-ethnic picture is further enhanced by the presence of Aboriginal women brought to the island to act as 'wives' for the pre-1836 settlers. Many of these Aboriginal women were likely violently kidnapped from their coastal communities in present day Tasmania, Victoria, or South Australia, although historical research Chester Schultz has argued that some may have been acquired by 'trade' between sealers and Aboriginal men.[30] Raids by sealers for 'wives' were documented in colonial records at the time. The edition of the *Australian* which reported on the community living at Kangaroo Island in 1826 also included a letter to the editor which castigated the 'persons illegally living in the Strait.' These men were stated to be living with 'the black native women they occasionally steal from the main land and whom they use most barbarously.'[31] George Augustus Robinson, a religious preacher and Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Port Phillip District from 1839 to 1849, also documented abductions in Van Diemen's Land, including one which had been described to him by a Parperloihener man called Penderion.[32] However, as historian Lyndall Ryan notes in *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (1981), the interactions between European sealers and Aboriginal peoples sometimes demonstrated examples of accommodation, mutual trade, and cultural hybridity. Like Schultz, Ryan notes that 'Aboriginal men offered women in an attempt to incorporate the visitors into their own society.'[33] In turn, the sealers provided hunting dogs along with martial assistance during periods of conflict with rival Aboriginal groups. Consequently, both Ryan and Schultz claim that, through their engagement with these women, the sealers slotted into a system of Aboriginal kinship ties and rivalries in a way that the official settlers rarely did.[34]

The Aboriginal women were essential for the survival of the pre-1836 settlers who lived on Kangaroo Island. Most of the settlers lived with at least one and sometimes several Aboriginal women. Governor Wallen, for instance, is reported to have had at least two 'wives'. Colonial sources tend not to recall these women in as much detail as the men, although they are present. In his 1865 historical fiction novel *The Kangaroo Islanders*, author William Cawthorne records possible nicknames given to some of the women, such as 'Bumblefoot Sal', 'Pussy', 'Black Bet', 'Brown Sally', and 'Suky'.[35] However, despite sparse details regarding the women themselves, their importance and resourcefulness is well documented. Cawthorne, for instance, narrates a scene where 'Bumblefoot Sal' administers highly effective bush medicine to a severely stunned European man.[36] Research by Taylor and, more recently, Schultz, confirms the importance of the women on Kangaroo Island, who ensured the survival of the pre-1836 settlements by helping to 'find water in a parched land and meat in a seemingly hunted-out patch'.[37] This scholarship speaks to a broader body of research which has

[30] Schultz, *Feet on the Fleurieu, Language on the Land,* 26.
[31] "To the Editor of the Australian," *The Australian,* 9 March 1826, 2.
[32] Ian McFarlane, "Aboriginal Society in North West Tasmania: Dispossession and Genocide" (PhD Diss., University of Tasmania, 2002), 27-52; cited in Taylor, *Unearthed,* 41.
[33] Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians: second edition* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 70.
[34] Ryan, *Aboriginal Tasmanians,* 71.
[35] William Anderson Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders: A story of South Australia before colonisation, 1823,* ed. Rick Hosking (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2020), 38 (for Bumblefoot Sal), 67 (for Pussy), 71 (for Black Bet and Brown Sally), 93 (for Suky and Brown Sally).
[36] Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders,* 38.
[37] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 28-29.

explored the tendency for colonising men to establish partnerships with Aboriginal women. Across Australia, as Ann McGrath points out, Aboriginal women were sought out in part because they could 'gather bush foods, cook, and undertake cleaning and housework, as well as provide social and sexual comfort.'[38]

The interactions and relationships between the pre-1836 settlers and the Aboriginal women with whom they lived implicitly challenged European cultural hegemony. Polygamous unions between settlers and multiple Aboriginal women, such as those that occurred on Kangaroo Island, were not uncommon across the Australian frontier and often aligned with the traditional customs of Aboriginal peoples. Yet, the readiness of European men to engage in polygamy questioned Christian beliefs about the inherent value and spiritual sanctity of monogamous marriage.[39] Further, while the European men maintained patriarchal authority within these unions, they sometimes embraced Aboriginal methods of living which they learned from their 'wives'. As Taylor demonstrates, contemporary colonial newspapers expressed outrage about these pre-1836 settlers and their supposedly non-European ways.[40] In 1826, the *Hobart Town Gazette* lamented 'that so debased a specimen of the Christian race as these men should be the first to give an impression to the natives.'[41] These ideas persisted well into the twentieth century, with historian Manning Clark stating in 1978 that the pre-1836 settlers were 'no more capable than the aborigine of avoiding a life of degeneracy'.[42] Such strong views spoke to significant anxieties regarding threats to the boundaries of class and culture in the early Australian colonies.[43] In particular, the decision by these men to abandon European propriety in order to embrace a style of life seemingly better suited to the Australian environment undermined colonising assumptions about the superiority of British culture and civilisation.

The Aboriginal women on Kangaroo Island were also, to some degree, able to maintain their agency and promote their traditional practices despite their subordinate position to the European men. In 1867, an overt example of female resistance was related to South Australian missionary George Taplin. Apparently after being captured and restrained by the pre-1836 settlers, one woman used fire to burn through her cords, freed her fellow captives, and fled to the mainland in a boat.[44] Escape attempts such as this were not uncommon, although female assertions of autonomy could be more subtle. As Ann Laura Stoler points out, throughout the European empires, Indigenous women often took active advantage of their sexual, social, or economic value in order to achieve personal goals in spite of patriarchal

[38] Ann McGrath, "Consent, Marriage and Colonialism," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6, no. 3 (2005): *Project MUSE*, https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2006.0016.
[39] McGrath, "Consent, Marriage and Colonialism," https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2006.0016.
[40] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 45-48.
[41] Van Diemen's Land, William Henry Hamilton (Acting Colonial Secretary), "On Kangaroo Island, and the Runaways in the Straits," *Hobart Town Gazette* (Hobart: George Terry Howe, 10 June 1826), 4; Taylor, *Unearthed,* 48.
[42] Manning Clark, *Henry Lawson: the man and the legend* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1985), 107.
[43] Philip Clarke, "The Aboriginal Presence on Kangaroo Island, South Australia," in *History in Portraits: Biographies of nineteenth century South Australian people,* eds. Jane Simpson, and Luise Hercus (Canberra: Aboriginal History Inc, 1998), 19-22.
[44] George Taplin, George Taplin's Diary, 9 March 1867, PRG 186, Mortlock Library, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide; cited in Taylor, *Unearthed,* 41.

and colonial power structures.[45] For instance, on Kangaroo Island, Aboriginal women leveraged their role as sexual companions and their unique skills in bushcraft to pass on their cultural practices to the next generation. Cawthorne describes a scene in his novel where the Aboriginal women speak 'with their half-caste children, talking to each other in a low plaintive voice in their native tongue.'[46] The women go on to sing a traditional lament together, before taking the time to teach their children about the stars and constellations.[47] This act of passing on language, culture, and lore to their mixed-descent children subverted male familial authority, but it also undermined colonial hegemony. As Irene Watson points out, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty remains evident today in part due to the survival of complex legal systems, song lines, and languages despite colonial attempts to extinguish them.[48]

The sole occupancy of Kangaroo Island by the sealers, their Aboriginal 'wives', and their children came to an end on 27 July 1836 when the *Duke of York* sailed into Nepean Bay bearing a platoon of British colonists. The *Duke of York* was the first of four ships chartered by the South Australian Company—a private commercial enterprise that facilitated colonial emigration to South Australia. Several ships of the South Australian Company, including the *Duke of York*, had set out from London in advance of the Colonisation Commission's official expedition to establish a new colony in South Australia. As historians Paul Sendziuk and Rob Foster note, 'in the absence of preparatory surveys, the South Australian Company had relied on the few existing accounts to identify potential sites' and had decided to send their first vessels to Kangaroo Island.[49] Although they did not have governmental authority to do so, these first South Australian Company settlers unofficially declared the establishment of the Province of South Australia upon disembarking at Reeves Point on Kangaroo Island.[50] The colonists established a camp on the island, but the government surveyor William Light found that the local terrain was unsuitable for a major settlement when he arrived on 20 August.[51] Within a few months the majority of the settlers had relocated to the new township of Adelaide. The establishment of the government of the Province of South Australia was only officially proclaimed when Governor Hindmarsh arrived on 28 December 1836 and came ashore at Holdfast Bay near Adelaide.

Kangaroo Island's history prior to the arrival of South Australian Company settlers in 1836 illuminates a deeply layered history. The short encounters with the island by explorers and early sealers from diverse countries, the permanent villages of the pre-1836 settlers, and the complex experiences of the Aboriginal women reveal instances of trans-national imperialism,

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[45] Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The politics of comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 25-26.
[46] Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders,* 70.
[47] Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders,* 70-71.
[48] Irene Watson, "The Future is our Past: We once were sovereign and we still are," *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 8, no. 3 (2012): 13.
[49] Paul Sendziuk and Robert Foster, *A History of South Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 20-21.
[50] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 72-74.
[51] Sendziuk and Foster, *A History of South Australia,* 21-22.

examples of cultural hybridity, and stories of gendered and Indigenous resistance and accommodation. However, the arrival of the ships of the South Australian Company has partly obscured these historical narratives in the memorial landscape of Kangaroo Island and South Australia. The South Australian Company's base at Reeves Point only existed for a few months and was supposedly plagued by alcoholism and poor management. Yet, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the apparent importance of Reeves Point as a foundational site came to dominate narratives of the island to the detriment of those earlier histories.

Narratives of Kangaroo Island's colonisation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

By the mid-nineteenth century, Kangaroo Island's history was already being memorialised via narratives that glorified official British colonisation. Within this broader narrative, stories about the voyages of Matthew Flinders in 1802 as well as the landing of South Australian Company settlers at Reeves Point in 1836 received the most attention. Meanwhile, historical actors from non-British imperial states were typically relegated to auxiliary roles. Tales about the activities of the pre-1836 European settlers and the Aboriginal women on the island, while certainly present, existed mainly in the background and were often framed as a curious opening prelude to the main performance of official arrival in 1836. The overarching image conjured by these memorial narratives depicted a clear sense of British possession which, as Bain Attwood argues, helped to justify the legitimacy of the British settler colonial state.

This focus on narratives of British colonisation and possession could be seen through the attention given to memorials that recalled Matthew Flinders. One of the earliest official memorials erected on Kangaroo Island was an obelisk unveiled on 22 March 1902. Established in Queenscliffe—now Kingscote—the memorial commemorated the 100 year anniversary of Flinders's landing, more than three decades before the state's centenary of official colonisation.[52] The unveiling ceremony was attended by a number of prominent local figures, including Charles Tucker, the local member for the House of Assembly and former mayor of Adelaide, and Louis von Doussa, the former Attorney-General for South Australia.[53] The obelisk remained a significant site for the performance of memory in the early twentieth century, including in 1910 when some Islanders asserted their sense of imperial identity by draping a Union Flag over the memorial.[54] Other memorials to Flinders soon followed, including a memorial stone and tablet erected at Christmas Cove near Penneshaw in 1936, and a plaque at Mount Thisby which was unveiled on 'Pioneers Day' in 1948.[55] These sites

[52] "Landing of Flinders," *The Kangaroo Island Courier*, 26 March 1902.
[53] "At Kangaroo Island," *The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser* 28 March 1902, 3.
[54] "Flinders remembered," *The Register*, 23 March 1910, 9.
[55] "Penneshaw Centenary Celebrations," *The Kangaroo Islander Courier,* 20 November 1936; cited in "Matthew Flinders Christmas Cove," KIPAsigns*,* accessed 12 October 2023, https://sites.google.com/site/kipasigns/commemorations/matthew-flinders-christmas-cove; "Matthew Flinders," KIPAsigns, accessed 12 October 2023, https://sites.google.com/site/kipasigns/commemorations/matthew-flinders.

lionised a semi-fictional version of Flinders who performed as a key *dramatis personae* in a neat colonial narrative. Explorers like Flinders who were the 'first' to 'discover' the land provided a clear beginning for a linear story which traced enduring British possession from the past into the present. This in turn solidified the 'apparent fact of settler ownerships as if it was always there,' as historian Tracey Banivanua Mar points out.[56]

Conversely, memorials to Baudin were uncommon at this early point of the twentieth century, and may well have been non-existent if French sailors had not left graffiti in 1803. Unlike Flinders, Baudin did not fit neatly into a narrative focused on British imperial exploits. However, the town of Penneshaw had been established near the site where the message 'Expédition De Decouverte Par Le Commandant Baudin Sur Le Géographe 1803' had been engraved in stone. The message was an artefact that spoke to a non-British history and could not be easily ignored. By the 1900s 'Frenchman's Rock' was an important local tourist attraction for Penneshaw. Public fundraising contributed to the construction of a small white dome at the site in 1906, but deterioration of the French carving meant that the original rock was eventually removed and taken to Adelaide for safe keeping in 1917.[57] A concrete replica was installed in its place.

Other than this, though, Baudin did not receive any significant official memorials, monuments, or plaques. He was mentioned in an article for *The Register* about Matthew Flinders on 8 April 1902, but only because once Flinders met the *Géographe* he 'had to be content to follow where others had led the way'.[58] The following year, *The Register* did not acknowledge the centenary of Baudin's circumnavigation of Kangaroo Island, or any of his other achievements. However, despite the lack of explicit acknowledgement, local knowledge of French involvement with the island endured. The carved message at Penneshaw assisted in this, but so did the place names that Baudin had inscribed on the island during his voyage in 1803. As chapter three explores in greater depth, toponyms can maintain suppressed memories even as they are ignored by dominant or official narratives.[59] On Kangaroo Island, locations like D'estrees Bay, Cape Gantheaume, Cape Bouguer, and Ravine Des Casoars kept the French language, and its predilection for silent letters, alive in local parlance.

Baudin's position in these local narratives demonstrates that there was an awareness of non-British histories in local communities prior to mid-twentieth century, even if they were not subject to outward memorialisation. W.E.H. Stanner famously claimed that a structural culture of Anglo-centric, colonial entitlement contributed to a broad cultural silence with regards to non-British histories of Australia generally and Indigenous histories particularly.[60]

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[56] Travey Banivanua Mar, "Settler colonial Landscapes and Narratives of Possession," *Arena Journal* 37, no. 38 (25 January 2019): 181.

[57] Birgit Heilmann, "Frenchman's Rock," History Trust of South Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/things/frenchmans-rock.

[58] "In Memory of Flinders," *The Register,* 8 April 1902, 4.

[59] Laura Kostanski, and Ian Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," in *Indigenous and minority placenames: Australian and international perspectives*, eds. Ian Clark, Luise Anna Hercus, and Laura Kostanski (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014), 189.

[60] William E. H. Stanner, *After the Dreaming: 1968 Boyer Lectures* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1969), 24-25; Anna Clark, *Making Australian History* (Melbourne: Vintage Books Australia, 2022), 171-172.

Yet, as a large body of recent scholarship has shown, the blanket of the 'Great Australian Silence' that Stanner described had innumerable small tears where other narratives show through.[61] Many early to mid-nineteenth century colonial texts demonstrated awareness of interracial connections, interest in Aboriginal life, accounts of frontier violence, and fears of non-British interests in Australia.[62] Especially in the late nineteenth century, these stories continued to appear in certain areas of public discourse, even as official memorial practices focused on orthodox narratives of British colonisation.[63] This was certainly the case with Kangaroo Island's history, where depictions of Aboriginal women and the island's pre-1836 settlers appeared in quiet, but distinct ways.

For instance, some nineteenth century books related stories of the pre-1836 settlers and their Aboriginal 'wives' to contemporary colonial audiences. Two significant examples were Cawthorne's novel *The Kangaroo Islanders* (1865-1866) and William Augustine Leigh's travelogue *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels with Adventures in the new Colonies of South Australia* (1840). Leigh's travelogue sat within a long tradition of colonial adventure narratives which literary scholar Robert Dixon argues helped reveal colonial anxieties and construct nationalist mythologies.[64] *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels* contained depictions of the pre-1836 settlers, including one of a 'Robinson-Crusoe kind of personage, who has been on this island for nearly twenty years' along with his 'black wives (or gins, as they are called).'[65] However, Leigh mainly used his book to scorn the 'inhospitable' Australian environment and to chastise the South Australian Company, while he praised the valiant toil of the early British settlers.[66] The so-called 'Islanders' added colour and depth to his narrative, but they were not necessarily his focus.

By contrast, Cawthorne's novel was a semi-fictional account of pre-1836 life on Kangaroo Island which explicitly depicted the first unofficial settlers and the Aboriginal women. Literary scholar Rick Hosking notes that *The Kangaroo Islanders* was published in a serialised form in the *Illustrated Melbourne Post* between 1865 and 1866, before 'the majority of the South Australian "foundation memoirs" and colonial histories first appeared.'[67] Cawthorne's father was the lighthouse keeper at Cape Willoughby, and he appears to have been influenced by stories related to him by the old sealers and Aboriginal women who were both still living on the island in the 1850s. However, he dramatised these narratives in ways that introduced historically inaccurate elements. For example, he advanced the erroneous belief that the men living on the island were 'runaway convicts from Van Diemen's Land and Sydney.'[68]

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[61] Ann Curthoys, "WEH Stanner and the Historians," in *An Appreciation of Difference: W.E.H Stanner and Aboriginal Australia,* eds. M. Hinkson, and J. Beckett (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2008), 235 and 241-244.
[62] Clark, *Making Australian History,* 174-178.
[63] Clark, *Making Australian History,* 178.
[64] Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 228.
[65] Leigh, *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels,* 81 and 104.
[66] Leigh, *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels,* 69-71.
[67] Rick Hosking, "'Beyond the Pale': William Cawthorne's *The Kangaroo Islanders,*' in Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders,* 200.
[68] Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders,* 5.

Cawthorne appeared to have been sympathetic towards the Aboriginal women on the island and he described their poor treatment by European men in his novel. Yet, as Hosking notes, the eventual murder of Cawthorne's protagonist, Captain Meredith, by a Kaurna warrior helped fix 'in the communal memory the idea that Aboriginal people were not to be trusted, that they acted irrationally, [and] that they were inexplicitly violent.'[69] In this way, Cawthorne's novel simultaneously highlighted the dark side of colonisation while also reiterating established tropes that justified belief in Britain's cultural superiority and its imperial project.

Glimpses of Kangaroo Island's pre-1836 history could also be seen in South Australian colonial newspapers during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1886—the year of the colony's fiftieth anniversary—*The South Australian Advertiser* published a profile piece on George 'Fireball' Bates. The article introduced Bates by stating that:

> Few are aware that there still lives in South Australia one who, in point of years, eclipses all the old residents of the province, who, years before the colony was declared, lived in it a wild and adventurous life, who remembers the arrival of all the pioneer ships from first to last, and welcomed them in many instances to these shores, and who still lives in the vicinity of Hog Bay, existing on Government rations with his aged wife in a miserable hut.[70]

Bates appeared in a range of other colonial documents in the 1880s, where he was generally identified as a 'pioneer'. A watercolour painting of his hut declared him to be 'the pioneer of Kangaroo Island' and was displayed in the Jubilee Exhibition Building in Adelaide in 1887.[71] He also appeared in an Old Colonists Association pamphlet with the lengthy title *An account of the celebration of the jubilee year of South Australia (1886) with the reminiscecnes [sic] of early settlers, the names of the pioneers who arrived in South Australia in the year 1836 and other interesting information connected with the foundation of South Australia* (1887).[72]

The story of Bates, especially as he was presented in the 1886 *South Australian Advertiser* article, spoke to a tension that often appeared in late nineteenth century representations of South Australian history and identity. As Nettelbeck points out, narratives of South Australia's settlement in this period often sought to reconcile the colony's overarching belief in its fundamentally humane and liberal nature with local stories of adventure that revealed racial violence.[73] The article on Bates shared with the latter an open, and sometimes celebratory, admission of violence against Aboriginal people. It acknowledged and detailed the kidnapping of Aboriginal women from the mainland, although it excused the practice by stating that the women were 'useful and willing slaves'.[74] It also reinforced emerging social-Darwinist

[69] Rick Hosking, "Introduction," in Cawthorne, *The Kangaroo Islanders,* x.
[70] "Old George Bates", *The South Australian Advertiser,* 27 December 1886, 6.
[71] "The Jubilee Exhibition," *South Australian Register,* 18 August 1887, 6.
[72] Old Colonists' Association, *An account of the celebration of the jubilee year of South Australia (1886), with the reminiscences of early settlers, the names of the pioneers who arrived in South Australia in the year 1836, and other interesting information connected with the foundation of South Australia* (Adelaide: W.K. Thomas and Co., Printers, 1887), 7.
[73] Amanda Nettelbeck, "South Australian settler memoirs," *Journal of Australian Studies* 25, no. 68 (2001): 97.
[74] "Old George Bates," 6.

assumptions about European superiority; in contrast to the Europeans, Aboriginal peoples were portrayed as violent, superstitious, and duplicitous. For instance, the article related a story in which Bates was invited to 'become a chief' for a group of Aboriginal people before being mistreated, assaulted, and abandoned by them. This event was used to further justify the taking of slaves 'As punishment'.[75] Yet, in some ways, Bates's narrative was unique as a story of frontier contact because it could openly explore histories of violence due to the fact it was set prior to the official establishment of South Australia as a colony. Thus, the story of Bates was not restrained by having to claim that 'violence was rare' in order to sustain foundational myths about South Australia's humanitarian origins.[76]

But, while Bates's pre-foundational story was free from the unacknowledged contradictions of more orthodox colonial adventure narratives, it made him an awkward addition to South Australia's pantheon of founding pioneers. There is some indication that Bates was not granted the status of 'pioneer' until after he personally 'sent a letter to the *Register* stating his claim to be called a pioneer.'[77] Likewise, the Old Colonists Association pamphlet only contained a short and highly sanitised history of Bates. He was mentioned in just one paragraph of the 82-page pamphlet where he was recognised as one of the 'first white settlers' who lived 'his Robinson Crusoe life' on Kangaroo Island alongside 'a number of adventurous men.'[78] The pamphlet does not mention the Aboriginal women who lived on the island, nor does it refer to Kangaroo Island's history of slavery. The focus of the pamphlet—as its descriptive title makes clear—is on those who arrived in 1836.

To a certain extent, the limited role given to Kangaroo Island's unofficial settlers, such as Bates, may reflect the difficulties involved in finding space for pre-1836 histories during anniversary celebrations meant to commemorate 1836 as the date of the colony's foundation. However, it may also represent a certain level of discomfort in the late nineteenth century with acknowledging as 'founding pioneers' men who clearly did not embody the colony's stated humanitarian principles. Perhaps because of this, stories about these pre-1836 pioneers seemed to recede further into the background of state commemorative narratives as the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth.

Foundational narratives during the 1936 State Centennial commemorations

Nettelbeck and Foster note that 'throughout the 1930s, a historical culture emerged in Australia dominated by the theme of foundation.'[79] This theme could be identified at the national, state, and regional level and found expression in South Australia during the momentous state-wide centennial commemorations of 1936. These commemorations celebrated the establishment of South Australia as an official British colony. For the residents

[75] "Old George Bates," 6.
[76] Nettelbeck, "South Australian settler memoirs," 96-98.
[77] George Bates, "Lines from an old pioneer," *South Australian Register,* 8 December 1886, 6; Old Colonists' Association, *An account of the celebration of the jubilee year of South Australia (1886),* 7.
[78] Old Colonists' Association, *An account of the celebration of the jubilee year of South Australia (1886),* 7.
[79] Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundations," 58.

of Kangaroo Island, the centennial celebrations provided an opportunity to highlight the island's unique place within the state's history as a site of British colonisation prior to Hindmarsh's proclamation on 28 December 1836.

Rather than drawing attention to those 'pioneers' who, like Bates, had existed on the island prior to 1836, memorialisation on Kangaroo Island engaged with the 'theme of foundation' by commemorating the arrival of the first South Australian Company settlers at Kingscote on 27 July 1836. The location of Reeves Point specifically was the centre of the island's celebrations because this was where—as the *Advertiser* poetically stated—'Exactly 100 years ago, under a magnificent rainbow, the Duke of York furled her sails in Nepean Bay and landed a gallant little band of nation builders.'[80] As was reported in both *the Advertiser* and the *Kangaroo Island Courier* at the time, the commemorations around Kingscote included a dramatic re-enactment of the landing at Reeves Point in period costume, a thanksgiving church service, and an official luncheon for key individuals. In addition, the foundation stone of a new Pioneer Memorial dedicated to the South Australian Company settlers was laid on Quarry Hill overlooking Reeves Point.[81]

The attendance of the descendants of South Australian Company settlers at key commemorative events on Kangaroo Island underlined both the apparent significance of those who disembarked from the *Duke of York* in 1836 and the island's connection to these 'foundational' early settlers. As anthropologist Janet Carsten points out in relation to Southeast Asia, the descendants of key historical figures are often revered during performances of memory. Through their ancestral kinship, living descendants symbolically connect figures of the past with the current-day, and act to legitimise claims about the present-day community's enduring connection to place.[82] Further, when they are enlisted as actors during re-enactments, descendants are often assumed to possess a deep emotional insight into the minds' of their ancestors which imbues their performance with special legitimacy.[83] During the 1936 Reeves Point commemorations, the presence of the 'descendants of 1836 pioneers' was ubiquitous and widely advertised in the press.[84] The grandchildren or great-grandchildren of the 1836 settlers played the lead roles in the commemorative re-enactment, and all of the invitees at the official luncheon could 'claim kinship with the founders of South Australia'. Meanwhile, Margaret Doris Maclagan, the granddaughter of South Australian Company settler Thomas Hudson Beare, placed the foundation stone of the Pioneer Memorial.[85] The centrality of these individuals expressed a

[80] Ernestine Hill, "First Landing at Kangaroo Is. Re-enactment Today of Dramatic Incident. Poetic Repetition of History.," *The Advertiser*, 27 July 1936, 8.
[81] Hill, "First Landing at Kangaroo Is," 8.
[82] Janet Carsten, "The Politics of Forgetting: Migrations, Kinship, and Memory on the Periphery of the Southeast Asian State," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1, no. 2 (1995): 318.
[83] Amy McNeese, "Playing the past: historical re-enactment societies and the performance of identity in Scotland," (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2002): 11 and 311-312.
[84] "S.A. on outskirts of centenary carnival. Will be biggest Gala in History of State. Vivid Picture of Proceedings.," *The News (Adelaide),* 9 July 1936, 6.
[85] "S.A. on outskirts of centenary carnival.," 6.

distinct message: the scions of the pioneers still lived and thrived in the communities that had been established on Kangaroo Island on 27 July 1836.

The new Pioneer Memorial also located South Australia's foundations with the arrival of British ships at Reeves Point. When it was built, the Pioneer Memorial bore 'a bronze tablet engraved with the model of a sailing ship' on a central pillar flank by two statues of kangaroos, and 'a stairway leading to a balustrade lookout, commanding the sea for many miles, with a flagstaff'.[86] Its architecture was important. As scholarship in both memory studies and architectural studies have pointed out, the physical shape of a memorial site may lead visitors to think about the past through a specific interpretive framework.[87] The Pioneer Memorial directed visitors to think about both the island's and the state's foundation through its connection to ships and the sea. The twin kangaroo statues were likely meant to be a reference to the island's name—itself a reference to the island's endemic subspecies of western grey kangaroo—and these two figures clearly grounded the memorial in a local context.[88] Meanwhile, the carved depiction of a sailing ship recalled the vessels that transported settlers in 1836 and ensured their survival through shipments of supplies from Europe. The Pioneer Memorial's lookout also promoted reflection on the significance of the sea as an imperial lifeline, though in a more subtle way. By directing visitors to look out over the Bay of Shoals, the lookout promoted a memorial act of imitation which recalled the actions of early settlers who may have watched the sea in anticipation for the ships that connected them to the empire.[89]

The Pioneer Memorial's emphasis on ships as the colony's lifeline alluded to a sense of British imperial identity within the island's memory culture which was undoubtedly a reflection of nation-wide feelings. In 1936, Australia was still enmeshed within the empire; the country was officially a British dominion and members of the Australian state were legally British subjects. Prime Minister John Curtin made it clear that Australia considered itself a British nation when he stated in 1941 that 'This nation will remain for ever the home of sons of Britishers who came here in peace in order to establish in the South Seas an outpost of the British race.'[90] The Governor of South Australia at the time, Sir Winston Dugan, in many ways

[86] Hill, "First Landing at Kangaroo Is," 8.

[87] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations,* No 26 (1989): 22; Stanford Anderson, "Memory without Monuments: Vernacular Architecture," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 11, no. 1 (1999): 16-18.

[88] It is also possible that the kangaroo statues were intended to represent a broader white Australian settler nationalism, which, as several academics have pointed out, often expressed a sense of settler domination over native species, territories, and environments via the incorporation of native animals into European cultural practices or symbols. See: Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver, *The Colonial Kangaroo Hunt* (Melbourne University Press, 2020), 112.

[89] The Pioneer Memorial's structure may also be significant because of the way it utilizes both horizontality and verticality. Looking at the structure from the ground, the memorial stands tall as a symbol of colonial progress. Yet, once one climbs the stairs and stand on the lookout, the monument's 'axis of display' is 'horizontal' in that it directs one's view towards the horizon. Discussing the significance of spatial organization in the context of war memorials, Jay Winter and Antoine Prost argues that 'Verticality is the language of hope, horizontality that of mourning.' If so, the Pioneer Memorial perhaps embodies both. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 187.

[90] John Curtin, "White Australia to be defended against Japan – extract from speech by Prime Minister John Curtin," (16 December 1941), A989, 1944/43/554/2/1 part 1, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.

embodied these ongoing cultural and political ties which bound South Australia to Britain. Dugan was born in Ireland and died in England and he had been a major general in the British Army prior to being appointed governor.[91] During the unveiling of the completed Pioneer Memorial on 9 November 1936, this sense of imperial pride was on show. Dugan, who was in attendance, stated that the 1836 landings at Reeves Point were part of a deeper history during which 'Great Britain [had] done wonders in colonisation' and he noted that 'we should be proud to belong to this great race.'[92] Emphasising Kangaroo Island's place within the larger empire, a Union Flag was hung on the monument. In this way, the ceremony presented the landings at Reeves Point as a foundational moment for South Australia while connecting it to an imperial history of progress.



Fig. 1. Unveiling of the Kingscote Pioneer's Memorial by Sir Winston Dugan on 9 November 1936. (Photograph. "Pioneer's Memorial," 1936, B 9698, Kingscote Collection, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.)

These celebrations on Kangaroo Island in 1936 thematically aligned with state-level commemorations, particularly with regards to concepts of continuity and foundation.[93] As Nettelbeck and Foster point out, many of the commemorative events that occurred in South Australia throughout 1936 articulated a linear path from British 'discovery' in 1802, to official settlement in 1836, and from there to South Australia's place in 'a modern and progressive nation.'[94] The climax of these celebrations was the 'Pageant of Progress' in Adelaide on 22 December 1936. Among other things, the pageant explored South Australia's history with a

[91] P.A. Howell, "Dungan, Sir Winston Joseph (1876-1951)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 14* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 44.
[92] "The Unveiling of the Monument," *Kangaroo Island Courier*, 13 November 1936, 2.
[93] Julian Thomas, "1938: Past and present in an elaborate anniversary," *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 91 (1988): 118-123; cited in Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundation," 58.
[94] Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundation," 60.

cavalcade of 236 floats which was described by Sir Basil Brooke, a dignitary from Northern Ireland, as 'The story of the birth and life of a nation in one glorious hour.'[95]

However, Kangaroo Island's role in the colony's early history was absent from the Adelaide pageant. The 'historical section' of the pageant represented the state's early history in several floats. These included a 'Stone Age' float, depicting Aboriginal people sitting around a camp; a float of Matthew Flinders and the *Investigator*; a float of the explorer Charles Sturt 'being menaced by armed natives'; a float depicting government surveyor William Light contemplating a proposed site for Adelaide; a float dedicated to the landing of Governor Hindmarsh; and a float showing Hindmarsh reading the proclamation of the government of South Australia.[96] It did not include any significant reference to non-British historical figures with strong connections to Kangaroo Island, such as Baudin, the American sealers, or the Aboriginal women of the island. Neither did the parade note the arrival of settlers at Reeves Point prior to the landing at Adelaide, or the existence of white settlers living in South Australia before 1836. Rather, the pageant made clear that it was the 'official' British explorers and the 'old colonists' of Adelaide who established the colony and paved the way for its modern development.[97]

On Kangaroo Island, some commentators expressed their annoyance that their local history did not feature more prominently in state commemorations of foundation. Prior to the centenary commemorations at Reeves Point, the *Advertiser* noted the significance of the fact that Kangaroo Island 'leads the van in South Australia's Centenary celebrations.'[98] Some Islanders attempted to claim a unique pre-proclamation position within the state's historical narrative and evidenced this by pointing to the fact that the island's commemorations occurred some five months prior to the major events in Adelaide. As the *Kangaroo Island Courier* stated, seemingly with a mixture of pride and frustration, 'Monday next is Kangaroo Island's great day. No other part of the State can take from us the honor [*sic*] of being residents of that part of South Australia that on the 27th of July, 1836, became the cradle of our State's colonisation.' [99] It was in this context of resistance to a domineering, Adelaide-based state narrative that the histories of the sealers and the pre-1836 white settlers were expressed. Taking cues from the *Kangaroo Island Courier*, the *Advertiser* praised 'the old-time sealers and whalers, who, before the colony existed, were nomads of the south coast of Australia from Bass Strait to Leeuwin, with headquarters at Kangaroo Island.' The article went on to claim that 'There is no doubt that in an heroic, if irregular, manner, these paved the way for later colonisation.'[100]

The *Advertiser*'s recognition of 'sealers and whalers' demonstrated that there was room for Kangaroo Island's pre-1836 history to be recognised, but it was limited. Recognition of these

[95] "Impression left of distinguished visitors," *The Advertiser,* 23 December 1936, 25.
[96] Photographs, 22 December 1936, B 8334, Centenary Celebrations Collection, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B+8334; "Pageant of Progress will make history," *The Mail,* 19 December 1936, 2; Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundation," 60.
[97] Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundation," 60 and 66-68.
[98] Hill, "First Landing at Kangaroo Is," 8.
[99] "Our Day," *The Kangaroo Island Courier,* 24 July 1936, 2.
[100] Hill, "First Landing at Kangaroo Is," 8.

early European settlers tended to vanish when their existence called into question assumptions of pioneering 'firsts'. For instance, during a report on the Pioneer Memorial, *the News* reported that Margaret Doris Maclagan was the niece of Arabella Beare, who was 'the first white person to land' in South Australia.[101] Maclagan's connection to Arabella Beare reinforced her significance as a descendent, but it also demonstrated the belief that the landings in 1836 represented a foundational 'first' for white settlement. This may have strengthened the perceived significance of the landings at Reeves Point, but, in doing so, it rhetorically obliterated the histories of the sealers who had been living permanently on the island since around 1820.

The histories of the Aboriginal women who lived on the island were missing entirely from commemorative proceedings in 1936. As Nettelbeck and Foster note, Aboriginal peoples featured during South Australia's centenary commemorations when they gave 'the authenticity of nativeness to the story of white Australian arrival, and here their role ended.'[102] The same could be said for Kangaroo Island's commemorations. Unlike in 1886, where they provided colour for Bates's pioneering adventure stories, in 1936 the stories of the Aboriginal women did not usefully contribute to narratives about Kangaroo Island's place in South Australia's foundation. Consequently, they did not appear and the commemorations remained focused on the activities and exploits of white settlers.

These commemorations on Kangaroo Island during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries echoed narratives that were being depicted at the state level. They revealed multiple layers of identities alongside complex, and sometimes contesting, narratives of foundation, but the overarching focus remained fixated on narratives which emphasised British colonisation and official settlement in 1836. The 'gallant little band of nation builders', as the *Advertiser* called them, that landed at Reeves Point provided a firm foundation for this narrative on Kangaroo Island, but did not seem to feature at the broader state-level.[103] Auxiliary or subaltern narratives arose when they were useful for this foundational narrative, but they were sanitised or excluded when they raised uncomfortable questions about the complicated realities of South Australia's history. However, as the twentieth century went on, and the Aboriginal civil rights movement steadily built momentum, this comfortable narrative of British colonisation became increasingly untenable.

Narratives of foundation and the 1986 sesquicentenary commemorations

In 1986, Kangaroo Island again commemorated the arrival of South Australian Company settlers during what was termed by *The Islander News Pictorial* as 'Kangaroo Island's greatest anniversary celebration.'[104] The commemorative events were similar in form to those that occurred fifty years earlier. The Kingscote Pioneer Memorial featured significantly and the

[101] "S.A. on outskirts of centenary carnival," 6.
[102] Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundations," 59.
[103] Hill, "First Landing at Kangaroo Is.," 8.
[104] "Countdown to Heritage Festival," *The Islander News Pictorial,* 23 July 1986, 1.

commemorative events included a thanksgiving church service, a dramatic re-enactment of the landing at Reeves Point in period costume, and an official luncheon for key individuals, among other things.[105] However, in spirit and in focus the commemorations in 1986 were quite different from earlier ones. In 1936, the island's commemorations concentrated chiefly on narratives of British colonisation that aligned with state-level celebrations. In 1986, though, the commemorations were framed by a regional narrative that presented Kangaroo Island as the 'birthplace' of South Australia and this was placed in opposition to the state's conventional focus on the Proclamation Day ceremony held in Adelaide on 28 December.[106]

In part, the differences between the commemorations in 1936 and the commemorations in 1986 may have reflected the fact that Australia's national memory culture had evolved since the mid-twentieth century, although the changes were not immediately apparent at the local level. Many settler-descendants across Australia still believed 'Australian history' began with the arrival of British colonists, and the 1970s and 1980s contained several important celebrations to colonial 'foundations'. In addition to South Australia's 1986 celebrations, sesquicentennial commemorations of colonisation also occurred in Western Australia in 1979 and in Melbourne between 1984 and 1985. At the national level, the bicentenary of James Cook's voyage along the east coast of Australia was celebrated in 1970. Eighteen years later, in 1988, the Australian National Bicentenary celebrated the 200-year anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet and the establishment of a penal colony at Port Jackson. The bicentenary was advertised as the 'celebration of a nation' and seemed to officially sanction the idea that the arrival of British settlers represented the beginnings of the Australian state, which had since grown to be modern, unified, and increasingly multicultural.[107] As both Graeme Davison and Stephen Gapps have pointed out, these commemorations were popular in part because they spoke to a broader groundswell of public interest in history that had been occurring throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[108]

However, while the belief that Australian history began with colonisation was common at the time, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s had increasingly drawn attention to Indigenous counter-narratives. Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists and academics pointed out that many issues related to Indigenous rights were closely tied with the history and legacy of state-sanctioned colonial violence, dispossession, and racism. They also noted that this history was unresolved and often unacknowledged. These movements built pressure on state and federal governments to recognise the history of Indigenous mistreatment and called into question the celebratory

[105] "Countdown to Heritage Festival," 1, "The historic re-enactment weekend," *The Islander News Pictorial,* 23 July 1986, 8; "Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Event," *The Islander News Pictorial,* 23 July 1986, 10; "From 'Around the River,' *The Islander News Pictorial,* 30 July 1986, 4.

[106] "The Birthplace of South Australia," *Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Special Pictorial Souvenir,* 30 July 1986, 1; Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association, e-mail message to author, 12 December 2020.

[107] Chris Healy, *From the ruins of colonialism: history as social memory* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2-3.

[108] Stephen Gapps, "Museum of the Living Dead: Performance, Body, and Memory at Living History Museums," *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 7, no. 2 (2018): 256; Graeme Davison, "The Use and Abuse of Australian History," *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 91 (1988): 55.

tone of the commemorations of colonisation in the 1980s.[109] In particular, the perception that the Australian National Bicentenary sought to frame British colonisation as a foundational moment deserving of national unity triggered protests from those who saw the commemorations as 'yet another memorial to a white invasion,' as Healy states.[110] The bicentenary protests included one of the largest marches since the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in the 1970s; some 40,000 people marched through Sydney demanding Aboriginal land rights and calling for a reckoning with Australia's ongoing history of settler colonialism.[111] The 1980s, therefore, experienced both celebratory events commemorating Australia's colonisation as well as growing demands for the country to recognise its Aboriginal history.

Yet, the 1986 commemorations on Kangaroo Island did not seem to demonstrate conflicted or contentious feelings regarding Australia's colonial past. Overseen by the Kingscote J150 Committee, in collaboration with the newly formed Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association (KIPA), the commemorations explored an orthodox narrative of 'the experiences and achievements of the stout-hearted pioneers who … tackled and tamed an unknown land.'[112] As already noted, the island's focus on pioneers and foundational moments of colonisation reflected broader trends in Australian commemorations throughout the 1970s and 1980s. On Kangaroo Island the celebration of the 'state's first settlers' was simplified by the absence of Aboriginal people on the island when Flinders arrived in 1801. As Rebe Taylor argued, the idea that Kangaroo Island was a true *terra nullus* allowed the local commemorations of settlement to be free from 'the burden of guilt that other colonial Australians might carry.'[113] Unlike at the national level, the local newspaper, *The Islander News Pictorial,* did not report any protests in 1986 over the island's commemorations of British arrival. Consequently, while stories which celebrated Australia's colonial foundations were being challenged at the state and national level in the 1980s, on Kangaroo Island these same narratives appeared to be present, popular, and relatively uncontentious.

Indeed, to a certain extent, the commemorations on Kangaroo Island explicitly emphasised its colonial history due to a belief that the island's role as the location of South Australia's first settlement deserved greater acknowledgement from the rest of the state. Supplementary material published for the official commemorations made this point explicitly. A 'Special Pictorial Souvenir' distributed by the *Islander News Pictorial* on 27 July stated 'Kangaroo Island's pre-eminence in the European history of South Australia deserves to be better known … because the emphasis given to the proclamation of the State at Glenelg has tended to obscure and distort its proud history.'[114] Likewise, during his speech prior to the re-enactment of the landings at Reeves Point, the Chairman of the Kingscote J150 Committee, George Murphy, claimed that 'I am sure that many mainlanders erroneously believed the first settlers

[109] Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 31.
[110] Healy, *From the ruins of colonialism,* 2.
[111] Macintyre and Clark, *The History Wars,* 40.
[112] "Countdown to Heritage Festival," 1.
[113] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 104.
[114] "The Birthplace of South Australia," 1.

arrived at Glenelg.'[115] Evidently, Murphy and the authors of the 'Special Pictorial Souvenir' felt uncomfortable with the state's failure to recognise the island's history and this may have contributed to the commemoration's didactic exploration of Reeves Point as the state's 'birthplace'.

Reeves Point had been a central location for earlier commemorations, but it gained even greater visibility as a historically significant location in the 1980s after it was recognised as a heritage site by the South Australian state government. This process began in 1983 shortly after the South Australian Department of Environment and Planning conducted an archaeological study which uncovered the ruins of a number of colonial structures along with the original layout of the first South Australian Company settlement.[116] In September of that year, the 'Reeves Point Settlement Site'—which included the colonial graveyard, the original well, and the old mulberry tree—was officially listed on the South Australian Heritage Register.[117] Following this, the state Jubilee 150 Board, supported by the KIPA, the District Council of Kingscote, the Kangaroo Island Lions Club, and the National Trust, initiated a plan to develop the new Reeves Point heritage site into a 'historical precinct' which would act as a memorial to the state's first settlement. The *Jubilee 150 Special Pictorial Souvenir* noted that this plan would turn Reeves Point into 'a more adequate testimony to [the] Island's pioneering heritage than any bricks and mortar monument could ever be.'[118] A total of 50,000 dollars were spent on the site, of which 40,000 dollars were provided by the state government.[119] While this was a relatively modest sum, it indicated that the state government had interest in the location as a site of memory. The fact that the South Australian Premier, John Bannon, agreed to personally dedicate the new 'historic precinct' during the island's 1986 commemorations seems to lend support to the notion that the state government saw some state-wide significance in Reeves Point.[120]

The development of Reeves Point terraformed the land so that the new historic precinct recalled the original settlement of 1836. As Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman have argued, *some lieux de mémoire* reshape the modern landscape to align with perceptions about the environment's historic appearance. In particular, memorial sites that reshape the environment impose specific narratives of the past on the land and create a sense of

[115] "Chairman's speech after Sunday Service," *Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Special Pictorial Souvenir,* 30 July 1986, 6.
[116] M. V. Truscott, "Archaeological survey of the Reeves Point site – place of the South Australian Company's settlement of Kingscote, Kangaroo Island," NLA Call No. mc N 392, prepared for the Heritage Conservation Branch of the South Australian Department of Environment and Planning (Adelaide: Department of Environment and Planning, 1983), 2-4.
[117] South Australia, Department for Environment and Water, *Reeves Point Settlement Site (site of the first official settlement in the Colony), including cemetery, well, and mulberry tree,* Heritage ID. 10980, Heritage No. 16032 (Adelaide: South Australian Heritage Register, 01 September 1983), https://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/HeritageItem.aspx?p_heritageno=16032.
[118] "Development of Reeves Point Historic Site," *Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Special Pictorial Souvenir,* 30 July 1986, 8.
[119] "Governor, Premier at Reeves Point ceremony," *Islander News Pictorial,* 23 July 1986, 1; "Development of Reeves Point Historic Site," 8.
[120] "Re-enactment bits & pieces," *Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Special Pictorial Souvenir,* 30 July 1986, 6.

'timelessness' that aids legitimacy.[121] At Reeves Point, modern roads were rerouted to follow the colonial pathways and new vegetation was planted to reference the 'original' environment. The ruined colonial structures, uncovered by the state's archaeological study, were contextualised with interpretive signs telling the story of the 'first settlers'. Notably, two new mulberry trees were propagated from the original 'old mulberry tree' and were planted at the site.[122] The original mulberry tree held special significance in Kangaroo Island's mythology as it had first been planted by South Australian Company settlers in 1836. According to the Kingscote District Council in 2021, its continued existence represents a 'living testament to the tenacious spirit of the early pioneers of South Australia.'[123] Taken together, these actions seemed to symbolically reassert the landscape of 1836.

On the anniversary day of the island's sesquicentenary, several events occurred in or around the Reeves Point historic site. These included the official speeches of the Premier and other dignitaries, as well as the re-enactment of the landings of the South Australian Company settlers. Some of these events deepened the site's symbolism. For instance, drawing on old, established themes of enduring ancestry and continuity, the two newly propagated mulberry trees were planted on the day by 'representatives of the four families' who claimed the original tree was 'planted by one of their ancestors'.[124] More generally, though, the symbolism of the historic site contextualised the events that took place there and subtly spoke to the commemoration's overall focus on foundations.

This theme of colonial foundations could also be found in the *Islander News Pictorial*. The newspaper claimed in several articles that Kangaroo Island was the birthplace of the state and called for the 27 July celebrations to demonstrate this to mainland South Australia. In the weeks leading up to the sesquicentenary, the newspaper argued that there was a need 'to impress upon people everywhere the pre-eminent but little known role of Kangaroo Island in the history of the State'.[125] Later, when it was reported that Governor Donald Dunstan, Premier John Bannon, and Opposition leader John Olsen would attend the official ceremonies held in Kingscote, the *Islander News Pictorial* recognised a chance to promote the island's history. The newspaper argued that the presence of these major state politicians would draw South Australia's attention and the island could correct the record on the 'colony's first settlement'.[126] In the week following the celebrations the newspaper reported the words of the Chairman of the Kingscote J150 Committee, who argued that 27 July was 'one of the most

[121] Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors," *GeoJournal* 1, no, 72 (2008): 167-168.
[122] "Development of Reeves Point Historic Site," 8; "Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Event," 10.
[123] "Old Mulberry Tree," South Australian Tourism Commission, Government of South Australia, 22 June 2021, accessed 23 January 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20210622053355/https://southaustralia.com/products/kangaroo-island/attraction/old-mulberry-tree.
[124] William P. Holmesby, "Congratulations from K.I.P.A. president," *Islander News Pictorial,* 30 July 1986, 2; "Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Event," 10.
[125] "Islanders honour their pioneers," *Islander News Pictorial,* 30 July 1986, 5.
[126] "Our Island 150 Years and Running," *Islander News Pictorial*, 16 July 1986, 6; "The Birthplace of South Australia," 1; "Islanders Honour their pioneers," 5.

historic occasions in South Australia's 150 year history' and should be considered the equal of the Proclamation Day ceremony held in Adelaide on 28 December.[127]

To ensure that the island would be an important part of the state's sesquicentenary, the Kingscote J150 Committee and the KIPA facilitated local commemorative acts prior to the celebrations planned for Reeves Point on 27 July. The *Islander News Pictorial* called on local businesses to establish window displays commemorating settlement and the local Anglican Church advertised special Jubilee services.[128] There was also an 'epic mail ride' conducted by two horsemen, Rodger Borgmeyer and 'Darky' Bruce, on which the *Islander News Pictorial* provided regular updates. The two horsemen travelled around the island delivering souvenir mail which contained 'a folded card telling briefly the Kangaroo Island Story, the purpose of the ride and the route taken'. The souvenir mail was stamped with reproductions of old postmarks.[129] The men rode 550 kilometres over 8 days, delivered mail to regional post offices, and ultimately arrived back in Kingscote to deliver commemorative scrolls to the state's Governor and Premier during the main anniversary ceremony.[130] These events built local anticipation for the celebrations that would take place on 27 July and thus 'led the van' of commemorations in 1986, much like Kangaroo Island had done for the rest of South Australia in 1936.

The mail ride was particularly noteworthy as it served to bring regional communities from across the island into the commemorations held at Kingscote. In their study of the 1951 re-enactment of Charles Sturt's expedition along the Murray River, Nettelbeck and Foster argue that the traveling nature of the event brought a spotlight to regional centres which illuminated local memories. Yet, the re-enactment ultimately ended in Adelaide, which represented 'the prophetic terminus of Sturt's journey' and which symbolically connected regional communities to Australia's metropolitan centres.[131] Kangaroo Island's mail ride acted in a similar fashion. Like the re-enactment of Sturt's expedition, it demonstrated pioneering hardships through an extended horseback ride over rough terrain. Further, by delivering commemorative mail depicting 'the Kangaroo Island Story' directly to regional post offices, the mail ride incorporated local communities into a broader narrative of the island. Meanwhile, on a personal level, the delivery of commemorative mail reframed the everyday practice of checking the letterbox into an act of historical remembrance for ordinary people. In this way, the mail ride brought acts of memorialisation to regional areas which would not normally be at the centre of official commemorations. When the mail ride finished in Kingscote, these local narratives of the past—that the ride had given space to be expressed—were directly tied with the history of first settlement being celebrated on 27 July.

Historical performances like the mail ride were at the centre of a number of events during the 27 July commemorations. For example, Kangaroo Island's commemorative parade crafted a theatrical version of the island's history through a local example of the broader 'twentieth

[127] "Chairman's speech after Sunday Service," 6.
[128] "KI's Big Day," *Islander News Pictorial,* 16 July 1986, 5.
[129] "Epic mail ride begins on Saturday," *Islander News Pictorial,* 16 July 1986, 4.
[130] "Epic mail ride begins on Saturday," 4; "Horseback Mail," *Islander News Pictorial,* 30 July 1986, 2.
[131] Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundation," 62.

century … tradition of participatory outdoor pageantry' described by historian Stephan Gapps.[132] Bearing some resemblance to Adelaide's 1936 'pageant of progress', the island's parade contained thirty-five floats and nearly 600 people, including actors in costumes.[133] Historical displays were featured alongside vehicular props in the form of horse-drawn harvesters and steam tractors, as well as a Bren Gun Carrier and an armoured car provided by the Returned and Services League.[134] The displays and props emphasised Kangaroo Island's contributions to pioneering, farming, and Australia's armed forces and located them on a historical timeline beginning with the arrival and exploits of the South Australian Company. The theme of European arrival in 1836 was further underlined by the parade's route. It started in the modern centre of Kingscote and proceeded to the Pioneer Memorial, where the early settlers were commemorated. From here, the parade's participants and spectators could watch the official re-enactment of the landing at Reeves Point, which was organised to commence shortly after the parade's arrival at the Pioneer Memorial.[135]

[132] Gapps, "Museum of the Living Dead," 250.

[133] According to the 1986 census, there were about 3,800 people living on Kangaroo Island at this time. Assuming that the participants of the parade were drawn mainly from local residents, this means approximately 16% of the island's population were involved. This high rate of participation in the parade alone speaks to the significance and popularity of the sesquicentenary celebrations on the island.

[134] "July 27th Where … How … What … When …" *Islander News Pictorial,* 23 July 1986, 9; KI's Big Day," 5.

[135] "Island celebrates with a great colonial party," *Islander News Pictorial,* 30 July 1986, 1.



Congra
from
Chair

• Direct descendants re-enact the landing of South Australian pioneers at Reeves Point after arriving in the "Falie" which substituted for the "Duke of York".

Horseback Mail

Horseback mail riders, Rodger Borgmeyer and Darky Bruce arrived with greetings of goodwill from all Islanders which they presented to the Governor, the Premier and the Mayor.

Then followed an address of welcome to the dignitaries by Mayor Cordes.

Premier Bannon responded and dedicated the $50,000 Reeves Point historic site re-development.

The Governor and Premier unveiled plaques commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the first landing and the re-development work. This was followed in heavy rain by the planting of two mulberry trees by descendants of the Powell, Kleemann, Christian and Beare families.

Colonial Cabaret

KID SISTER truly brought the professional touch to Kingscote's Colonial Cabaret on Saturday night.

Despite difficulties in transporting all of the band's equipment to KI, South Australia's Jubilee flag-ship "Falie" came through with the means of transport, and the talent of the band members was obvious to all.

5KA D.J. Brent James held the show

• The "landing party" erect a makeshift flagpole before reading out the now famous declaration.

Fig. 2: A series of photographs of the 1986 re-enactment included in the Islander News Pictorial. (Photo by Author of the Islander News Pictorial, 30 July 1986, 10.)

Gapps has argued that, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, '*tableaux vivants*, pageants and re-enactments quite literally show[ed] people that Australian history began with the arrival of Europeans', and this was certainly evident on Kangaroo Island. [136] The *Islander News Pictorial* described the re-enactment event at Reeves Point:

> As the long procession made its way to Reeves Point, the historic [trading supply] ketch *Falie* with sails up, made a spectacular sight as she moved silently through a

[136] Gapps, "Museum of the Living Dead," 255.

> glassy smooth sea to the landing place.[137] Then the whale boat set out for shore laden with pioneers and one of the most famous incidents of 1836 was re-enacted. A strong young seaman carried 2-and-a-half-year-old Bonny Abbot through the shallow water and placed her firmly on the beach.[138]

The theatrical landing was followed by a performance of the pioneers taking possession of the land. In an act typical for celebrations of British arrival, the actors raised the Union Flag using an ersatz flagpole sourced from the surrounding native scrub. The actor who portrayed the pious Captain Robert Morgan then recited a prayer of thanksgiving, after which the actor who portrayed Colonial Manager Samuel Stephens read aloud a declaration in which he claimed the island for Britain. To reiterate the idea that this moment represented the start of South Australia, 'Stephens' proclaimed 27 July 'South Australia Day'.[139]

As can be seen, the re-enactment was carefully choreographed to tell the story of 'first arrival' and it selectively deployed the trappings of history to authenticate this narrative. Scholars have noted that the idea of 'authenticity'—often represented through historically accurate props, costumes, and quotes—is essential to historical theatre when organisers wish for the performance to be perceived as an accurate re-telling of history.[140] During the island's re-enactment, symbols that spoke to a sense of authenticity were evident. The two actors who portrayed Stephens and Morgan were both known to be descendants of the real men and their most important lines were documented quotes. Others at the re-enactment, both performers and spectators, were costumed in reproductions of clothing from 1836. Indeed, out of a desire to accurately capture a wide cross-section of colonial life, the KIPA called on the public to represent not just conventional figures but also 'seamen, labourers, sealers, whalers, farm hands, serving girls, maids, and up through the "social scale"'.[141] Thus, as far as possible, the performance of the arrival of the South Australian Company settlers accorded with its depiction in official colonial sources.

However, Gapps points out that the ability of historical theatre to 'authentically' represent the past is always limited by the fact that the performance must present a coherent narrative to an audience living in the present.[142] Most organisers and performers understand that true authenticity is unattainable in historical theatre and must make difficult decisions about when to act 'authentically' and when to perform the past according to modern assumptions. On Kangaroo Island in 1986, historical sources and symbols of authenticity were typically utilised during moments of the performance which explored the arrival of the South Australian Company. The importance of historical accuracy for this particular aspect of the re-enactment

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[137] The use of the ketch *Falie* during the re-enactment likely held regional significance for the island's population. Prior to being bought and refurbished by the South Australian government in 1982, *Falie* had operated as one of the last wind-powered trading vessels and supplied American River on Kangaroo Island.
[138] "Island celebrates with a great colonial party," 1.
[139] "Island celebrates with a great colonial party," 1; "Actors were direct descendants," *Kangaroo Island Jubilee 150 Special Pictorial Souvenir,* 30 July 1986, 8.
[140] Gapps, "Museum of the Living Dead," 258.
[141] "KI's Big Day," 5.
[142] Stephen Gapps, "Mobile Monuments: A view of historical re-enactment and authenticity from inside the costume cupboard of history," *Rethinking History* 13, no. 3 (2009): 402, 405-406.

was exemplified when the KIPA president publicly lamented that there had been a 'slight misunderstanding in the boat as to the correct [historically-documented] order of disembarkation.'[143] On the other hand, it appeared to be far less important for the re-enactors to depict the pre-1836 settlers and their Aboriginal 'wives' according to the historical sources.

During the re-enactment, 'Henry Wallen'—the island's pre-1836 'governor'—appeared and challenged the new arrivals shortly after Stephens claimed possession of South Australia. In contrast to the costumes of those acting as South Australian Company settlers, the actor portraying Wallen appeared to be an anatopistic 'Davy Crockett look-alike,' as Rebe Taylor notes.[144] A picture taken for *the Islander News Pictorial* shows 'Wallen' armed with a musket alongside two of his 'Aboriginal wives.'[145] The 'Aboriginal' women wore hessian sacks and were portrayed by white actresses made-up in blackface. The same photograph appeared in Neville Cordes' book *Kangaroo Island: 184 Great Years* with a caption which read: 'Margaret Patterson, Ian Howard … and Suzanne Heywood emerge from the scrub to put fear into the heart of the new settlers as Wallen and his entourage did in 1836.'[146] In the re-enactment, Wallen and his wives were hostile and had to be calmed by Samuel Stephens, who defused the situation by speaking amicably despite being 'taken aback by the strong smelling Wallen.'[147] Following this, in an act that spoke to broader myths of South Australia as a humanitarian colony, 'Wallen' willingly relinquished his governorship and peacefully turned the island over to the new settlers. In this performance, Wallen's presence on the island was recognised, but it was the colonists from the *Duke of York* who were celebrated as the first 'official' settlers and the true inheritors of the land.

In *Unearthed,* Taylor describes the re-enactment of Wallen in 1986 as 'an original performance' in which he played 'the part of the reprobate blackfella' common in twentieth century narratives of colonial settlement. Taylor claims that, rather than being aggressive, Wallen greeted the hungry settlers and had provided them with wallaby meat as well as fruits and vegetables that he had grown on his farm. She argues that his depiction in 1986 stemmed from a combination of the disjointed workings of memory and the need of the island's colonial descendants to 'script their own narrative of colonisation'.[148] Taylor's analysis is accurate, but it is important to recognise that it applies specifically to this particular version of Wallen. In 1986, the character of 'Wallen' was moulded to serve the theme of colonial foundation that underlay the island's commemorations more broadly. This depiction, though, diverged significantly from both earlier and later representations of the self-proclaimed 'governor'.

[143] Holmesby, "Congratulations from K.I.P.A. president," 10.
[144] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 104.
[145] "Islanders honour their pioneers," 5.
[146] Neville Cordes, *Kangaroo Island: 184 Great Years: A history in photographs, 1802-1986* (Kingscote: Island Press, 1986), 128; also included in Taylor, *Unearthed*, 106.
[147] "Island celebrates with a great colonial party," 1.
[148] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 104-105.



Fig. 3: 'Wallen' and his 'wives' as depicted during the 1986 re-enactment. (Photo by Author of the Islander News Pictorial, 30 July 1986, 5.)

For instance, Wallen was depicted quite differently in *Travels and Adventures in South Australia* in 1839. Perhaps because of his disdain for the South Australian Company, Leigh described the encounter between Wallen and Stephens in a scene reminiscent of King Arthur's confrontation with anarcho-syndicalist peasants in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*:

> 'I am the governor,' says Wallen.
> 'You are no such thing,' retorted the enraged Stephens to the astonished Islander; '*I* am the governor.'
> 'I tell you I *am*,' says Wallen stoutly; and enquired 'Who made you a governor?[149]

One can almost imagine this version of Wallen stating 'Well, I didn't vote for you,' along with Stephens's exasperated response: 'You don't vote for governors!' Leigh also claimed that Wallen did not readily give up his land but was forced off it by men from the South Australian Company.[150] Wallen was depicted differently again in later representations of the island's history. As already shown, islanders like Wallen, Bates, and others were remembered during

[149] Leigh, *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels,* 124.
[150] Leigh, *Reconnoitering, Voyages and Travels,* 124.

the jubilee celebrations in 1886 as having 'paved the way' for official colonisation and they were described as though they were midwives assisting South Australia's 'birth' on Proclamation Day. By the twenty-first century, as is shown in the following section, Wallen was being remembered as the state's 'first farmer.'

Yet, men like Wallen were inconvenient for the island's commemorations in 1986. Significant emphasis had been placed on Reeves Point as the 'first white settlement,' but the existence of white men on Kangaroo Island prior to 1836 had the potential to unsettle that claim. Further, stories which depicted Wallen's complicated interactions with the South Australian Company—including claims about his absurd confrontation with the Colonial Manager and his eventual dispossession—did not fit neatly into the heroic narrative of 'first' settlement that was the commemorative focus in 1986. Instead, as Taylor notes, Wallen's depiction as a semi-savage wild-man drew heavily on long established images of 'black native[s] on the other side of a colonial frontier' and placed Wallen outside the state's official history.[151] Through this version of Wallen, Reeves Point could still be imagined to be the first 'true' settlement in South Australia.

In 1986, Wallen's depiction as a wild-man may have served the claim that Reeves Point was the 'birthplace' of South Australia, but it was somewhat in vain because the island's sesquicentenary commemorations on 27 July failed to export this claim to the mainland. The Premier John Bannon (later the president of the South Australian Historical Society) explicitly rejected the view that South Australia was born on Kangaroo Island during his speech opening the Reeves Point historic precinct. Bannon noted that there was

> debate from time to time about the true birth date of South Australia. Whether [it is] the 27th of July 1836, when settlers landed here at Reeves Point, or 28th of December 1836, when proclamation was read at Glenelg officially proclaiming the State. There's not much doubt on any interpretation that the official birthday of South Australia is the latter.[152]

Bannon tried to create space for the island's regional narrative in his speech. He pointed out that Proclamation Day did not 'detract … from the historic importance of Kangaroo Island and Reeves Point.'[153] However, his statements were unlikely to have been appreciated by those who sought a uniquely prominent position for the island in the state's origin story.

The idea that Reeves Point represented the 'birthplace' of South Australia did not die out following the conclusion of commemorations in 1986. Five years later—following a concerted campaign by the KIPA—a South Australian politician, Ian Gilfillan, introduced a motion to the state's Legislative Council.[154] The motion called for the governor 'to have a formal vice-regal announcement and recognition of Reeves Point, Kangaroo Island, as South Australia's

[151] Taylor, *Unearthed,* 106.
[152] "What the Premier said at the dedication ceremony," *Islander News Pictorial,* 30 July 1986, 3.
[153] "What the Premier said at the dedication ceremony," 3.
[154] William Holmesby, *Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association: it's development and progress* (Statewide and Global Publishing, 2005), 14-15.

birthplace.'[155] The Legislative Council agreed to officially recognise 'Kangaroo Island as the first South Australian Company Settlement,' but Gilfillan's original motion was knocked back. The reason for this, as the South Australian Minister for the Arts and Cultural Heritage, Anne Levy, pointed out, was because 'The use of the word "birthplace" is unfortunate … [and] seems to completely ignore the many years of Aboriginal occupation of South Australia.'[156] Reflecting on the moment in his book detailing the history of the KIPA published in 2005, William Holmesby expressed chagrin at Levy's 'diatribe invoking aboriginal influences.' Nonetheless, the KIPA celebrated the 'partial' victory of their campaign for recognition.[157]

The sesquicentenary commemorations on Kangaroo Island revealed local dissatisfaction with the state's recognition of the island's history. Some residents were clearly anxious to rectify this and the move to represent Reeves Point as the 'birthplace' of South Australia spoke to these anxieties. However, in hoping that their regional narrative of foundation would be equal to, or even supersede, an Adelaide-centred state narrative of foundation, local campaigners perpetuated the same neglect of subaltern narratives that had so frustrated them about their own non-recognition. Both in the 1936 and the 1986 commemorations, the island's non-British histories were either subsumed into stories of Reeves Point or were absent. Kangaroo Island may ultimately have been recognised as the site of the first South Australian Company settlement, but, as Levy's comments indicated, celebrations of colonial 'firsts' were becoming increasingly unpopular as the twentieth century drew to a close. Shortly after the turn of the twenty-first century, commemorative events on the island moved away from narratives of foundations and adopted a more pluralistic approach to remembering history.

Narratives of encounters and the Encounter 2002 commemorations

In 2002, the bicentenary celebrations of Matthew Flinders's voyage provided the people of Kangaroo Island another opportunity to commemorate the island's colonial history. 'Encounter 2002', as it was termed, had been developed and partly funded by the South Australian government and involved a diverse range of local festivals and commemorative events in communities throughout the state. The finale of the two-month-long commemorations occurred on 8 April, when a fleet of four tall ships sailed into Encounter Bay and rendezvoused with a modern French frigate, the *Vendemiarie*.[158] This moment symbolised the encounter between Matthew Flinders and Nicholas Baudin in 1802 and could have facilitated an orthodox celebration of European exploration and British colonisation. However, Encounter 2002 had been consciously designed to explore a range of historical narratives and to celebrate South Australia's mixture of British, migrant, and Aboriginal heritage.[159] Consequently, Encounter 2002 departed from the Anglo-centric celebrations that

[155] South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates,* Legislative Council, 9 October 1991, 964 (Ian Gilfillan, Member of the Legislative Council).
[156] South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates,* Legislative Council, 9 October 1991, 964-965 (Anne Levy, Member of the Legislative Council and Minister for the Arts and Cultural Heritage).
[157] Holmesby, *Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association*, 13-15.
[158] The four ships were the *One and All*, the *Young Endeavour,* the *Enterprize*, and the *Falie*.
[159] Nadine Williams, "French teach us a lesson," *The Advertiser,* 5 April 2002, 19.

dominated earlier South Australian anniversary celebrations and embraced smaller and more varied local stories of the past.

Encounter 2002's exploration of South Australia's diverse heritage demonstrated the further shift that had occurred in Australia's national memory culture since the 1980s. In the final decades of the twentieth century, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights advanced significantly and many of Australia's myths of peaceful settlement and benevolent colonisation were widely and openly challenged in public and political discourse. Famously, in 1992, the High Court triggered a national conversation on colonial history after it dismissed the concept of *Terra Nullius* and recognised Indigenous land rights in the Mabo case.[160] Six months later, Prime Minister Paul Keating acknowledged the history and legacy of colonisation during his Redfern Address. Keating—whose government unashamedly advocated for Indigenous rights—noted that 'It was we [the European settlers] who did the dispossessing ... We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion.'[161]

Concurrently, settler Australians had progressively come to appreciate Aboriginal art, music, and history. As Chris Healy notes, some settler-descendent Australians exploited 'Aboriginality' in a tokenistic way as the country sought to distance itself from its former identity as a British nation.[162] Even so, the country's growing respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures created greater space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, artists, and musicians to raise awareness of past and present injustices. In the area of music, for instance, the 1980s and 1990s saw the release of several popular songs which detailed the country's colonial history and its contemporary mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples. These included *The Dead Heart* (1986) and *Beds are Burning* (1987) by Midnight Oil; *From Little Things Big Things Grow* (1991) by Paul Kelly and Kevin Carmody; and *Took the Children Away* (1992) by Archie Roach, to name a few.

However, while many were coming to accept Australia's history of violent colonialism, there were those who openly rejected what they felt was a campaign designed to undermine the nation's pride in its past. Most notably, the Prime Minister John Howard—who had come to power in 1996 after his conservative Liberal/National coalition defeated Paul Keating's Labor government—sought to downplay the history of harm done to Indigenous Australians. Historians Andrew Bonnell and Martin Crotty write that Howard himself was a noted participant in the 'History Wars' and he had argued during the 1996 Sir Robert Menzies lecture that:

[160] Amanda Nettelbeck, "Remembering indigenous dispossession in the National Museum of Australia and the Canadian Museum of Civilisation," *Time and Society* 21, no. 1 (2012): 41.
[161] Paul Keating, "Speech by the Hon Prime Minister, P J Keating MP: Australian launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, Redfern, 10 December 1992" (speech, Redfern, 10 December 1992).
[162] Healy, *Forgetting Aborigines,* 37.

> I believe that the balance sheet of our history is one of heroic achievement and that we have achieved much more as a nation of which we can be proud than of which we should be ashamed.[163]

Although Howard's government officially endorsed reconciliation, the Liberal/National coalition argued that reconciliation should be achieved by addressing current disadvantages rather than through native title or by apologising for racist past policies.[164] Therefore, the early 2000s were marked by tensions created by a broad support for Aboriginal culture and history on the one hand and a determined conservative defence of stories detailing heroic, colonial 'achievement' on the other.

Encounter 2002 took place within this cultural context of anxiety and debate over appropriate representations of Australia's past. Likely influenced by this, the Encounter 2002 commemorations sought to reconcile the divergent currents in the country's memory culture through a theme focused on 'the coming together of three worlds, visions, and cultures.'[165] It had been selected by the Encounter 2002 committee because it highlighted traditional histories of British colonisation, while also acknowledging South Australia's non-British European heritage, in addition to the state's Aboriginal cultures and traditions. In South Australia, the need to celebrate Aboriginal culture was undoubtedly heightened by the recent controversy over the Hindmarsh Island Bridge, which had been completed in late 2001 despite strong objections from a group of Ngarrindjeri women Elders.[166] To facilitate reconciliation during Encounter 2002, the state government displayed modern Aboriginal art in regional centres and sought assistance from local communities to organise lectures on the cultures and traditions of local Aboriginal peoples. Further, commemorative events were designed to accommodate a broad range of historical perspectives and, in the words of Encounter 2002 event organiser Jan Chorley, were 'built around … reconciliation'.[167]

Although the commemorations were established to mark the bicentenary of Flinders's 1802 voyage, the state's organising committee did not require commemorative acts associated with Encounter 2002 to explicitly acknowledge Flinders or his voyage. Instead, the Encounter 2002 committee encouraged local communities to commemorate the bicentenary by exploring and celebrating their own local narratives of the past. Regional authorities—such as local councils, community progress associations, and local heritage groups—had significant control and autonomy over the shape of the memorial acts that occurred within their area. Rather than one or two large state-sponsored commemorations, there was a patchwork of commemorative events across the state that often looked quite different depending on the

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[163] John Howard, "The Liberal Tradition: The beliefs and values which guide the federal government," *Sir Robert Menzies Lecture* (November 18, 1996) quoted in Andrew Bonnell and Martin Crotty, "Australia's History under Howard, 1996-2007," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617, no.1 (May 2008): 152.

[164] Bonnell and Crotty, "Australia's History under Howard," 150-153.

[165] Daniel Lato, "Mapping the future by visiting the past," *The Advertiser,* 5 April 2002, 22.

[166] Paul McHugh, "Anthropology on trial: the Hindmarsh Island Bridge controversy (1993-2001)," in *Comparative Law and Anthropology,* ed. James A.R. Nafziger (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 45-51.

[167] Williams, "French teach us a lesson," 19.

community in which the commemorations took place. On Kangaroo Island, events occurred at American River, Baudin Beach, Pelican Lagoon, Cape Willoughby, and Penneshaw, as well as at Reeves Point in Kingscote, and all these communities explored slightly different aspects of the island's early history.[168] Some of these commemorations made references to Flinders, but others explored the history of Baudin, the South Australian Company colonists, the pre-1836 settlers, and the Aboriginal women who were forcibly brought to the island.

Flinders and the *Investigator* were still central to several commemorative events on Kangaroo Island. The local newspaper, the *Islander*, published weekly extracts from the journals of both Matthew Flinders and Nicholas Baudin for four months prior to the symbolic re-enactment of their encounter on 8 April.[169] The newspaper also published articles written by several different residents of the island who were in an extended debate over the exact location of 'Kangaroo Head', where Flinders had landed on 23 March 1802.[170] On the bicentennial anniversary of this date, the Flinders Monument obelisk at Kingscote was re-dedicated by the former state premier, Dean Brown, one hundred years after it had originally been established in 1902. Meanwhile, the Kangaroo Island Council officially re-named what had formally been Mount Thisby to Prospect Hill—the name Flinders originally recorded in his journal—and placed a plaque at Pelican Lagoon immortalising several lines of pelican-inspired poetry written by Flinders.[171]

Nearby, the American River Progress Association held the light-hearted 'Encounter Triathlon', which asked contestants to perform the skills required 'of the 1802 explorers, Nicholas Baudin and Matthew Flinders and their crews'.[172] More significantly, the tall ships that would 'encounter' the *Vendemiarie* during the commemorative finale on 8 April spent the preceding two months visiting seaside towns, including on Kangaroo Island, according to a schedule which roughly kept time with Flinders's original voyage. The arrival of these ships generally heralded the beginning of local commemorations. Consequently, the idea of Flinders and his voyage implicitly acted as the thematic glue that held the state's many diverse commemorative events together and the British navigator was in the background of almost all Encounter 2002 commemorations even if he was not explicitly mentioned.

Kingscote was one of the first sites on Kangaroo Island to celebrate Encounter 2002 after the *Enterprise* and the *One and All* arrived off the coast on 21 March.[173] The *Islander* reported that the festivities in Kingscote included 'the food and wine fair, Royal Australian Navy Band, tall ships day sails, Rock Eisteddfod performances, maritime displays, Flinders journal readings, RAAF Roulette aerobatics demonstrations, colourful kites, yacht racing, craft

[168] "Encounter starts today," *The Islander,* 28 March 2002, 1 and 5.
[169] *The Islander* from 4 January 2001 to 5 April 2001.
[170] Rod Matheson, "It's Kanguroo Head and it's further east," *The Islander,* 7 March 2002, 10; Keith Bushnell, "No it's not, it may be a little west," *The Islander*, 4 April 2002, 11.
[171] "Flinders Prospect," KIPAsigns, accessed 11 November 2023, https://sites.google.com/site/kipasigns/commemorations/flinders-prospect.
[172] Jacqueline and Gabriel Bittar, "Everyone's a winner with Encounter Triathlon," *The Islander,* 28 February 2002, 14.
[173] American River was the first site to celebrate, beginning its celebrations on 21 March. Kingscote was the second site to celebrate 2 days later on 23 March; "Encounter starts today," 1 and 5.

demonstrations, and live music.'[174] Encounter 2002 also provided the KIPA and the Advance Kingscote Progress Association with funding to update and revitalise the Reeves Point Historic Precinct. Most prominently, a public art installation was erected on the crown of Flagstaff Hill. The installation consisted of four, concrete 'quarter hulled sections' engraved with the names of the four South Australian Company ships and featured a central flagpole designed 'in a fashion similar to [a] ships' rigging' with 'the crow's nest and mizzen mast [housing] the flag raising mechanism'.[175] In this way, the installation reinforced Reeves Point's long-established focus on the arrival of the South Australian Company ships. Two years later, a plaque was placed at the site noting that 'This flagstaff celebrates the achievements of the pioneers who from 27th July 1836 lived, worked and created a foundation for our community'.[176]



Fig. 4. The Reeves Point Flagstaff monument atop Flagstaff Hill in 2020. (Photo by Author, 3 October 2020.)

Yet, while the 2002 update of Reeves Point did reinforce orthodox narratives about the site as a foundational location of South Australia, it also included some references to non-colonial histories. For instance, encased within the brass 'rigging' that held up the flagstaff of the new art instillation was a concrete pole engraved with 'words and symbols' which acknowledged 'the indigenous past.'[177] While there was something darkly ironic about this symbol of 'the indigenous past' appearing to be caged behind bars representing European arrival, the

[174] "Feel Good Kingscote Encounter: Attraction-packed kick off," *The Islander,* 28 March 2002, 6.
[175] *Public artwork at reeves point flagstaff*, 2002, interpretive sign, Reeves Point Flagstaff, Kingscote, South Australia, viewed 3 October 2020.
[176] *This flagstaff celebrates…* , 2004, bronze plaque, Reeves Point Flagstaff, Kingscote, South Australia, viewed 3 October 2020.
[177] *Reeves Point Flagstaff*, 2002, inscription, Reeves Point Flagstaff, Kingscote, South Australia, viewed 3 October 2020.

acknowledgment of Aboriginal history was noteworthy. It demonstrated a divergence from earlier commemorations of Reeves Point where Aboriginal history was usually missing.

Similarly, the update of Reeves Point reinterpreted Henry Wallen from a 'savage outsider'—as he was represented during the re-enactment in 1986—to Kangaroo Island's first farmer. Wallen was already being re-evaluated at the time and a shelter with a plaque had been constructed at Cygnet River in 2000 which described Wallen as a 'gentle, quiet fellow'.[178] During Encounter 2002, the main road through the Reeves Point Historic Site was renamed in Wallen's honour and his gravesite was refurbished. Ultimately, a new memorial plaque was established at the site which described Wallen in sympathetic terms and referenced his partnership with Aboriginal women. Unveiled in 2011 to celebrate 175 years since settlement, the plaque noted that:

> Wallen arrived on Kangaroo Island circa 1819 as a free settler. He established a farm at "Three Wells", Cygnet River and has been described as South Australia's first farmer. He is said to have been a quiet, industrious, well-behaved man. He was a successful hunter, familiar with the Bible and kind to his Aboriginal wives and son, Henry Jnr.
>
> When the first official settlers arrived in 1836, Wallen introduced himself as "the Governor". He was helpful to the colonists in many ways but was unfairly dispossessed of his farm and stock when the SA Company took it over for their office.[179]

The plaque also detailed Wallen's later life; it explained that he successfully integrated into colonial society after 1836 and it discussed the experiences of his Aboriginal son, Henry Wallen Junior. In this fashion, the plaque alluded to some of the complexities of early colonial settlement. It enshrined the experiences of European settlers prior to 1836, acknowledged the injustices of the South Australian Company, and spoke to the island's history of interracial relationships.

Nevertheless, the references to Aboriginal peoples on these memorials at Reeves Point did not necessarily demonstrate a deeper reflection of South Australia's Aboriginal history. While both the Wallen memorial and the Flagstaff Hill memorial alluded to Aboriginal histories, both were primarily centred on settler narratives and neither considered the impact of settlement on Aboriginal communities. Problematically, in the case of the Wallen plaque, the statement that he was 'kind to his Aboriginal wives' served to obfuscate the wider fact that many of these women were removed from their traditional communities, held in bondage, and required to labour in the service of the pre-1836 settlers. Even if Wallen was kind to them personally, the women's presence on Kangaroo Island likely originated from his involvement in an inherently unjust system of enslavement. The updated memorials did not necessarily erase 'Indigenous peoples as modern subjects', as scholars have shown has sometimes been

[178] *Henry Wallen: South Australia's first farmer,* 2000, interpretive sign, Cygnet River, South Australia, viewed 3 October 2020.
[179] *"Governor" Henry Wallen,* 2011, bronze plaque, Reeves Point Historic Sites, Kingscote, South Australia, viewed 3 October 2020.

the case with monuments to colonialism.[180] Nor did they exploit Aboriginal history to 'extend the [colonial] national story backwards in time,' as Nettelbeck noted museums often did in the 1980s.[181] Rather, they superficially acknowledged Kangaroo Island's Aboriginal history before proceeding to uncritically celebrate early colonists. Through this cursory acknowledgement, the memorials participated in a dismissal of Aboriginal experiences.

This passing acknowledgement of Aboriginal history at Reeves Point stood in counterpoint to the Mary Beckwith memorial, which did allude to the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal women. The memorial was established on 4 April 2002 at Baudin Beach, which had formally been called American Beach but was renamed during Encounter 2002.[182] Many of the commemorative events that occurred there placed 'particular emphasis … on the contributions of French explorer Nicholas Baudin' and, in this way alone, represented a divergence from the traditionally Anglo-centric commemorations focused on Flinders and the South Australian Company.[183] The focal point of these commemorations was the Baudin Beach Progress Association's unveiling of a monument to Mary Beckwith—a British convict woman who travelled with Baudin after he left Sydney in 1802 and returned to Kangaroo Island in 1803.[184]

The Mary Beckwith monument had been constructed by a local Kangaroo Island sculptor, Deborah Sleeman, and was divided into an upper and lower section. The upper section was designed to invoked 'the sails and winds of fate that brought Mary and others to this place', while the lower 'skirt' represented 'Mary herself and the forgotten women of the Island.'[185] As a historical figure, Beckwith represented a history of female oppression because her life revealed many of the iniquities of patriarchal colonial society. In an article detailing Beckwith's life, local South Australian historian Anthony Brown noted that she had been sentenced to transportation in 1800 after being convicted of stealing calico on dubious evidence.[186]

Once in Australia, Beckwith participated in a sexual relationship with Nicholas Baudin during his five-month stay in Sydney in 1802, and she may have used this connection with Baudin to escape New South Wales aboard his ship. As historians Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans have pointed out, it was certainly not uncommon for convict women to utilise their sexuality to resist oppressive systems, negotiate better conditions, and achieve personal objectives.[187]

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[180] Aimee Carrillo Rowe and Eve Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies: Ongoing Settlement, Cultural Production, and Resistance," *Cultural Studies and Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 1 (2017): 7.
[181] Amanda Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1121.
[182] John Sabel, "Letter to the Editor: It's called Baudin Beach," *The Islander,* 28 March 2002, 4; Peter Hawkins, "Letter to the Editor: Why Baudin Beach?," *The Islander,* 28 March 2002, 4.
[183] "Our French Connection," *The Islander,* 11 April 2002, 7.
[184] Nadine Williams, "Memory of a convict girl called Mary," *The Advertiser,* 3 April 2002, 30.
[185] Deborah Sleeman, *Mary Beckwith Memorial*, 2002, interpretive sign, Mary Beckwith Memorial, Baudin Beach, South Australia, viewed 9 October 2020.
[186] Anthony Brown, "The Captain and the Convict Maid: a chapter in the life of Nicholas Baudin," *South Australian Geographical Journal* 97, no. 1 (1998): 21-22.
[187] Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, *Gender Relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 5-8.

The memorial's interpretive sign invited the reader to consider these elements of Beckwith's story, and noted that she

> stands for all those women, Aboriginal and others, taken by sealers, seamen, and settlers to serve them as wives and housekeepers. Their stories have been obliterated, but many showed great strength in not simply surviving but in achieving meaningful lives in the most tragic circumstances.[188]

In this way, the Mary Beckwith memorial explicitly reflected on the history of female disempowerment, including on the disempowerment of the island's Aboriginal women.

The memorial to Beckwith at Baudin Beach owed much to the work of Anthony Brown. Brown, who was also a member of the state Encounter 2002 organising committee, had uncovered her story in the historical records during his research into his book on Flinders and Baudin: *Ill-Starred Captains*. In 1994, Brown expressed regret that his article on Beckwith 'must serve as her only memorial.'[189] He also argued that Beckwith was likely 'the first European woman to set foot on South Australian soil'.[190] When the physical memorial was unveiled eight years later during Encounter 2002, Brown's influence on the memorial was apparent; his name, quotes from his work, and his role in uncovering Beckwith's story appeared on the interpretive sign and he officially dedicated the memorial during the Baudin Beach celebrations. During these commemorations, in an act reminiscent of the Reeves Point re-enactments of the twentieth century, an actress dressed as Mary Beckwith herself 'made a guest appearance … to inspect the sculpture erected in her honour.'[191] As a result, the memorial and the commemorations articulated Brown's view that Beckwith represented a 'foundational first'.[192]

The Mary Beckwith Memorial therefore engaged with the gendered injustices of colonialism, but it explored these histories through the framework originally set down by Brown—that is, through the eyes of a white convict celebrated for her position within a colonial narrative. In doing so, the Mary Beckwith Memorial contained an implicit tension that is nevertheless common in Australian memory culture. As Michelle Arrow and James Findlay point out, the concept of 'the convict as victim rather than agent of colonisation' is well-established in Australian fiction and can still be seen in modern films such as *The Nightingale* (2018).[193] This is especially the case for female convicts, such as Beckwith, whose experiences of patriarchal and colonial oppression have been depicted in a variety of different ways for a variety of different purposes since European settlement began.[194]

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[188] Deborah Sleeman, *Mary Beckwith Memorial*, 2002, interpretive sign, Mary Beckwith Memorial, Baudin Beach, South Australia, viewed 9 October 2020.
[189] Brown, "The Captain and the Convict Maid," 30.
[190] Brown, "The Captain and the Convict Maid," 28
[191] "Community Encounters in the East," *The Islander*, 11 April 2002, 10.
[192] Williams, "Memory of a convict girl called Mary," 30.
[193] Michelle Arrow and James Findlay, "A critical introduction to *The Nightingale*: gender, race and troubled history on screen," *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 14, no. 1 (2020): 3.
[194] Ann Curthoys, "We've Just Started Making National History, and You Want Us to Stop Already?," in *After the Imperial Turn: Think with and Through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 80 - 83.

In the case of the Mary Beckwith Memorial, the figure of the white, female convict was used to unite non-Indigenous and Aboriginal experiences of colonial violence and to jointly commemorate that history in a shared story of dispossession. However, as Eualeyai and Gamillaroi academic Larissa Behrendt points out, 'it is dangerous to link those marginalised within the colonial state to those being colonised,' because this comparison has the potential to silence the unique historical traumas experienced by Aboriginal peoples.[195] By conflating the hardships of the convict woman with the oppression of Aboriginal women, the Mary Beckwith Memorial simplified Kangaroo Island's colonial history and distracted from recognising that the landing of the 'first European woman' paved the way for the later enslavement of Aboriginal women. As Curthoys argues, this conflation of experiences may be well meaning, but may also lead to 'an inability to develop the kind of pluralist, inclusive account of the past' necessary for reconciliation.[196]

Conversely, the Contemplation Seat at Penneshaw was designed to commemorate the experiences of the island's Aboriginal women within an explicit framework of reconciliation. Commissioned by the Penneshaw Encounter 2002 Committee and created by local artists Thomas Appleby and James Newcomer (known locally as 'Indiana James'), the Contemplation Seat acknowledged Aboriginal women and their experiences without also celebrating European colonisation. The memorial was unveiled at Penneshaw on 3 April 2002, by the former premier Dean Brown. In attendance was Kary Merry, the 'great, great granddaughter of a Tasmanian Palawa woman who lived on Kangaroo Island', as the *Islander* reports.[197]

In its form, the Contemplation Seat was an example of James Young's concept of a counter-monument.[198] The memorial itself consisted of a carved wooden bench on which 'to sit down and … "contemplate"' the lives of the women who were 'brought to the island to serve as wives and slaves to Europeans.' The bench itself had been carved from a fallen bluegum, which possessed a scar thought to have been caused after 'women from the sealing era [had taken] bark for shelters and bowls.'[199] Thus, the Contemplation Seat directed visitors to consider Aboriginal experiences and cultural practices within the context of Australian colonial settlement and it offered 'a way to think about … history that reveals it as complex and internally contested.'[200] Geographers Tim Edensor and Shati Sumartojo also note that counter-monuments are sometimes 'physically positioned to dialogically interrogate older

[195] Larissa Behrendt, "The Nightingale Review: Ambitious, Urgent and Necessarily Brutal. But who is it for?," *The Guardian,* 20 August 2019, accessed 20 November 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/aug/20/the-nightingale-review-ambitious-urgent-and-necessarily-brutal-but-who-is-it-for; Arrow and Findlay, "A critical introduction to *The Nightingale*," 7; Larissa Behrendt, *Finding Eliza: Power and Colonial Storytelling* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2016), 95-98.
[196] Ann Curthoys, "Expulsion, Exodus, and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology," *Journal of Australian Studies* 23, no. 61 (1999): 18.
[197] "Contemplation seat to commemorate women," *The Islander*, 21 February 2002, 10.
[198] James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 267-296.
[199] "Contemplation seat to commemorate women," 10.
[200] Shanti Sumartojo, "Memorials and State Sponsored History," in *The Palgrave Handbook of State Sponsored History after 1945*, eds. B. Bevernage and N. Woulters (London: Palgrave Macmilan, 2018), 455.

memorials' and this was true of the Contemplation Seat.[201] The memorial was situated on a knoll overlooking 'Frenchman's Rock', so that the monument to Baudin—and to Australia's imperial history—would be in view of anyone sitting on the seat and contemplating the dispossession of Australia's Indigenous peoples.



Fig. 5: The Contemplation Seat monument at Penneshaw in 2020. (Photo by Author, 9 October 2020.)

The inscription on the sign that accompanied the Contemplation Seat also directly engaged with the personal histories and experiences of those Aboriginal women who lived on the island prior to 1836. This made it substantially different from the memorials at Reeves Point and the Mary Beckwith Memorial, which tended to speak of Aboriginal people only in broad or abstract terms within the larger story of colonial arrival. For instance, the Contemplation Seat sign named several individual Aboriginal women and unambiguously stated that they 'were kidnapped by sealers.' Yet, while the sign acknowledged that these women were victims of colonialism, it also respected their strength and agency and argued that 'The success of the colony of Australia was built on the labour of these Aboriginal women workers.' It went on to tell a story of individual and cultural survival by noting that:

> They were often brutally treated but women like Sally, Big Sal, Suke, Betty, Old Wauber and many others will be remembered as strong, adaptable and resourceful survivors who continued their cultural traditions even though they were far from their homes and families.

[201] Tim Edensor and Shanti Sumartojo, "Reified monuments, counter memorials and anti-memorials: contested colonial heritage in Melbourne – commemorating John Batman," *Postcolonial studies* 26, no. 4 (21 July 2023), 4.

The sign called on visitors to 'think about [this] … period of Australian history' and it expressed hope that the seat would initiate 'a process of reconciliation and healing for Aboriginal people and for the community of Kangaroo Island.'[202]

The official unveiling of the Contemplation Seat on 3 April 2002 seemed focused on the theme of reconciliation and actively sought to respect and engage with Aboriginal history and culture. One small, locally-initiated example of this were the banners that were flown throughout Penneshaw on the day. These banners bore the Encounter 2002 logo, which depicted the silhouettes of two tall ships before a golden sun against a red sky. Around the Contemplation Seat, however, the logo on the banners was intentionally modified to remove the ships' silhouettes. In an interview with the *Islander*, the creator of the banners, local artist Linda Jenkins, argued that this was done because 'We all need to accept that there was a very long time and a lot of important culture before the ships arrived.'[203]

This apparent desire to respect the fact that Aboriginal culture pre-existed colonial encounters was reflected in the process that led to the creation of the Contemplation Seat itself, as the *Islander* reported on 21 February 2002.[204] During its construction, the Penneshaw Encounter 2002 Committee had commissioned Keryn James, an archaeologist at Flinders University, to liaise with relevant sections of South Australia's Aboriginal community, including the Ngarrindjeri and the Kaurna peoples.[205] James was charged with seeking support and guidance from these communities so that the Reconciliation Seat would be culturally appropriate. During the unveiling ceremony, two Yarilde women Elders, Val Power and Muriel Van Der Bil, were invited to speak on South Australia's history of Aboriginal dispossession. After this, both women gave their blessings to the new monument.[206] The Reconciliation Seat appears to have been the only Kangaroo Island monument in 2002 to receive blessings from members of the South Australian Aboriginal community in this way.

To an extent, the diverse histories that were recalled on Kangaroo Island in 2002, as well as the diverse approaches to memorialisation, reflected the grassroots nature of Encounter 2002. The emphasis placed on regional narratives during the commemorations meant that local events avoided the kinds of singular, grand narratives of the state's history which dominated commemorations in the twentieth century. As could be seen with the Mary Beckwith Memorial and the Reeves Point memorials, local commemorations gave voice to local stories that could sometimes diverge significantly from typical, state-based celebrations of European settlement. However, despite being 'built around the theme of reconciliation,' many local Encounter 2002 commemorations continued to feature stories that celebrated colonisation and the arrival of white settlers. Aboriginal history was acknowledged, but this was often done a non-confrontational way which did not draw attention to the links between European arrival and Aboriginal dispossession. Only when the local community authorities acted with reconciliation consciously in mind—as the Penneshaw Encounter 2002 Committee

[202] *Contemplation Seat*, 2002, interpretive sign, Contemplation Seat, Penneshaw, South Australia, viewed 9 October 2020.
[203] "Penneshaw Encounter will be colourful," *The Islander,* 28 March 2002, 2.
[204] "Contemplation seat to commemorate women," 10.
[205] "Contemplation seat to commemorate women," 10.
[206] "Our French Connection," 1 and 8.

seemed to do while planning the Reconciliation Seat—was Aboriginal dispossession commemoratively explored.

Conclusion

Since 2002, the residents of Kangaroo Island have continued to commemorate local, subaltern histories. For instance, the history of American sealers has become part of the local identity of the town of American River. Since 2012, a rough effigy of the *Independence* has marked the turn-off to American River as one travels down the island's main highway and, in the town itself, local volunteers have been constructing a replica of the American schooner.[207] Likewise, the town of Baudin Beach has continued to identify with the French explorer. In 2011, the Baudin Beach Progress Association erected a new monument containing a two-dimensional sculpture of Baudin and the *Géographe* which celebrated the French captain, although it did so in the context of his contributions to the state's colonial foundations; the monument's plaque states that it 'commemorates the 175 year anniversary of formal European settlement' in South Australia and argues that 'the establishment of this state was made possible by the explorations of outstanding sea captains, including *Nicolas Baudin.*'[208]

The extent to which Kangaroo Island's history of memorialisation is representative of broader South Australian shifts in memorialisation is difficult to determine. Yet, the commemorations of Kangaroo Island's regional story since the nineteenth century demonstrates the broader point that narratives of the past are always incomplete and subject to evolution.[209] Stories exploring the experiences of Aboriginal peoples on the island, and of the pre-1836 white settlers who lived with them, have come into and out of focus at different times according to the needs of the commemorative events of the day. During much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Kangaroo Island's pre-1836 history was utilised to explore the island's place in South Australia's 'foundational' narrative. More recently, commemoratives sites have explored the island's Aboriginal history in a range of ways, including through passing acknowledgement, assimilative engagement, and 'contemplation' in service of reconciliation. In what is perhaps a sign of the times, the liberal politician Vickie Chapman—a longstanding patron of the KIPA—penned an essay for the KIPA's website in 2011 which acknowledged the 'Aboriginal women stolen from Tasmanian and mainland South Australia', who, she wrote, were nonetheless 'brave and pioneering'. At the same time, old narratives endured; while recognising the island's Aboriginal women, Chapman reasserted the belief that Kangaroo Island was the 'Birthplace of South Australia.'[210]

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[207] "Rebuild Independence Project," South Australian Tourism Commission, accessed 8 May 2024, https://southaustralia.com/products/kangaroo-island/attraction/rebuild-independence-project; "Rebuild Independence," Rebuild Independence Group, accessed 8 May 2024, https://www.rebuildindependence.org/.
[208] David Clarke, *Nicolas Baudin*, 2002, bronze plaque, Nicholas Baudin Memorial, Baudin Beach, South Australia, viewed 9 October 2020.
[209] Nettelbeck and Foster, "Commemorating Foundations," 67.
[210] Vickie Chapman, "K.I Birthplace of S.A," Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association, accessed 28 November 2023, https://www.kipioneers.org/history/k-i-birthplace-of-s-a.

This chapter has demonstrated that contested colonial histories in general, and Aboriginal histories in particular, move in and out of focus and are treated differently over time. However, it has only alluded to the ways in which the politics and priorities of memory have shifted, or the outcomes that may arise as they evolve. The following chapter explores recent attempts to memorialise frontier violence in the town of Elliston on South Australia's west coast. In this context, attempts to advance reconciliation have raised important questions about how recognition of contested histories might facilitate reconciliation, especially in circumstances where the historical events are considered ambiguous due to the absence of written colonial records.

Chapter Two: Memory, Massacre, and the Waterloo Bay Reconciliation Memorial

The evolution of commemorative processes on Kangaroo Island detailed in chapter one demonstrates a growing recognition of Aboriginal history within local communities. But, in *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation* (2016), Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, and Ravi de Costa argue that reconciliation processes require the settler colonial state to do more than simply acknowledge Indigenous peoples, cultures, or histories of victimisation.[1] They note that recognition is, of course, important, as 'for the bulk of colonial history, Indigenous peoples were, to most settlers, invisible, and for most the realities of Indigenous lives today still remain invisible.'[2] However, as Ravi de Costa goes on to argue in his chapter, reconciliation where 'a dominant actor "recognises" a subordinate or oppressed actor' without addressing entrenched discriminatory practices or structures does not necessarily lead to meaningful reforms.[3] Consequently, settler colonial policies designed to 'achieve reconciliation' have at times faced criticism from those who argue that such efforts can become, as Sarah Maddison states, part of 'the endless cycling of attempts to eliminate or absorb the Indigenous population'.[4]

In this context, academics of settler colonialism have argued that Indigenous recollections and interpretations of frontier violence must inform and shape both academic and public engagement with the past. Historian and Eastern Arrente woman Jennifer Caruso notes in the foreword to *Colonialism and its Aftermath* (2020) that 'it is inherent that the voices and experiences of Aboriginal people—whether drawn from texts of the past or the result of gathering of "life-stories"—are given equal measure to the non-Aboriginal written sources used to reconstruct and interpret events.'[5] In turn, some academics have argued that creating space for Indigenous voices to speak on historical experiences of trauma is not just good history, but also central to the processes of personal and collective healing that are necessary prerequisites for genuine reconciliation.[6] Accordingly, there has been increasing pressure to create discursive and commemorative spaces that facilitate the fact that, as Linda Tuhiwai

[1] Tom Clark, Ravi de Costa, and Sarah Maddison, "Non-Indigenous People and the Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation," in *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation*, eds. Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, and Ravi de Costa (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 4-8.
[2] Clark, de Costa, Maddison, "Non-Indigenous People and the Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation," 4.
[3] Ravi de Costa, "Two kinds of recognition: The Politics of engagement in settler societies," in Clark, de Costa, Maddison, eds., *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation,* 50; cited in Amanda Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence: Reconciling with the Australian frontier," in *Aftermaths: Colonialism, Violence and Memory in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific*, eds. Angela Wanhalla, Lyndall Ryan, and Camille Nurka (Otago: University of Otago Press, 2023), 41.
[4] Sarah Maddison, "The Limits of the Administration of Memory in Settler Colonial Societies: the Australian Case," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 32, no. 1 (2019): 182-183.
[5] Jennifer Caruso, "Foreword," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath: a history of Aboriginal South Australia,* eds. Peggy Brock, and Tom Gara (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2017), xiii.
[6] Gillian Whitlock, "Active remembrance: testimony, memoir and the work of reconciliation," in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism*, ed. Anne E. Coombes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 24-25.

Smith notes, 'Indigenous peoples want to tell [their] own stories, write [their] own versions, in [their] own ways, for [their] own purposes'.[7]

This chapter explores the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial—a 'reconciliation memorial' erected by the District Council of Elliston on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula in 2017—and the attempt by the Elliston community to publicly acknowledge Indigenous interpretations of frontier violence. The memorial notes that it commemorates 'an event referred to by the traditional owners [of the Elliston region] as "the Massacre of Waterloo Bay."'[8] Narratives of a massacre have existed in the oral histories of both settler-descendants and local Aboriginal peoples in some form or another since the nineteenth century. According to these narratives, Aboriginal people were driven off the local cliffs to their deaths by European settlers in the late 1840s or early 1850s. However, due to a lack of written documentary evidence within the colonial record, there has been significant speculation as to whether such a massacre occurred in the fashion commonly related. This made efforts to erect a memorial highly contentious when it was first proposed in 1970 and contributed significantly to community debates in 2017 over the reconciliation memorial's inclusion of the word 'massacre'.[9]

Yet, as this chapter explores, there appears to be a growing belief among some settler-descendants that Aboriginal histories of colonial conflict should be memorialised as they are recalled by Aboriginal peoples today. Although some members of the Elliston community felt that the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial should reflect a historical account authenticated by historians using written documentary evidence, the ultimate inclusion of the word 'massacre' on the memorial revealed a broader community desire to move beyond the written record as the final arbiter of historical 'truth'. Instead, the erection of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial in 2017 was a good faith attempt to promote a 'spirit of reconciliation' and it represented a genuine break from past models of reconciliation predicated on adherence to settler colonial knowledge systems. This may not answer the calls made by Maddison, Clark, and de Costa for recognition to be accompanied by structural reform, but it nonetheless illuminates a potential path towards a reconciliation process in which Aboriginal peoples set the terms of engagement.

Recalling the Elliston 'Incident' in 1970

The memorial that was eventually erected in 2017 followed in the footsteps of a longer campaign calling for public recognition of the violence that occurred around Waterloo Bay in the nineteenth century. Notably, the Federal Council for the Advance of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the Aborigines Progress Association put forward a plan to erect a

[7] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 28.
[8] "Waterloo Bay Massacre," Monument Australia, accessed 13 May 2023, https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/indigenous/display/111195-waterloo-bay-massacre.
[9] Robert Foster, Rick Hosking, and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian frontier and the violence of memory* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2001), 69.

memorial cairn at Waterloo Bay near Elliston in 1970.[10] According to the *Advertiser*, this memorial would 'commemorate a massacre of 250 Aborigines by white settlers in 1846 [*sic*].'[11] As with many regional memorials, the proposed cairn reflected shifting perceptions of Australia's national history. In this case, the proposal was made during a period of heightened national interest in Aboriginal rights following the successful 1967 referendum and the nation-wide campaign of national mourning enacted by Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists in response to the Captain Cook centenary celebrations planned for April 1970.[12] The proposed cairn appears to be the first recorded attempt to establish a memorial site to the Waterloo Bay massacre and it ultimately failed due to a claimed absence of historical evidence 'proving' that the event 'actually occurred'.[13]

Nonetheless, the idea that there had been a massacre at Waterloo Bay in the nineteenth century was a well-established local story by 1970. In *Fatal Collisions* (2001) Robert Foster, Rick Hosking, and Amanda Nettelbeck note that the 'shadowy, incomplete fragments of a local legend about Indigenous people driven to their deaths over a cliff near Elliston as payback for the murder of two or three settlers' had existed within the local settler-descendant community since at least 1850.[14] As they show, references to a massacre appeared, both euphemistically and explicitly, in newspaper articles, letters to the editor, oral accounts, short stories, and novels throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[15] Admittedly, these accounts were often contested, either by those who argued that a massacre had not occurred or by those who disputed specific details within the various stories being related.[16] Regardless, they preserved the overall sense that *something* had occurred in the mid-nineteenth century and, once again, demonstrated that the national 'Great Australian Silence' did not prevent regional stories of frontier violence from being recalled.[17]

The overall shape of this massacre story—at least, as it was recalled in the mid-to-late twentieth century—was well articulated in two local books which were both published around 1970. The first, Neil Thompson's 1969 novel *The Elliston Incident,* dramatized the massacre in a work of historical fiction. The novel narrates a story of a violent uprising of the Wirangu and Kukutha people in the nineteenth century and their terrifying guerrilla war against the settlers of the Eyre Peninsula. In the novel, the settlers are finally provoked into fighting back after the death of a shepherd named John Hamp, whose body is found decapitated with his head roasting in a camp oven. In retribution for this act, the Wirangu are

[10] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions*, 69.
[11] Max Fatchen, *Advertiser,* 25 March 1970, 17; cited in Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collision,* 69.
[12] Fatchen, *Advertiser,* 17.
[13] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collision,* 69.
[14] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 44.
[15] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 46, 50-54, and 57-59.
[16] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 60-61
[17] Anna Clark, *Making Australian History* (Melbourne: Vintage Books Australia, 2022), 174-178.

rounded up by horsemen and driven over the 'bluffs' south of Elliston. The novel notes that twenty Aboriginal people were killed in this 'incident'.[18]

The second account, a local history book entitled *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay,* was compiled by the Elliston Centenary Book Committee in 1978. The book was not based on archival research or primary source material, but rather drew largely on accounts provided by elderly residents of the Elliston district.[19] Despite numerous inaccuracies, like many local histories it nonetheless continued to influence community interpretations of the region's history throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[20] In fact, during local debates in 2017 over the 'reconciliation memorial' and the history of the 'massacre', one resident wrote to the District Council of Elliston and noted that 'most people would only have the information documented in the Centenary book.'[21]

Like Thompson's novel, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* recounted that a massacre of Aboriginal people occurred in 1849 following a chain of events which began with the murder of John Hamp. According to the book, Hamp had been found by his brother who realised that the crime 'had been committed by the natives, who had decapitated the body, leaving John's head beside the body, then ransacked the hut, and taken all the food.' John's brother reported the death to the local landowner, Dr Browne, who organised 'a punitive force to punish the natives'. The book claimed that Browne led the force south and surprised a large party of Aboriginal people who were camped at a waterhole. The settlers opened fire with their muskets and the Aboriginal people scattered, with the majority fleeing towards Waterloo Bay. The settlers pursued and as they did

> the leading horsemen saw [the Aboriginal people] race for the cliffs and jump over. As the white men … [reached] the brink and look[ed] down no trace of any natives could be seen. Straight down, 150 feet below, was the sea!'

Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay then stated that Browne addressed his men and warned them that—while they had achieved the purpose of their expedition—they had broken the law and would be considered murderers by the colonial government. Thus, the settlers swore an oath of secrecy never to reveal what had happened on the cliffs.[22]

Unlike Thompson's novel, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* did not speculate on the number of people killed during the massacre. In fact, the author concluded its version of the historical story by stating 'It is my opinion … that the natives escaped … the few who were shot could have been the only losses, as once over the cliffs they would know all the caves and hiding places below.'[23] Nevertheless, the book contextualised the massacre within a broader

[18] Neil Thompson, *The Elliston Incident* (London: Robert Hale, 1969), 176-179.
[19] Elliston Centenary Book Committee, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay: Elliston 1878-1978* (Elliston: Elliston Centenary Committee, 1978), 10.
[20] Skye Krichauff, *Memory, Place and Aboriginal-Settler History* (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 148-149.
[21] Kaye Rumbelow to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, Elliston, 24 July 2017.
[22] Elliston Centenary Book Committee, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay*, 8-10.
[23] Elliston Centenary Book Committee, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay*, 10.

narrative of violence between settlers and Aboriginal peoples on the Eyre Peninsula. The massacre, along with many other instances of frontier violence, was stated to have been done in retaliation for thefts and murders committed by Aboriginal people. 'The white men,' the author argued, 'now and again, in self-defence and in attempting to arrest raiders, may have shot down a few natives.'[24]

Despite the discrepancy between the two books over the number of Aboriginal people killed during the massacre, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* and *The Elliston Incident* related broadly similar stories. Both books claimed that the massacre was the culmination of a series of violent incidents on the frontier of the Eyre Peninsula. Both books argued that Aboriginal people were the initial aggressors and that the decapitation of John Hamp—whose head was found in a camp oven—was the immediate catalyst for the settlers' retaliation. Both books stated that a large group of Aboriginal people were pursued by men on horses and driven over the cliffs at Waterloo Bay. And the authors of both books were sympathetic towards the hardships faced by European settlers while being patronising towards Aboriginal people. In *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay,* for instance, the author argued that 'It must have been extremely difficult for the poor half-savage creatures to discriminate between the good and the bad of the newly arrived settlers.'[25]

The violence detailed in these books speaks to an enduring memory of documented violence on the Eyre Peninsula. The peninsula was a prominent battleground for the frontier wars and Tom Gara and Peggy Brock claim that—according to the written records—it may have been 'South Australia's most violent frontier.'[26] Violence between Europeans and Aboriginal people likely began prior to the arrival of settlers and pastoralists in the early 1840s, because sealers from Kangaroo Island may have raided the area to kidnap Aboriginal women.[27] Later, in 1842, the region surrounding the settlement of Port Lincoln was placed in a state of virtual siege by Aboriginal warriors, who attacked outlying stations, menaced the settlers, and stole their livestock. In response to the attacks, the Governor of South Australia, George Grey, deployed a detachment of the 96th Regiment of Foot, but the infantrymen in their red coats initially failed to apprehend the perpetrators. As Foster and Nettelbeck note in *Out of the Silence* (2012), the regiment, assisted by armed settlers on horseback and the South Australian Mounted Police, only managed to re-establish some sense of British authority on the peninsula in 1843 after a series of early setbacks.[28] Conflict and killings continued to plague the area from the early 1840s to the early 1860s and Gara and Brock claim that over this

[24] Elliston Centenary Book Committee, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay*, 17.
[25] Elliston Centenary Book Committee, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay*, 5.
[26] Tom Gara and Peggy Brock, "Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath: a history of Aboriginal South Australia*, eds. Peggy Brock and Tom Gara (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2017), 220.
[27] Gara and Brock, "Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast," 219.
[28] Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence: The History and Memory of South Australia's Frontier Wars* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2012), 42-47.

twenty-year period 'at least a dozen Europeans were killed… and an unknown number of Aboriginal people perished.'[29]

Because questions about the historical record played a significant role in later debates over the massacre's memorialisation, it is useful to reflect on some of the murders that occurred around Elliston in 1848 and 1849 and which were recorded in colonial documents. Notably, John Hamp—whose death was depicted as the inciting incident for the massacre in both *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* and *The Elliston Incident*—was killed outside his hut at Lake Newland on 23 June 1848. According to official police reports, he appeared to have been attacked while he was walking to collect timber from the surrounding scrub.[30] These reports describe Hamp's death as having been caused by spear wounds and deep lacerations to the side of his head. In contrast to local mythology, the reports do not claim that Hamp had been decapitated or that his head had been discovered in a camp oven.[31] Hamp's death was, nonetheless, followed by the murder of many Aboriginal people by European settlers. For example, in August 1848, at least one Aboriginal person was shot by settler George Stewart after the theft of a shirt from the hut of a shepherd. Following this, an Aboriginal man was shot by John Wood in late 1848 and another by James Symes in early 1849.[32] In May 1849, five Aboriginal men, women, and children were poisoned after consuming flour laced with arsenic. Patrick Dwyer, the man responsible for the poisoning, was charged with murder, but he was later released.[33]

As archaeologist Heather Burke *et al.* note in their analysis of the colonial frontier in the western Central Murray region, Aboriginal responses to European settlement and the violence that accompanied it depended on circumstances and involved both peaceful conciliation and aggressive retaliation.[34] On the Eyre Peninsula, as Gara and Brock point out, 'the early settlers needed Aboriginal workers on farms and stations' and some Aboriginal people were evidently prepared to do this work.[35] However, Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck note that the incident of poisoning in 1849 may have triggered two murders that were intended as retaliatory 'payback'.[36] On 3 May, Captain James Rigby Beevor was killed on a pastoral property about 80 kilometres north-west of Port Lincoln.[37] He was found dead outside his hut, from which goods to the value of 70 pounds had been stolen. A few days later on 7 May 1849, Annie Easton was killed on the neighbouring lease. Her husband discovered

[29] Gara and Brock, "Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast," 220.
[30] Charles Driver (Govt Resident, Port Lincoln) to Colonial Secretary, 17 July 1848, in 24-6-1848-1127, Government Record Group (GRG), State Records of South Australia (SRSA), Adelaide.
[31] Driver to Colonial Secretary, 17 July 1848, SRSA.
[32] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 47-48.
[33] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 48-49.
[34] Heather Burke, Amy Roberts, Mick Morrison, Vanessa Sullivan, and the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, "The Space of Conflict: Aboriginal/European interactions and frontier violence on the western Central Murray, South Australia, 1830-1841," *Aboriginal History* 40, no. 1 (2016): 145-146.
[35] Gara and Brocks, "Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast," 220.
[36] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 47.
[37] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence,* 84-85; Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 47-49.

her corpse with spear wounds to her breasts, her cheeks, the back of her neck, and one of her thighs. Her six-week-old son Alfred was found unharmed in his cot nearby.

Three weeks after Easton's death, on 27 May 1849, two settlers, David Allen and James Brown, were threatened by a group of Aboriginal people and stores were taken from a hut. Colonial records note that local pastoralist Thomas Cooper Horn organised an armed party of station hands and pursued the suspects after he heard of this incident.[38] Horn's posse encountered a group of Aboriginal people and the two sides supposedly came into conflict, with the Europeans discharging their muskets and the Aboriginal fighters hurling volleys of spears. Ultimately, the Aboriginal party fled from the confrontation and broke into two separate groups as they ran. Horn and his men followed one group which ran towards the cliffs around what was then known as Horne Bay, but which was later referred to as Waterloo Bay. The records claim that as the Aboriginal people climbed down the cliffs to escape, Horn and his men opened fire and killed three. Five other Aboriginal people were apprehended for theft.[39]

Some members of the public have argued that the story of a massacre evolved later out of enduring collective memories of this event. For instance, as of November 2021, the *Wikipedia* page for the 'Waterloo Bay Massacre' argues that the settlers' violent response to the threatening of Allen and Brown demonstrates that 'some form of punitive action did take place on the cliffs of Waterloo Bay'. Drawing primarily on *Fatal Collisions* (2001) by Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, the *Wikipedia* page claims that this moment of violence had 'been embellished into a myth'.[40] Similar claims about the conflict between Aboriginal peoples and Horn's party being inaccurately remembered as a 'massacre' appeared during community debates over historical authenticity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as will be depicted later.

However, Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck actually argued that the colonial records of the events are insufficient and cannot make a definitive ruling about the truthfulness of the massacre story at Waterloo Bay.[41] The colonial record does not prove the existence of a massacre, but neither does it disprove the possibility that one occurred. The records do note that Aboriginal people were killed while descending the cliffs at Waterloo Bay and there is evidence that shows that several acts of violence occurred near Elliston in the late 1840s. Circumstantial evidence also suggests that the killings around the cliffs were somehow significant; the *Chronical* noted in 1937 that Horne Bay was renamed Waterloo Bay because the conflict that occurred there between the settlers and Aboriginal people recalled the famous Battle of Waterloo.[42] Likewise, many of the enduring narrative beats of the massacre

[38] Foster and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence,* 86.
[39] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 47-49.
[40] "Waterloo Bay Massacre," Wikipedia, accessed 15 November 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterloo_Bay_massacre.
[41] Foster, Hosking, Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 72-73; Foster, Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence,* 136-137.
[42] "Was there ever a massacre?," *Chronicle,* 23 September 1937, 58.

story—including as it was presented in *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* and *The Elliston Incident*—can be identified within the colonial records. The violent uprising of Aboriginal peoples recalled in *The Elliston Incident*, for instance, alludes to the fact that the frontier around Elliston was hotly contested and resulted in several deadly confrontations. However, the specific details of this particular event remain unclear because of gaps in the historical records, in part because colonial authors may have downplayed, or may not have even recorded, certain events.[43]

Yet, questions about the historical authenticity of the massacre story dominated discussions within Elliston's settler-descendant community when the erection of a memorial cairn was proposed in 1970. Some local residents questioned the event's framing as 'a massacre', called for a forensic examination of the colonial record, and debated the exact number of Aboriginal people who were killed. Several letters to the editor published in local newspapers referred to local books such as *The Elliston Incident* and claimed that these depictions were mythologised memories that were not founded in historical reality.[44] While discussing this moment in *Fatal Collisions*, Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck identified at least one correspondent, Norman Ford, who claimed that local residents had entirely 'invented the Waterloo Bay massacre story, which was so completely exposed by the late Mr Somerville and Mr A.T. Saunders'.[45] In contrast to this statement, prominent Indigenous-rights activist and Yanyuwa man John Moriarty argued in the *News* that the massacre was 'part of the history of the West Coast Aboriginal population' despite attempts by the settler-descendent population to discredit what was a 'well-known fact.'[46]

The District Council of Elliston responded to the proposal for a memorial cairn in 1970, and to the debates surrounding the proposal, by deferring to the written, colonial, historical record. The chairman of the District Council of Elliston, J. B. Cameron, told the *News* in February 1970 that 'we [the District Council of Elliston] are unsure what happened back in 1848 [*sic*] and are hoping that someone can give us direction on the matter'.[47] This approach was not unusual; as several scholars have pointed out, appeals to 'historical "truth" developed through an old-fashioned positivist empirical method' were often deployed in the twentieth century 'to resolve long standing controversies about the past.'[48] In this instance, the council indicated that they would support the establishment of a memorial, but only if it could be definitively

[43] Amanda Nettelbeck, and Robert Foster, *In the Name of the Law: William Wiltshire and the Policing of the Australian Frontier* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2007), 31.
[44] See: Jeff Turner, "What Did Happen at Waterloo Bay?," *News*, 2 April 1970, 12-13; Norman Ford, "Massacre Legend," *Advertiser*, 30 March 1970, 2; Laurie Bryan, "Massacre Incident," *Advertiser*, 3 April 1970, 2; originally cited in Foster, Hosking and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 70-72;
[45] Ford, "Massacre Legend," 2; in Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 70.
[46] *News,* 18 February 1970, 2.
[47] Turner, "What did Happen at Waterloo Bay?," 12-13.
[48] Elazar Barkan, "Historians and Historical Reconciliation," *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 4 (October 2009), 899-913; Richard Evans, "History, Memory, and the Law," *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (2002), 334.

proven that a massacre had taken place in the nineteenth century.[49] In order to determine this, though, the council prioritised a narrow body of evidence which selectively drew on written settler recollections or colonial police reports. They dismissed as unreliable local settler-descendent memories and, notably, Aboriginal oral histories. Ultimately, the District Council of Elliston stated at a meeting on 13 April 1970 that they 'cannot agree to the erection of a cairn to commemorate the death of Aborigines who allegedly lost their lives at Waterloo Bay, because of the absence of definite proof that the massacre occurred.'[50]

The District Council of Elliston may have justified their decision by appealing to historical truth, but their methodology resembled an approach termed by historian Dirk Moses as 'documentary positivism'. Historians, Moses argues, rely on the 'convergence of evidence' drawn from a wide range of sources, 'including from supposedly "indirect" evidence such as hearsay, second-hand testimony, or oral history.'[51] On the other hand, he points out that historical research based on the belief that 'a factual statement can be authenticated as true only if backed up by a circumscribed category of documents' may actually be misleading.[52] Moses was writing in the context of the History Wars, but even in 1970 some residents were frustrated by the fact that the District Council of Elliston neglected to consider Aboriginal oral histories. Elliston resident Laurie Bryan—writing to the *Advertiser* in response to Ford's letter—argued that claims 'about the Waterloo Bay Massacre's [*sic*] being a myth is a personal opinion which is directly contrary to the opinions of the Aboriginal peoples of the West Coast, who are basing their attitude on personal relationships with the Aboriginal people involved in the incident.'[53]

One possible explanation for the District Council of Elliston's rejection of the Waterloo Bay massacre memorial cairn may be that the proposal threatened local settler descendants' sense of identity. Scholars have noted that 'documentary positivism' may provide a useful defence for historically-informed identities because it justifies the rejection of evidence that may reveal uncomfortable facts. For instance, Bain Attwood suggested in 2001 that 'conservatives who often seem intent on denying the historical realities' regularly dismissed oral testimonies and autobiographies as unreliable forms of evidence so as to avoid addressing the legacy of Australia's child removal policies.[54] Similarly, historian Richard Evans noted, with reference to *David Irving v Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt*, that a narrow view of what constitutes 'evidence' is sometimes exploited to support pre-conceived

[49] "Plan to recall 'Massacre'," *Advertiser*, 24 March 1970, 11; Turner, "What did Happen at Waterloo Bay?," 12-13.
[50] "Aboriginal Massacre at Waterloo Disputed," *The West Coast Sentinel,* 15 April 1970, 1.
[51] Dirk Moses, "Revisionism and Denial," in *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2003), 345.
[52] Moses, "Revisionism and Denial," 353.
[53] Bryan, "Massacre Incident," 2.
[54] Bain Attwood, "'Learning about the truth': The stolen generations narrative,' in *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand,* eds. Bain Attwood and Fiona Magowan (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2001), 209; originally cited in Coombes, "Memory and history in settler colonialism," 41.

interpretations of the past.[55] In the case of Elliston, the story of the massacre of Waterloo Bay called into question the heroism and moral fibre of early European settlers. As historian Ann Curthoys points out, the Australian settler legend has sometimes acted as a barrier for settler-descendants who struggle to recognise that colonial settlement necessarily involved Aboriginal dispossession.[56] It is not therefore inconceivable that the District Council's refusal to consider Aboriginal oral histories stemmed from an unconscious and unacknowledged desire to avoid a critical engagement with the lives of their pioneering ancestors.

Circumstantial evidence may lend support to this explanation. In the years that followed, the District Council of Elliston actively created memorial sites at locations where European settlers were known to have been slain by Aboriginal people. In December 1971 a plaque was unveiled by P. Penna, the deputy chairman of the District Council of Elliston, at Lake Newland in memory of the death of John Hamp; later, granite cairns were constructed at the sites of death of James Rigby Beevor and Annie Easton.[57] Although the District Council of Elliston noted that they were 'sympathetic to those aborigines who lost their lives in the early settlement of the area', none of the recorded instances of Aboriginal deaths were actually memorialised.[58] Seven years after the memorials to Hamp, Beevor, and Easton were constructed, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* argued that the European response to Aboriginal violence did not actually result in any Aboriginal people being killed at Waterloo Bay. In *Fatal Collisions,* Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck argued that one consequence of these new memorial sites was that the landscape came to reflect a story of frontier violence which 'reinforced the perception that the settlers only responded in the face of inexplicable, brutal and violent aggression by the Aborigines.'[59]

Regardless of their motives or their justifications, the actions of the District Council of Elliston ensured that the area's memorial landscape solely represented settler-descendant narratives of the frontier throughout the twentieth century. Describing the situation as it stood in 2001, Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck lamented the fact that Elliston's memorial sites 'commemorate the European fallen of the Australian frontier [while] the Aboriginal dead remain uncommemorated.'[60] Yet the story of the massacre remained within the community's collective memory and would continue to haunt Elliston in the years to come. Reflecting on the community's engagement with the story in 2017, Elliston resident Julie Allchurch stated

[55] Evans, "History, Memory, and the Law," 326-345.
[56] Ann Curthoys, "Expulsion, Exodus, and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology," *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 61 (1999): 2.
[57] Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (for Reconciliation Australia), *Recognising Community Truth-Telling: An exploration of local truth-telling in Australia,* by Vanessa Barolsky, Karen Berger, and Kirstie Close (Melbourne: Deakin University, 2023), 58. Available at https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/recognising-community-truth-telling/.
[58] "Aboriginal Massacre at Waterloo Disputed," 1.
[59] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 72.
[60] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 72-73.

that the Waterloo Bay massacre was a 'subject [that] will not go away'.[61] It would not be until the construction of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial in 2017 that the situation would shift.

Acknowledging 'massacre' for the 'Reconciliation Monument' in 2017

The processes that led to the establishment of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial began in 2012 after the Elliston District Council received 1.1 million dollars of state and federal government funding to build a walking trail along the cliffs and coastline around Elliston.[62] In an interview with the *Port Lincoln Times* in 2015, Kym Callaghan, the Chairman of the District Council of Elliston, stated that the coastal trail 'would help build tourism' and promote exercise.[63] The trail was also designed to have a memorial function. As was noted in a 2017 District Council of Elliston Development Plan—produced in association with the South Australian Department of Transport, Planning, and Infrastructure—the coastal trail was planned to include interpretive signage which would detail the history of the Elliston region.[64] For the most part, this history detailed an orthodox Anglo-European narrative of colonial settlement and agricultural development. The signs described Matthew Flinders's voyage to survey Australia's south coast in the early 1800s and traced Elliston's development from its nineteenth century origins to its place as a regional centre for agriculture, pastoralism, and surfing in the twenty-first century.[65]

However, in their application for state funding, the District Council of Elliston indicated that they also intended to construct a 'reconciliation monument' along the walking trail. The council stated that this monument would 'symbolise the current generation's recognition of past wrongs against the original inhabitants of this land during settlement.[66] They also claimed that it would be built with the involvement of local Aboriginal peoples so as to properly depict 'Elliston's Aboriginal history.'[67] At the time, the Wirangu people held the only

[61] Julie Allchurch, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 25 July 2017, accessed 2 February 2022, https://www.portlinclontimes.com.au/story/4858082/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=1374.
[62] District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017,* 2; Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, *Recognising Community Truth-Telling,* 58.
[63] Henry Fisher, "Elliston Plans for Coastal Trail Build," *Port Lincoln Times,* June 30, 2015, accessed 2 February 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/3178188/elliston-plans-for-coastal-trail-build/.
[64] South Australia, Government of South Australia, *The South Australian Government Gazette,* no. 81 (Adelaide: Government Printer, 12 December 2017), 4905; South Australia, District Count of Elliston, and Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure, *Development Plan* (Adelaide: Department of Planning, Transport, and Infrastructure, 12 December 2017), 119; District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017,* 2; Fisher, "Elliston Plans for Coastal Trail Build."
[65] "Elliston Coastal Trail," District Council of Elliston, accessed 10 December 2021, https://www.ellistoncoastaltrail.com.au/.
[66] South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017* (Elliston: District Council of Elliston, 20 June 2017), 3.
[67] District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017,* 2.

Native Title Claim to the area.[68] Primarily through the representation of Wirangu Elders Jack Johncock and Veda Betts, the Wirangu community requested that the proposed 'reconciliation monument' memorialise the 'massacre' at Waterloo Bay.[69]

The Wirangu's request was unsurprising, especially because the walking trail planned to traverse and showcase the cliffs of Waterloo Bay. As Edward Gonzalez-Tennant notes in the context of subaltern memories of racial violence in the United States, major landforms often act as unofficial sites of memory and may 'influence humans and continue to haunt them.'[70] At Elliston, the cliffs of Waterloo Bay were, and are, imbued with the memory of a massacre among both Aboriginal and settler-descendent peoples.[71] Wirangu Elder Veda Betts made this clear during an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2018. She stated that the belief that 'there were lots of black people driven off those cliffs, just like sheep' was well established in the collective memory of the Wirangu people. Betts also noted that the fact that some non-Indigenous people claimed that the story of the massacre had no basis in historical fact contributed to divisions between Elliston's settler-descendent residents and the Wirangu people prior to 2017. She recounted that her family would avoid Elliston when they travelled along the western coast of the Eyre Peninsula because it was 'full of bad spirits' due to the people murdered there in the nineteenth century and the ongoing lack of acknowledgement regarding those deaths.[72] Thus, a memorial at Waterloo Bay which explicitly acknowledged that these killings occurred in the nineteenth century would be transformative for the Wirangu community in the present day.

Council documents show that the concept of a reconciliation memorial, which acknowledged the area's local history of frontier violence and Indigenous dispossession, was not necessarily controversial in Elliston. Rather, it was the use of the specific term 'massacre' to describe the murder of Aboriginal peoples at Waterloo Bay in the nineteenth century that was contentious. Community debates regarding the word 'massacre' will be more deeply explored in the following section, but for the present it is worth noting that the District Council of Elliston was aware of the controversial nature of the term. During a council run 'Informal Gathering' held to negotiate the 'Wirangu Reconciliation Monument Wording' in July 2017, Chief Executive Officer of the District Council of Elliston, Phil Cameron, noted that:

> When this issue arose … no elected member, nor any Council Officer involved, was under any illusions that the use of the word 'massacre' would be controversial amongst the residents and ratepayers of this District. Council was, and remains, concerned about the controversy this has and is causing. Issues like this test lifelong

[68] District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017,* 2; Commonwealth, National Native Title Tribunal, *Wirangu No 2 Native Title Claim* (Canberra: National Native Title Tribunal, 1997), SC1997/006.
[69] Tim Elliott, "Battle of Waterloo: How a massacre monument split the community of Elliston," *Sydney Morning* Herald, January 25 2020, accessed 2 February 2022, https://www.smh.com.au/national/battle-of-waterloo-how-a-massacre-monument-split-the-community-of-elliston-20191128-p53f2b.html.
[70] Edward González-Tennant, "Hate sits in places: Folk knowledge and the power of place in Rosewood, Florida," in *Excavating Memory: Sites of Remembering and Forgetting,* eds. Maria Theresia Starzmann and John Roby (Gainesville; University of Florida Press, 2015), 219.
[71] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 67.
[72] Elliott, "Battle of Waterloo."

> friendships … I know there are strongly held views on both sides and I know the effect that can have on us.[73]

Consequently, the initial position of the council was that although a memorial to the 'Elliston Incident' might be erected in the name of reconciliation, the word 'massacre' should not be used to describe this event.[74]

However, it quickly became evident that the Wirangu people would not agree to a 'reconciliation monument' unless that monument described the events of 1849 as a 'massacre.' In an email presented to the District Council of Elliston during an Ordinary Council Meeting in June 2017, an unnamed Wirangu representative stated explicitly:

> I don't believe your Council Members say no Aboriginal People were killed. What I don't know is whether Council Members understand the debate in the same way I do; that is, something did happen, and the issue is how to describe what happened … Historical writing records frontier conflict and the killing of Aboriginal people, but what we call those acts today is the subject of this debate: Wirangu people say it is a massacre, some community members do not.[75]

The email plainly lays out the view that massacre was an appropriate term because it spoke to the Wirangu's broader historical experiences and communal identity. Massacre described not just the events that occurred around Waterloo Bay in 1849, but also the wider history of frontier violence on the Eyre Peninsula, along with later Aboriginal experiences of dispossession and displacement.

There was also evidently frustration among some members of the Wirangu people regarding the long history of preferential treatment given to European written sources over Aboriginal oral histories with regards to local history. Wirangu Elder Jack Johncock especially resented assertions from some settler-descendent community members that the term 'massacre' was inappropriate because of a supposed lack of historical evidence demonstrating that the event had occurred. In an article for the *Port Lincoln Times* in July 2017—which reported on a public meeting that failed to resolve the controversy over the memorial's wording—Jack Johncock was noted to have said:

> Our Stories go back thousands of years, we might not live here but we possess the stories of this land … You say you don't know what happened here, that there is no proof, but we do, it's in our stories.[76]

Johncock's frustration perhaps speaks to a broader annoyance with the fact that, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes in *Decolonising Methodologies,* there is an established tendency for non-Indigenous peoples to devalue Indigenous knowledge systems in order to preserve colonialist

[73] South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Informal Gathering – Wirangu Reconciliation Monument Wording,* Phil Cameron (Elliston; District Council of Elliston, 21 July 2017), 1.
[74] District Council of Elliston, *Informal Gathering,* 1-2.
[75] District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017*, 4.
[76] "Elliston monument wording divides community," *Port Lincoln Times,* July 27 2017, accessed 2 February 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4817788/wording-clash/.

interpretations of the past.[77] In this instance, the apparent assumption from some members of the community that the Wirangu's oral history amounted to nothing more than unsubstantiated rumours seemed to indicate that there persisted within Elliston an enduring colonialist mind-set which dismissed Indigenous forms of historical knowledge. Such dismissals, Attwood points out, do not provide a basis for meaningful reconciliation. Conversely, an acknowledgement of the 'massacre' would represent not just recognition of a historical event, but also an acceptance of the validity of Wirangu systems of memory which was necessary for the reconciliatory nature of the memorial.[78]

Many of these sentiments were pointed out to the District Council of Elliston by the anthropologist Timothy Haines, who was employed to help facilitate negotiations between the Wirangu and the non-Indigenous members of the Elliston community.[79] As historian Stefan Berger details in the introduction to *The Engaged Historian* (2018), academics within the humanities, particularly historians, speak 'with special authority within broader memory discourses,' and this authority may help them to facilitate processes of memorial reconciliation in certain circumstances.[80] In this case, Haines had experience working with the Aboriginal peoples of the Eyre Peninsula and could consult closely with the Wirangu community, but he also held influence within a western framework of knowledge as a qualified academic. Haines prepared a report for the District Council detailing a short history of colonial violence in South Australia which he presented at an Ordinary Council meeting on 20 June 2017. The report demonstrated that frontier violence across South Australia, and especially the Eyre Peninsula, was ubiquitous and interlinked with the process of settlement.[81] It also referenced several historians who had written about the Eyre Peninsula, demonstrated the complexities of historical research into this period due to the limitations of the historical evidence, and suggested that colonial records might be untrustworthy because they were 'written by the victors.'[82]

Haines's report also engaged with the term massacre. He ruminated on the meaning of the word, including its dictionary definition, its etymological origins, and its various current interpretations in common parlance. Haines noted that the general understanding of the word 'seems to focus on large numbers of people killed'.[83] In contrast, he pointed out that

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[77] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 21.

[78] Bain Attwood, "Unsettling pasts: reconciliation and history in settler Australia," *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005), 249 and 255-256.

[79] South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be Held Tuesday 18 April 2017* (Elliston: District Council of Elliston, 18 April 2017), 2; District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June 2017*, 4; Timothy Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations: A Short History of Massacres in South Australia* (Elliston: District Council of Elliston, April 2017), 5-7.

[80] Stefan Berger, ed., *The Engaged Historian: Perspectives on the intersection of Politics, Activism and the Historical Profession* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 2.

[81] Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations*, 1-4.

[82] Haines especially drew on four academic works: Foster, and Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence*, 2012; Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck: *Fatal Collisions,* 2001; Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006); and Graham Jenkins, *The Conquest of the Ngarindjeri* (Adelaide: Raullan Press, 1985). These scholarly texts appeared to be particularly well known among members of the non-Indigenous Elliston community, and references were made to them by several residents throughout the debates over the memorial.

[83] Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations,* 10.

many academic historians argue that an event can be considered a 'massacre' even when only a few people are killed. For instance, the 'Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788-1930' project—led by Lyndall Ryan and published by the University of Newcastle—defines massacre as the 'deliberate and unlawful killing of six or more undefended people in one operation.'[84] Similarly, in *Theatres of Violence* (2014), co-edited with Phillip Dwyer, Ryan argues that a massacre constituted a minimum number of between three to ten people unlawfully killed.[85] These claims draw significantly on the work of historian Barbara Mann, who notes that the murder of a small number of people can still be a massacre because it may contribute to a larger series of events which ultimately results in genocide.[86] Thus, the 'Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia' project states that an event may be termed a 'massacre' if the resulting number of fatalities leaves a group dangerously vulnerable to further attacks and severely limits their ability to effectively acquire food, reproduce the next generation, or carry out key cultural practices.[87]

By pointing to these academic definitions, Haines may have been attempting to demonstrate to the District Council of Elliston that a dispute over the exact number of people killed at Waterloo Bay would indicate a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of 'massacre'. Rather, massacre might be more usefully understood as a term used to 'uncomfortably blend war and murder' by describing 'organised mass killings that are nonetheless unlawful and illegal,' as historian Tom Griffiths points out.[88] Within this framework, calling an event a 'massacre' may lead to a fuller sense of closure for victims by deeming that the specific event was unjust, while also acknowledging that there was a wider historical context of war-like violence at the time.[89] For these reasons, Haines stated that 'perhaps we would be right in concluding that three random people shot at the end of a pursuit responding to a perceived burglary may constitute a "massacre" as much as 230 chased off a cliff.'[90] Further, in a point which the District Council later directly quoted during an Ordinary Council Meeting, Haines argued that a massacre 'inheres in the attitude and intention of the perpetrator, rather than the numbers of victims'.[91] In this, Haines depicted an academic perspective on 'massacre', but he also alluded to the Wirangu's position regarding the term and explained its significance for a non-Indigenous audience.

It is unclear to what extent Haines's report was influential, but most of the members of the District Council of Elliston ultimately changed their mind regarding the Wirangu community's request for the term 'massacre' to appear on the reconciliation memorial. Most notably, the

[84] Lyndal Ryan et al., "Introduction," Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788-1930, University of Newcastle, accessed 2 February 2022, https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/introduction.php.
[85] Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, eds., *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing, and Atrocity throughout History* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2014), xiii-xxv.
[86] Barbara Alice Mann, "Fractal massacres in the Old Northwest: the example of the Miamis," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 2 (2013): 173.
[87] Ryan et al., Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, "Introduction."
[88] Tom Griffiths, "The Language of Conflict," in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience,* eds. Bain Attwood and Stephen Glynn Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 144.
[89] Griffiths, "The Language of Conflict," 145.
[90] Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations,* 6.
[91] Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations,* 10; District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 20 June* 2017, 3-4.

Chairman of the Elliston District Council, Kym Callaghan, became an ardent proponent for the word's inclusion. According to an article in the *ABC* in 2017, Callaghan claimed to have been opposed to the term initially, but changed his mind after reading Supreme Court documents about the incident and after visiting the site with two Wirangu women, including Elder Veda Betts.[92] He claimed that Bett's reaction to Waterloo Bay caused him to realise that the narrative of the massacre held emotional significance for the Wirangu which was not acknowledged by a debate over the exact numbers of people murdered or by arguments over 'historical authenticity'.

Consequently, it became increasingly clear that the District Council of Elliston, along with the non-Indigenous Elliston community more broadly, would have to move beyond discussions about the colonial archive and begin to consider Aboriginal memories of frontier violence. The Wirangu people's insistence that the word 'massacre' be included on the reconciliation memorial spoke to a deeper demand for settler recognition of Aboriginal narratives and experiences of colonial history. Incorporating the word into the memorial would symbolise both the non-Indigenous community's acceptance of these histories and ensured that non-Indigenous peoples would no longer monopolise interpretations of the past or dictate the terms of reconciliation. For the walking trail commemorative site to be a 'reconciliation monument', it would also have to be a 'massacre memorial.'

Negotiating divergent views over 'Massacre' in the Elliston community

Despite growing recognition, especially among members of the District Council of Elliston, that the term 'massacre' was essential for the new monument's reconciliatory aims, explicit use of the word remained controversial among some non-Indigenous residents of Elliston. Debates about the word and its place on the memorial occurred across a variety of mediums, including in local newspaper articles, letters to the editor, council meetings, and community meetings. Several years later in 2022, the *ABC* reported that it had also been a common topic of conversation behind closed doors—over kitchen tables and cups of tea.[93] To understand the process of negotiation that eventually resulted in the erection of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial in 2017, it is important to understand why a large cohort of non-Indigenous Elliston residents opposed the term massacre despite its significance for the Wirangu community.

Most notably, as in 1970, many of those who objected to the word's use on the reconciliation memorial argued that 'massacre' did not describe the historical reality of the event. For instance, in a letter to the *Port Lincoln Times,* Denise Little drew on her personal reading of archival records and the writings of historians to argue that the story of a massacre had been

[92] "Word "Massacre" used by council to describe Waterloo Bay clifftop killing of Aboriginals," *ABC News,* 19 September 2017, accessed 1 February 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-19/elliston-council-votes-to-keep-word-massacre-in-monument/8961036.

[93] Kristi Melville, "Waterloo Bay: That word 'massacre'," *The Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* 28 May 2019, accessed 4 February 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/the-history-listen/waterloo-bay:-that-word-massacre/11082690.

'embellished' due to the conflation of many separate incidents.[94] In her understanding, the event could not be termed 'massacre' because there was no indication that a large enough number of people had been killed. On the other hand, Richard Ridgeway expressed the view that the term massacre was inappropriate because historic instances of colonial violence were legally sanctioned. Ridgeway wrote, 'The documented evidence suggests three troopers pursued 10 Aboriginal people who were avoiding attempts to be taken into legal custody for theft. These people were armed with stolen weapons and resisted apprehension with great determination and five of them became casualties.'[95] By emphasising supposed Aboriginal crimes and lack of co-operation with the pursuers, Ridgeway portrays Aboriginal deaths as legally justified and therefore incomprehensible as a 'massacre'. Both Little and Ridgeway suggested that they preferred the term 'incident'.

Haines had attempted to problematise an overreliance on the archival record, but a belief that the colonial documents did not depict a 'massacre'—either because too few people had died or because the perpetrators were acting legally—nevertheless had substantial support within the community. Early on during community discussions, a petition circulated among the community which raised concerns about the use of the word. The pre-amble to the petition explicitly stated that 'These signatories unquestionably have no issues with acknowledging the various documented atrocities which occurred in the area between the local Aborigines and the recently arrived Europeans.' Nonetheless, it noted:

> We the undersigned are strongly and absolutely against the phrasing of the word 'massacre' for the Indigenous memorial associated with the Elliston Coastal Trail Project. Due to exhausted [*sic*] historical research it has been established that no documented evidence of a massacre ever took place at Elliston.[96]

Caroline Gillett, who organised the petition with the support of her husband Kym Gillett, repeated these assertions later during a Community Meeting in July which was held to discuss the monument's wording. Gillett argued:

> There is evidence verifying that yes, there was violence certainly on both sides in this very large district but not an iota, whatsoever about a large massacre in the late 1840s on the Elliston coastline, let alone Waterloo Bay. I think recognition is fine, I think acknowledgement is fine, but I don't think the word massacre should ever be used because there is no proof it ever happened.[97]

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[94] Denise Little, letter to the editor, *West Coast Sentinel,* 25 July 2017, accessed 4 February 2022, https//www.westcoastsentinel.com.au/story/4813037/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=2051.

[95] Richard Ridgeway, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 5 September 2017, accessed 4 February 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4904451/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=2004.

[96] Caroline Gillett and Kym Gillett, "We the undersigned are strongly and absolutely against the phrasing of the word 'massacre," petition, in *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials: Volume 3: Petitions, Letters, and Submissions*, ed. District Council of Elliston (Elliston: Direct Council of Elliston, 19 September 2017), 38-43.

[97] Olivia Barnes, "Debate Over 'Massacre' at Waterloo Bay," *Port Lincoln Times,* 23 June 2017, accessed 18 February 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/5418326/massacre-questioned.

By the time the petition was presented to the District Council of Elliston on 24 August 2017 it had been signed by 48 residents of Elliston.[98] It is possible that there may have been other residents who disagreed with the inscription's wording but who did not sign this petition.

Caroline and Kym Gillett represented opposition to the term 'massacre' as a commitment to archival evidence and historical truth in the petition, but it was evident that many of the signatories were concerned about what the term might mean for the community's historically-informed identity. As historians of memory point out, history and memory are intertwined with identity, and so memorials which engage with complex or confronting histories can be anxiety provoking for both individuals and for communities.[99] Historian Sabine Marschell notes that it is not uncommon for members of formerly dominant groups, 'motivated by anxieties over disempowerment and alienation', to demonstrate strong emotional attachments to contested narratives of the past, even as they express agreement with the principles of reconciliation.[100] This phenomenon could be identified in the wording of the petition itself, which acknowledge histories of frontier violence but stated emphatically that 'We object to the word 'massacre' ever being associated with our district.'[101] The view was also explicit in the writing of pastoralist and local historian Bill Nosworthy, who argued in the *Port Lincoln Times* that guilt and shame were being imposed on the town by this 'memorial to a "massacre" that may not have occurred.' Nosworthy expressed his feeling that the monument was perpetuating divisions within the local community rather than promoting unity and reconciliation.[102]

Concerns about the town's historical identity was likely compounded by personal and familial links to colonial settlers in the area at the time of the massacre. Writing within the context of German engagement with the history of the Holocaust, historians Rainer Schulze and Harald Welzer have both argued that communities may broadly acknowledge and express regret for past injustices, but individuals within those communities have a tendency to exonerate their ancestors for any responsibility regarding those same injustices.[103] In Elliston, the local artist Siv Grava pointed out in a letter to the editor that the community debates were so emotionally charged because 'some people … think that the debate is pointing towards the oldest families in our district' and implicating their ancestors in the 'massacre.'[104] After all,

[98] Gillett and Gillett, "We the undersigned are strongly and absolutely against the phrasing of the word 'massacre," 38-43.
[99] Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Culture, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 54.
[100] Sabine Marschall, *Landscapes of Memory: Commemorative monuments, memorials, and public statuary in post-apartheid South Africa* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 1 and 142.
[101] Gillett and Gillett, "We the undersigned are strongly and absolutely against the phrasing of the word 'massacre," 38-43.
[102] Bill Nosworthy, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 13 August 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https//www.westcoastsentinel.com.au/story/4851094/letters-to-editor/?cs=2051.
[103] Rainer Schulze, "Memory in Germany History: Fragmented Noises or Meaningful Voices of the Past?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 4 (2004): 641; Harald Welzer, "Collateral Damage of History Education: National Socialism and the Holocaust in German Family Memory," *Social Research* 75, no. 1 (2008): 289.
[104] Siv Grava, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 25 July 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4813088/elliston-memorial-debated/?cs=1374.

the connotations of the word 'massacre' might force some 'old families' to confront the complex histories of their ancestors who may have been involved in instances of frontier violence, such as the events of 1849. Negotiations over the wording on the reconciliation memorial had to take these concerns and fears into consideration.

Unlike in 1970, though, a majority of non-Indigenous and settler-descendent local residents seemed to support the construction of a reconciliation memorial which included the term 'massacre'. Shortly after Caroline Gillett and Kym Gillett circulated their petition opposed to the 'massacre' wording, another petition was organised by Jay Dudley, Isabelle Smith, Julie Allchurch, and Siv Grava. This petition recorded 'a list of people who have no problem with the word "massacre" in the context in which it appears in the proposed text for the monument'.[105] The reasons given by residents for their support of the petition varied, although most seemed comparatively uninterested in a forensic analysis of the colonial documents. Some of the signatories, such as Chris Coote, argued that Wirangu oral histories were more reliable than stories based on colonial sources and should be taken 'at face value … [because Wirangu people] had no reason to hide or alter the truth like the perpetrators possibly did.'[106] Others were more ambivalent about the events of the past but were aware that use of the term 'massacre' would provide 'a wonderful opportunity for reconciliation', as Grava stated in the *Port Lincoln Times*.[107] Where Gillett's petition noted 46 residents opposed to the use of the word massacre, the petition organised by Dudley, Smith, Allchurch, and Grava recorded 207 residents who agreed with the term.

In addition to this petition, the District Council of Elliston also received numerous letters indicating support for the inclusion of the word 'massacre' on the memorial inscription from residents living in Elliston or on the Eyre Peninsula. The authors of these letters often blended their belief that 'massacre' accurately described the historical events of 1849 with an awareness that the word was important for reconciliation.[108] In one letter, Newton (Ned) Luscombe, who ran the small Kyancutta Museum, noted that he had 'no hesitation' in recognising the 'massacre' because:

> The number of aborigines who died as a result of this punitive expedition remains a matter of conjecture but one thing is certain—the intent of some white settlers was to permanently remove the inconvenience caused by the local indigenous people once and for all.[109]

[105] Jay Dudley, Isabelle Smith, Julie Allchurch, and Siv Grava, "Elliston Community Memorial," District Council of Elliston, petition in *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials*, ed. District Council of Elliston, 1-4.
[106] Chris Coote, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 15 August 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4858082/?cs+1374.
[107] Grava, letter to the editor.
[108] See District Council of Elliston, ed. *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials: Volume 3: Petitions, Letters, and Submissions* (Elliston: Direct Council of Elliston, 19 September 2017), 5-16 and 20-33.
[109] Newton Luscombe to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, Elliston, 3 September 2017, in *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials*, ed. District Council of Elliston, 21.

Luscombe finished his letter by noting that 'We cannot change the past but through acknowledgement of past mistakes and respect for other cultures comes reconciliation and hopefully a better future.'[110]

Perhaps even more significantly, the South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Kyam Mahar, wrote directly to the Council on 14 September 2017. Mahar pointed to both the colonial literature and the oral histories of local Aboriginal peoples to argue that:

> it is hard to escape the fact that numerous Aboriginal people lost their lives at the hands of more well-armed settlers. In these circumstances the word 'massacre' is the most appropriate word to use. Using any other word would be an attempt to rewrite history and jeopardise the journey of Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the area.[111]

The emphasis placed on reconciliation in these two letters showed awareness of the place of Elliston's 'massacre memorial' within a wider, ongoing process of recognition of frontier violence in Australia at both state and national levels. Mahar alluded to this in his letter by noting that 'There are many memorials and plaques across Australia that recognise the uneven conflicts of colonisation and their devastating impacts on Aboriginal people.'[112] Likewise, local resident Ian Dudley noted in an article for the *Port Lincoln Times* that 'Elliston is not unique' because frontier violence 'happened everywhere … [with] 21 records of extrajudicial killings on Eyre Peninsula alone.' By placing the murders at Waterloo Bay within this wider context, Dudley connected acknowledgement of the 'massacre' with the potential for Elliston to forge a new identity built around reconciliation. He noted that the 'one unique part of [the massacre] for Elliston in 2017 is we have the chance to be the first West Coast town to be brave and honest enough to acknowledge it.'[113] Dudley recognised that some other residents feared that 'the reputation of the town', its sense of community, and its tourism would be permanently damaged if a monument to the 'massacre' was erected.[114] Yet Dudley, and many others, felt that memorialisation would have the inverse effect. Through acknowledgement, as Julie Allchurch argued, the 'festering sore' of the massacre which was 'already well-known Australia wide' might finally be healed.[115]

Divisions within the non-Indigenous community may have been further complicated after debates over Native Title apparently revealed divergent views among Aboriginal peoples regarding the history of frontier violence around Elliston. The District Council initially consulted with the Wirangu in 2016 because they were the only Aboriginal group with an

[110] Newton Luscombe to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, 21.
[111] Kyam Maher to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, Elliston, 14 September 2017, in South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 17 October 2017* (Elliston, District Council of Elliston, 17 October 2017), 24.
[112] Kyam Maher to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, 25.
[113] Ian Dudley, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 25 July 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4813088/elliston-memorial-debated/?cs+1374.
[114] Dudley, letter to the editor.
[115] Julie Allchurch, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 15 August 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4858082/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=1374.

official Native Title claim to the Elliston area at that time. However, by mid-2017 the Nauo had initiated their own claim.[116] As Gara and Brock note, Aboriginal societies and territorial boundaries today differ markedly from those in the past. During the mid-nineteenth century the area around what is now Waterloo Bay may have been occupied by the ancestors of people who now identify as Wirangu, Barngarla, Nauo, or Kokatha.[117] All of these groups retained stories of colonial-era massacres, but not all would necessarily agree that any Wirangu people were victims of the massacre in 1849.[118]

On 21 September 2017, a *Port Lincoln Times* article appeared to suggest that ongoing tensions over Native Title ownership between the Wirangu and Nauo peoples had thrown the establishment of the reconciliation memorial into doubt.[119] The article was published after a series of letters to the editor written to the *Port Lincoln Times* and the *West Coast Sentinel* argued that the alleged 'massacre' occurred in territory which had not belonged to the Wirangu in the nineteenth century.[120] Yet, these letters tended to be written by settler-descendants who wished to cast doubt on the idea that there had been a 'massacre' rather than by Aboriginal people. Nosworthy, for instance, argued against the construction of a 'massacre memorial' due to the fact that there were questions over 'whether the correct aboriginal tribe is being recognised as the one who was involved.'[121] Some residents continued to make this claim even after a meeting between the Nauo and Wirangu peoples on 22 September 2017 in which the two groups indicated their joint support for a reconciliation memorial which acknowledged the massacre. For instance, on 2 October, a former Council Staff Member Steve Wooley argued that a memorial to the massacre would be an 'injustice' to the actual 'indigenous tribes that were in the area in 1850 [*sic*].[122]

These letters to the editor from non-Indigenous authors were a little misleading. While there may have been tensions between the Nauo and the Wirangu over Native Title claims, it would be inaccurate to assume that this meant that the Nauo people did not agree that a massacre

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[116] Commonwealth, National Native Title Tribunal, *Nauo people No 4 Native Title Claim* (Canberra: National Native Title Tribunal, 2023), SCD2023/003; "Nauo Native Title Work Advances," *Port Lincoln Times,* 21 September 2017, accessed 12 February 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4940468/nauo-community-works-for-recognition/.

[117] Gara and Brock, "Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast," 238-240; Paul Monaghan, "Structures of Aboriginal Life at the Time of Colonisation in South Australia," in eds. Brock and Gara, Colonialism and its Aftermath, 7-10 and 25-26.

[118] Gara and Brock, "Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast," 238-240; Timothy Haines, e-mail message to author, 15 January 2022.

[119] "Nauo Native Title Work Advances."

[120] Ridgeway, letter to the editor; Phil Fitzpatrick, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 25 July 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4813088/elliston-memorial-debated/?cs=1374.

[121] Nosworthy, letter to the editor; in addition to his comments in the *Port Lincoln Times,* Nosworthy continued to pursue this line of argument in several submissions sent to the District Council of Elliston, including: Bill Nosworthy, "Monumental comment," e-mail message to the District Council of Elliston, 27 August 2017 in *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials*, ed. District Council of Elliston, 68; South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 19 September 2017* (Elliston: District Council of Elliston, 19 September 2017), 9.

[122] Steve Woolley, "Elliston's monument to injustices," letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 2 October 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4961582/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=1374.

of Aboriginal peoples had occurred in 1849 at Waterloo Bay. As early as 27 July 2017, Nauo woman Ngahuia Trewartha had written to the *Port Lincoln Times* to indicate that 'our family respectively acknowledges and agrees with the wishes of the Wirangu descendants, the elders, and the elected community members that are supportive to the wording of The Massacre of Waterloo.'[123] Similarly, Wirangu Elder Penong Miller directly rebutted the *Port Lincoln Times* article of 21 September which had suggested the debate over Native Title put the reconciliation memorial's future in doubt. In a letter to the editor Miller wrote 'It is important to remember that the Wirangu and Nauo People are supportive of each other and working together to see this monument and plaque put up and for it to be put up as soon as possible.'[124] Miller indicated that the Nauo's concerns regarding the monument appeared to relate largely to the possibility that the inscription might imply that the people killed in 1849 were solely Wirangu. The two Aboriginal peoples agreed that colonial violence had resulted in the deaths of Aboriginal people at Waterloo Bay in 1849 and that the Elliston reconciliation memorial should refer to what happened as a 'massacre'. Nonetheless, the need to accommodate the views of both Nauo and Wirangu peoples added an additional layer to the debates and negotiations over the memorial, on which those opposed to the 'massacre' wording seemed to attempt to capitalise.

In many ways, the layers of debate and the divergent views over the term 'massacre' and its place on the Waterloo Bay memorial spoke to many of the broader difficulties faced by memorials constructed for the purposes of reconciliation. It is generally useful for such memorials to embrace and depict the emotional memories of subaltern groups; in this case, acknowledgement of Aboriginal narratives of massacre was essential to the project's reconciliatory aims. However, political scientist Nadim Khoury observes that communities that seek reconciliation often find that they must re-examine, reinterpret, or rewrite their historical narratives before reconciliatory activities can take place, and this process may be deeply uncomfortable.[125] Thus, as Marschell notes, while reconciliatory memorials may give 'visibility, authority, and legitimacy' to suppressed groups, 'they are also sites of contestation where perhaps previously invisible differences can become evident.'[126] This was clearly the case in Elliston. Reflecting on the debates in 2021, the *ABC* noted that a deep schism had arisen within the community as interactions between community members over the memorial became increasingly heated.[127] In October 2017, the District Council of Elliston

[123] Ngahuia Trewartha, "Support for wording," letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 27 July 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4816200/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=1374.
[124] Penong Miller, "Wirangu and Nauo working together," letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 2 October 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, http://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4961582/letters-to-the-editor/.
[125] Nadim Khoury, "Postnational Memory: Narrating the Holocaust and the Nakba," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 46, no. 1 (2020): 91-92; Nadim Khoury, "Plotting stories after war: Towards a methodology for negotiating identity," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 2 (June 2018): 368-369.
[126] Marschall, *Landscape of memory*, 2.
[127] Jodie Hamilton and Emma Pedlar, "Robert K Champion gives rise to a dark past of massacres with an aim to help healing," *The Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* 11 May 2021, accessed 4 February 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-11/songs-of-indigenous-massacres/100114194; Elliott, "Battle of Waterloo."

received a letter from a former Councillor, Brian Dandy, who requested that steps be taken to resolve the divisions created by the 'reconciliation memorial'.[128]

The apparently diametrically opposed viewpoints between those in Elliston who supported the term 'massacre' and those who did not were not easy to reconcile. Nevertheless, the general commitment to a 'reconciliation memorial' necessitated and facilitated negotiation between the District Council of Elliston, the non-Indigenous residents of the district, and the Aboriginal peoples of the Eyre Peninsula. This was an extended process. Although the physical structure of the reconciliation memorial was erected in May 2017, ongoing debates over the word 'massacre' meant the monument's central plaque remained blank until October while potential inscriptions were considered and discussed.[129]



Fig. 6. The Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial shortly after its erection in May 2017. The central boulder did not originally have an inscription because of ongoing community debates about appropriate wording. (Photograph originally supplied by SA Native Title Services and reproduced in Annie Hastwell, "Waterloo Bay Cliffside deaths still haunt South Australian town 170 year later," ABC News, *28 May 2019.)*

Haines, the anthropologist engaged by the District Council of Elliston, was asked to seek a possible inscription which would be non-threatening for those who opposed the term 'massacre' while maintaining the original 'reconciliatory' intention of the memorial. The initial

[128] Brain Dandy to the District Council of Elliston, Elliston, 2 October 2017, in District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 17 October 2017,* 26.
[129] Nicola Gage, "Waterloo Bay Massacre Commemorate 170 Years Later with Memorial," *ABC News,* 19 May 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-19/waterloo-bay-massacre-commemorated-170-years-later-with-memorial/8539416.

wording proposed by Haines in his report to the council on 20 June did not mention massacre and included a quote from *Metamorphosis* by the Roman poet Ovid.[130] It read:

> Waterloo Bay was the setting of a confrontation in May 1849 between a party of settlers, led by police, and a large number of traditional owners who were killed by the settler party.
>
> This monument commemorates the new spirit of reconciliation between the traditional owners of this land and the more recently arrived settlers.
>
> Though ignorance and indifference has led in the past to the destruction of family life, tolerance, understanding and reconciliation will forge a new beginning and a true community.
>
> *Omnia Mutantur, Nil interit* ('All things are changing: Nothing [truly] dies')

This was rejected by the Wirangu due to the lack of the word 'massacre.' The Wirangu also pointed out that Latin, as the language of the Roman Empire, was irrelevant to their culture.[131] However, the wording set the structure for later proposed inscriptions in the way that it briefly described the events of 1849 and highlighted the community's desire for reconciliation through recognition.

Meanwhile, the District Council of Elliston received several unsolicited suggestions from non-Indigenous community members who proposed their own 'reconciliatory' wording. Some residents proposed an inscription which included a comprehensive description of frontier violence around Elliston in the mid-nineteenth century. Other community members suggested a simple inscription with comparatively few words such as 'We Remember.'[132] Nosworthy, who continued to oppose the inclusion of the term 'massacre', suggested that the plaque should have no wording at all because he felt this would make for a 'powerful statement.'[133] Suggestions were submitted until late in the negotiation process. During a Council Meeting in September, in which council members reviewed for the penultimate time a proposed inscription which had been exhaustively negotiated with the Wirangu community, Councillor Hancock moved an amendment which would completely re-write the passage. Hancock's new wording did not include the word 'massacre' and emphasised the incident's conflicting accounts. There were no seconders for his motion. Hancock ultimately voted in support of the wording that now adorns the reconciliation memorial at the following meeting.[134]

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[130] Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations,* 19.

[131] Haines, *European Settler-Indigenous Relations*, 7; Timothy Haines, e-mail message to author, 12 January 2022.

[132] Little, letter to the editor; Phil Fitzpatrick, letter to the editor*, Port Lincoln Times*, 22 September 2017, accessed 10 January 2022, http://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/4961582/letters-to-the-editor/.

[133] Bill Nosworthy, "Elliston 'Massacre'" e-mail message to the District Council of Elliston, 6 August 2017 in *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials*, ed. District Council of Elliston, 60.

[134] South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Minutes from 19 September 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting* (Elliston: District Council of Elliston, 19 September 2017), 3; South Australia, *District Council of Elliston, Minutes from 17 October 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting* (Elliston: District Council of Elliston, 17 October 2017), 5.

Eventually Haines proposed an inscription which utilised quotation marks to describe the massacre. It read:

> This monument commemorates an incident referred to by the traditional owners of this land as "the Massacre of Waterloo Bay". A large number of Aboriginal people were killed near this site in May 1849 by a party of settlers.
>
> Waterloo Bay is a significant site in the history of frontier conflict between traditional owners and settlers, often resulting in the destruction of traditional family life.
>
> This memorial promotes a new spirit of reconciliation, helping forge a renewed and healing sense of community through tolerance and understanding.[135]

The District Council of Elliston conditionally accepted this wording on 19 September 2017, although only after what they termed a 'lengthy debate.'[136] The inscription was officially accepted at the following Council Meeting on 11 October after the Wirangu agreed to remove the word 'large' from the passage, due to ongoing disputes over the number of people killed. This concession was not insignificant, as Elder Johncock demonstrated when he pointed to the line during an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2021 and stated '"A number of Aboriginal people!" Yeah, like fucking 200 of them!'[137]

The monument's final wording reflects an approach to memorialisation which Attwood terms 'sharing history.' Attwood notes that the idea of 'sharing history', implicit in the history work of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, might be useful to create space for deeply held but conflicting narratives of the past to publicly co-exist. In his words, it 'acknowledges the simple fact that not only are there different historical perspectives of the colonial past but that these will continue to be articulated.'[138] The final wording of the reconciliation memorial avoided making claims about whether the incident 'actually happened'. But it recognised the indisputable fact that the memory of the massacre was well established within Aboriginal communities and pointed out that the frontier wars broadly caused significant destruction to traditional Aboriginal life. In this way the wording allowed a dual interpretation of the memorial: both as acknowledgement of the memory of the event, and as acknowledgement of the event itself.

The inscription, along with the monument's architecture, also addressed the dispute between the Nauo and the Wirangu over their competing Native Title claims to the area. Two granite columns were placed either side of the central inscription. The column on the right recognises the Wirangu; the column on the left is in 'Recognition of Aboriginal people on West Coast', including the Barngarla, the Nauo, the Mirning, and the Kokatha.[139] Thus, the Wirangu are given prominence on their own column, but all the Aboriginal peoples of the West Coast are incorporated into the monument. The inscription itself does not make mention of the

[135] District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 19 September 2017*, 3
[136] District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 11 October 2017,* 4.
[137] Elliott, "Battle of Waterloo."
[138] Attwood, "Unsettling pasts," 249 and 255-256.
[139] "Waterloo Bay Massacre," Monument Australia, accessed 10 January 2022, https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/indigenous/display/111195-waterloo-bay-massacre.

Aboriginal group that was 'massacred' in the nineteenth century. Rather, it references the 'traditional owners' and enables all groups to see their own story of massacre reflected in the memorial without invalidating the narratives of other groups.

In his letter to the District Council of Elliston, Kyam Mahar expressed his support for the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial by stating: 'Whilst important, this sort of memorial wording is not ground-breaking or unique.'[140] Mahar may have been correct to point out that other memorials to massacres can be found across Australia, but it is important to recognise the significant hurdles that the reconciliation memorial overcame and the ways in which it did so. The remarkable thing about the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial was that it seemed to appease apparently incompatible interpretations of the past in pursuit of reconciliation. As Andrew Schaap notes, reconciliation 'is not … a final shared understanding or convergence of world views, but … a disclosure of a world in common from diverse and possibly irreconcilable perspectives'.[141] The memorial's text embodies this idea by acknowledging 'massacre' while allowing Elliston's residents to disagree on the events of 1849. Elliston resident Ian Dudley made this point explicitly in a letter to the editor in 2017: '[The memorial] does not say the massacre is "the ONLY version of this event and you HAVE to agree."'[142]

Conclusion

Following its construction in 2017, the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial was reported in the media as a successful example of a project which 'advanced' reconciliation. In Australia, the story of the memorial's construction and its ongoing impact on the Elliston community was reported in the *ABC*, the *Guardian (Australia)*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.[143] Internationally, the *New York Times* published an article in 2018 in which the erection of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial was used as a case study to explore the memorialisation of an ambiguous historical event.[144] All these articles reflected positively on the memorial, noting that it represented a substantial step for reconciliation and was an example to other communities. In 2018, the District Council of Elliston earned a 'Promoting Indigenous Reconciliation' award at the annual National Awards for Local Government celebrations.[145]

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[140] Kyam Maher to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, 25.

[141] Andrew Schaap "Guilty Subjects and Political Responsibility: Arendt, Jaspers and the Resonance of the 'German Question' in Politics of Reconciliation," *Political Studies* 49, no. 4 (2001): 762.

[142] Dudley, letter to the editor.

[143] Annie Hastwell, "Waterloo Bay cliffside deaths still haunt South Australian town 170 years later," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* 28 May 2019, accessed 3 March 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-28/waterloo-massacre-monument-indigenous-history-struggle/11134080; Melville, "Waterloo Bay"; Gage, "Waterloo Bay massacre commemorated 170 years later with memorial"; Lorena Allam and Carly Early, "'It's like a big dark cloud has lifted': the tow dragged into reconciliation," *the Guardian (Australia),* 7 March 2019, accessed 3 March 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/07/its-like-a-big-dark-cloud-has-lifted-the-town-dragged-into-reconciliation-photo-essay; Elliot, "Battle of Waterloo";

[144] Damien Cave, "Were These Killings a 'Massacre'? And who gets to decide?," *The New York Times,* 4 December 2018, accessed 3 March 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/04/world/australia/aboriginal-massacres-elliston-memorial.html.

[145] Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, *Recognising Community Truth-Telling: An exploration of local truth-telling in Australia,* 58.

Three years later, Kym Callaghan—the chairman of the District Council of Elliston from 2014 to 2018—was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for, among other things, his role 'in the establishment of the Wirangu Reconciliation Monument.'[146]

The example of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial demonstrates one way in which regional communities may rise above narrow questions about the historical record to come to terms with complex memories of frontier violence and Indigenous dispossession. It may also represent a successful example of memorial reconciliation which goes beyond simple recognition of past injustices. Yet, it is also important to recognise that the memorial was constructed within a specific spatial and memorial context that established certain parameters around which community discussions in Elliston occurred. Importantly, although there had long been questions about whether a 'massacre' truly took place in the 1840s, the *story* of that massacre could not be denied because it had always been a feature of the community's collective memory and was associated with a permanent feature of the local landscape. Neither could it be denied that violence occurred between settlers and Aboriginal peoples on the Eyre Peninsula in the mid-nineteenth century. Not only was there extensive evidence of conflict in the colonial record, but the existing memorial landscape around Elliston already reflected this history of violence, albeit from a settler perspective which presented Aboriginal peoples as the initiators. Finally, because the Wirangu themselves had requested that the 'reconciliation memorial' acknowledge the massacre, at no point during the debates in Elliston did anyone question the appropriateness of using a physical memorial to honour Aboriginal memories of frontier violence.

The combination of these factors meant that the push to immortalise the Waterloo Bay Massacre via a local memorial had certain advantages which may not be present for other memorial initiatives. The following chapter explores some of these other contexts by shifting its focus from the politics of memorialisation within a regional community to memorial initiatives in an urban environment. As Penelope Edmonds points out, colonial cities are locations which have come to be conceptualised—at least by the city's non-Indigenous denizens—as being 'natural and inevitable' and separate from the contested frontier that occurred 'somewhere out in the country.'[147] Therefore, memorial initiatives which aim to highlight the Aboriginal past in urban spaces face a number of unique difficulties—not least the fact that many of the sites that speak to histories of violence and dispossession have been literally paved over. In this environment, memorialisation efforts raise questions not just about whose narratives of the past should be remembered and for what purposes, but also about what forms memorialisation should take and to what extent Indigenous histories can interrupt established non-Indigenous conceptions of place.

[146] Commonwealth, The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia Day 2021 Honours List* (Canberra: Government House, 26 January 2021), 11; Commonwealth, *Parliamentary Debates,* Senate, 3 February 2021, 310 (Alex Gallacher, Senator) (Austl.).

[147] Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanising Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2010), 5 and 10-11.

Chapter 3: Renaming and Restoring Kaurna Heritage in the City of Adelaide

Increasingly, historians are exploring memorial processes in urban environments where, in contrast to rural spaces, Aboriginal peoples, histories, and cultures have historically been considered 'out of space.'[1] In *Places of Reconciliation* (2021), historian Sarah Pinto explores public art installations and Indigenous naming and renaming processes conducted under a framework of reconciliation within the urban city centre of Melbourne. Referencing historians Penelope Edmonds and Tarcey Banivanua Mar, Pinto notes the difficulties of Indigenous recognition within a commemorative landscape 'dominated by markers of empire, settlement and nation building … that "naturalize and legitimize" the settler state.'[2] Although Pinto notes that newly created Indigenous commemorative sites have created important spaces for truth-telling in Melbourne, she also argues that these efforts to 're-write' the landscape of the settler colonial city have nonetheless struggled to challenge what Banivanua Mar refers to as the historical 'metanarratives of their surrounds.'[3] In this sense, she acknowledges the possibilities, limitations, and complications of commemorative reconciliation within urban settler colonial spaces.

This chapter addresses themes similar to those examined in *Places of Reconciliation*, although in the context of Adelaide and South Australia. Adelaide is unique as a settler colonial city because it is currently the only Australian capital in which the traditional owners—the Kaurna people—have had their connections to country officially recognised under Native Title. Nevertheless, cultural geographer Gavin Malone has argued that the 'constructed landscape' of colonial Adelaide continues to 'overwhelm' the Aboriginal histories represented in the city's public spaces.[4] This sense of historical erasure was articulated by Kaurna Elder Lewis O'Brien, who stated in 2006:

> As I walk the city of Adelaide … I ask myself: Kaurna people lived here but where is the evidence of our histories? There are no memorials to the Kaurna, our Kaurna names for locations on the landscape are replaced by English ones, so-called European 'pioneers' and 'explorers' are elevated through monuments while the great deeds of our people the Kaurna are silenced … If reading the landscape and its memorials to history is the criteria by which to determine whose cultural space it is, then one could

[1] Evelyn Peters, "'Urban' and 'Aboriginal': an Impossible Contradiction" in *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism,* eds., Jon Caulfield and Linda Peake (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 49.
[2] Sarah Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation: Commemorating Indigenous History in the Heart of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2021), 24; Tracy Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, "Introduction: Making Space in Settler Colonies," in *Making Settler-Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity,* eds., Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (London: Palgrave Macmillan, London), 2.
[3] Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation*, 11; Tracey Banivanua Mar, "Settler-Colonial Landscapes and Narratives of Possession," *Arena Journal* 37 (2012), 180.
[4] Gavin Malone, "Ways of Belonging: Reconciliation and Adelaide's Public Space Indigenous Cultural Markers," *Geographical Research* 45, no. 2 (2007): 164.

> be forgiven in thinking that the city of Adelaide was and is void of any Aboriginal peoples, and that we as Kaurna hold no rights to a shared space.[5]

Two recent memorial initiatives have attempted to restore and recognise Aboriginal history and culture within the urban environments of South Australia broadly, and Adelaide especially. The first initiative, and the chapter's primary focus, is the Adelaide City Council's Kaurna Place Names project, which used Kaurna toponyms to acknowledge 'the prior occupation of this land by the Kaurna people.'[6] The initiative had its origins in 1996, and the Adelaide City Council's *Reconciliation Vision Statement* (1997) produced shortly after committed the Council to 'seek opportunities to recognise Kaurna heritage through physical features of the City.'[7] By March 2012, the Adelaide City Council had officially established Kaurna names for all 29 parks of the Adelaide Park Lands as well as dual English/Kaurna names for the city squares and the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari.[8] The second initiative, which is only briefly covered, is the South Australian State Government's current plan to erect at least six statues to Aboriginal 'leaders and heroes' in order to ensure that 'our statues and monuments … include celebration of Aboriginal Australia.'[9] As this project is ongoing, the effects of the memorial initiative remain to be seen. It is noteworthy, however, because the initiative instigated debates within the media about the appropriateness of statues for the memorialisation of Aboriginal histories.

These case studies speak to the decolonising potential of local memorial processes aimed at restoring Indigenous cultures within city spaces, and this chapter examines the extent to which these processes can challenge entrenched settler colonial ways of thinking. Importantly, however, this chapter also notes that such projects are generally intertwined with a range of other ongoing decolonising initiatives undertaken in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders. Thus, the impacts of these memorialisation projects cannot be measured as isolated processes. Rather, this chapter demonstrates that they must be viewed as part of a much larger movement, initiated as a dialogue between Indigenous peoples and state or city governments, to restore Indigenous cultures to urban spaces.

The Kaurna people and the settlement of Adelaide, 1836 to 1850

Contemporary movements to memorialise Adelaide's Aboriginal history and culture were aided significantly by the fact that the Kaurna people were recognised as Native Title holders

[5] Lewis O'Brien and Lester-Irabinna Rigney, "Conversations: sharing space: an Indigenous approach," in *Sharing Spaces: Indigenous and non-Indigenous Responses to Story, Country, and Rights,* eds., Gus Worby and Lester-Irabinna Rigney (Perth: API Network, 2006), 26.
[6] "Kaurna Place Naming," City of Adelaide, accessed 29 August 2022, https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/kaurna-place-naming/.
[7] City of Adelaide, *City of Adelaide Reconciliation Vision Statement*, 11 April 1997, 2607ITEM0067, City of Adelaide Reconciliation Vision Statement—Item 9, City Archives, Adelaide.
[8] "Kaurna Place Naming."
[9] "Celebrating Aboriginal leaders and heroes," yourSAy, accessed 29 August 2022, https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-statues-and-monuments.

for the lands of the City of Adelaide and its surrounds in 2018.[10] The court's decision formally acknowledged the fact of Kaurna ownership of the Adelaide Plains prior to the arrival of European settlers in 1836, although the people who are today called the Kaurna did not use this term to describe themselves during the nineteenth century.[11] Robert Amery, linguist and a major actor in the Kaurna Naming Project, claims that the word most likely comes from the Ramindjeri or Ngarrindjeri language.[12] He notes that it was erroneously ascribed to the people of the Adelaide Plains by Norman Tindale in the twentieth century and states that 'perhaps a more suitable name for the Kaurna might be *Miyurna.'*[13] Similarly, historian Skye Krichauff notes that early settlers referred to the people that lived around Adelaide as the Tandanye or Tandanya tribe.[14] Krichauff follows the practice of Karl Winda Telfer and uses the term Kaurna Meyunna to describe the nineteenth century Aboriginal people of Adelaide to 'maintain geographical specificity and historical accuracy while simultaneously respecting that Kaurna is the name current generations of Aboriginal people use.'[15] This chapter adopts this convention.

Although the city's landscape would later come to overwrite its Aboriginal past, the Kaurna Meyunna presence on the land was relatively well documented during Adelaide's early years. When Europeans arrived in 1836, the Kaurna Meyunna initially kept their distance from the new colonists, perhaps because they were wary after earlier interactions with the sealers of Kangaroo Island.[16] This soon changed and by 1840 the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, reported that the Kaurna Meyunna were friendly and helpful.[17] Indeed, as Krichauff argues, during Adelaide's first three years, the relationship between the Kaurna Meyunna and the European settlers was primarily characterised by 'an atmosphere of mutual trust and satisfaction.'[18] Krichauff further notes that early colonists stated that the Aboriginal people around Adelaide were 'very friendly', 'tractable', and 'intelligent', and that 'accounts of tensions or hostility are rare in the written records.'[19] These good relations may have been due in part to the fact that the Kaurna Meyunna lacked awareness of the long-term intentions of the European settlers, as local historian Alan Pope argues.[20] Equally, though, they may also reflect the remarkable level of cross-cultural communication and mediation facilitated by key

[10] Commonwealth, National Native Title Tribunal, *Kaurna Peoples Native Title Claim* (Canberra: National Native Title Tribunal, 2018), SCD2018/001.
[11] Christine Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath: a history of Aboriginal South Australia,* eds. Peggy Brock, and Tom Gara (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2017), 65.
[12] Rob Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna! Reclaiming an Australian Language* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2016), 3.
[13] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,*3.
[14] Skye Krichauff, "'They seem much pleased with us and very friendly': explaining cordial relations between the people of the Adelaide Plains and early colonists, 1836-1839," *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia,* no. 28 (2020): 6.
[15] Krichauff, "'They seem much pleased with us and very friendly,'" 6.
[16] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 59.
[17] Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," 69.
[18] Krichauff, "'They seem much pleased with us and very friendly,'" 4.
[19] Krichauff, "'They seem much pleased with us and very friendly,'" 3.
[20] Alan Pope, *Resistance and Retaliation: Aboriginal-European relations in early colonial South Australia* (Bridgewater: Heritage Action, 1989), 17.

individuals, such as the Kaurna Meyunna leaders Kadlitpina and Murlawirrapurka,[21] and the Lutheran missionaries Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann and Christian Gottlob Teichelmann.[22]

During the early colonial period, the Adelaide park lands were a particularly important location for the Kaurna Meyunna. When the government surveyor William Light drew up his plans for the City of Adelaide in 1837, he surrounded the city centre and North Adelaide with a figure-eight configuration of land that was to be set aside as park grounds.[23] Before European arrival, this area had been rich in food, particularly around the watercourse known in the Kaurna language as the Karrawirra Pari but which the settlers called the River Torrens after one of the Colonisation Commissioners, Robert Torrens.[24] The area had also been culturally significant for the Kaurna Meyunna, and Rob Amery and Lester-Irabinna Rigney note that they carried out initiation rituals at a location close to where Adelaide Oval now stands.[25] After European arrival, the Kaurna Meyunna continued to camp along the banks of the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari in the area newly allocated by Light as 'park lands.' They apparently held frequent corroborees and special shows were occasionally performed for the colonists, such as in December 1848 when the *Adelaide Times* described a corroboree held by 'three small parties of blacks' in what is likely now Mistletoe Park / Tainmuntilla.[26]

When a 'Native Location' was established in 1839, the site was located at a place called Pirltawardli, in what is now Park One, because this was near an established Kaurna Meyunna camp.[27] At Pirltawardli, the missionaries Schürmann and Teichelmann established a school to convert the Aboriginal people and instruct them 'in the habits of civilised life.' The missionaries fostered good relations with Kaurna Meyunna leaders, studied and recorded the cultural practices and language of the Kaurna Meyunna people, and taught and preached in the Kaurna language.[28] Nevertheless, Rob Foster notes that the efforts to evangelise the Kaurna Meyunna were largely met with indifference from the adults and the missionaries increasingly 'focused their efforts more towards the children, much to the disgust of the elders.'[29] In 1845, the school at Pirltawardli was closed down and the students were moved

[21] Kadlitpina is known in historical records as Kadlitpinna and was known to colonists as Captain Jack. Murlawirrapurka is known in historical records as Mullawirraburka and was known to colonists as 'King John' or 'Onkaparinga Jack'.

[22] Skye Krichauff, "Mullawirraburka and Kadlitpinna: how and why influential individuals facilitated amicable cross-cultural relations in the Adelaide district, 1836 – 1840," *History Australia* 18, no. 2 (2021): 349-350.

[23] William Light (Surveyor-General of South Australia), *Plan of the city of Adelaide, in South Australia: with the acre allotments numbered, and marginal reference to names of the original purchasers, surveyed and drawn by Colonel Light,* 1840, 57.3 x 75.5 cm, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

[24] Rob Amery and Lester-Irabinna Rigney, "Recognition of Kaurna Cultural Heritage in the Adelaide Parklands: a linguist's and a Kaurna academic's perspective. Progress to date and future initiatives," in *The Adelaide Parklands Symposium: A Balancing Act: Past-Present-Future,* eds., Christine Garnaut and Kerrie Round (Adelaide: Centre for Settlement Studies, 2006), 14.

[25] Amery and Rigney, "Recognition of Kaurna Cultural Heritage in the Adelaide Parklands," 14.

[26] Patricia Sumerling, *The Adelaide Parklands: A social history* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2011), 23.

[27] Rhondda Harris, "The 'Aboriginal Location' in the Adelaide Parklands (1837 – 1851)," in *The Adelaide Parklands Symposium*, 63.

[28] Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," 75.

[29] Robert Foster, "The Aborigines Location in Adelaide: South Australia's first 'mission' to the Aborigines," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia* 28, no. 1 & 2 (1990), 11 and 19.

across the river to the Native School Establishment at Kintore Avenue where they were taught in English alongside Aboriginal peoples from other language groups.[30]

Early colonists appeared to be somewhat aware of Kaurna Meyunna connections to land and showed some understanding of their society. As Krichauff points out, the Kaurna Meyunna consisted of many smaller cultural communities and observant colonists in the early years noticed variations in customs, traditions, and dialects between the Aboriginal peoples living near Holdfast Bay, Port Adelaide, and Adelaide.[31] Several Kaurna Meyunna placenames were adopted by the settlers and the colony's second Governor, George Gawler, actively promoted their use where they were known. Gawler encouraged the settlers to seek out information relating to Aboriginal names, stating that:

> In regard to the minor features of the country to which the natives may have given names, the Governor would take the present opportunity of requesting the assistance of the colonists in discovering and carefully and precisely retaining these in all possible cases as most consistent with property and beauty of appellation.
>
> All information on this subject should be communicated in precise terms to the Surveyor-General who will cause memoranda to be made of it and native names, when clearly proved to be correct, to be inserted in the public maps.[32]

Moreover, at times, Gawler appears to have reinstated Kaurna placenames where they had been overwritten by English ones. Amery and Williams point to an instance in 1838 where Gawler reinstated the Aboriginal name 'Onkaparinga' for a river south of Adelaide after it had been named 'Field's River' on official charts.[33]

However, the apparent respect for Kaurna Meyunna placenames and the seemingly amicable relationship between the settlers and the traditional owners did not change the fundamentally colonial nature of the European settlement of Adelaide. Historian Christine Lockwood draws on the observations to Teichelmann and Schürmann to note that Kaurna Meyunna families traditionally possessed clearly defined territories and held exclusive ownership of land inherited through the male line.[34] In theory, the colony of South Australia acknowledged these rights. As Foster has noted, several of the colony's founding documents—including 'The Letters Patent' (19 February 1836) and the *First Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners* (28 July 1836)—indicated concern for Aboriginal welfare and stressed that 'their proprietary right to the soil' was to be respected.[35] The Commissioners

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[30] Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," 75.
[31] Krichauff, "Mullawirraburka and Kadlitpinna," 347.
[32] South Australia, Robert Gouger (Colonial Secretary), *The South Australian Government Gazette,* no. 93 (Adelaide: Robert Thomas and Co., 31 October 1839), 1.
[33] Rob Amery and Georgina Yambo Williams, "Reclaiming through renaming: the reinstatement of Kaurna toponyms in Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains," *The Land is a Map: Placenames of Indigenous Origins in Australia,* eds., Luise Hercus, Flavia Hodges, and Jane Simpsons (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2002), 256.
[34] Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," 67.
[35] Colonisation Commissioners for South Australia, *First Annual Report of the Colonisation Commissioners for South Australia*, no 426 (London: South Australian Colonisation Commission, 16 August 1836), 8; Robert Foster, "True Lies: South Australia's Foundation, the Idea of 'Difference,' and the Rights of Aboriginal People," in

suggested that Aboriginal land be acquired through 'bargains or treaties' overseen by the Protector of Aborigines, that the traditional owners be 'permanently supplied with subsistence,' and that parcels of land be reserved for 'the use of the Aborigines.'[36] In practice, though, Aboriginal land-rights were of secondary importance when compared with the interests of the colonists, and the ideals implicit in these founding documents were often ignored.[37] Ultimately, land intended for Aboriginal use was leased to European settlers despite Schürmann and Teichelmann and the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, urging the government to reserve land on which the Kaurna Meyunna peoples might independently sustain themselves.[38] As in the rest of Australia, and unlike in many other British colonies, Kaurna Meyunna land was occupied without the signing of a treaty between the traditional owners and the British crown.

Consequently, Lockwood notes that within ten years the land around Adelaide had been fully occupied by European settlement.[39] In spite of the cordial relations between the local Aboriginal peoples and the settlers, colonisation took a significant toll on the Kaurna Meyunna. Introduced diseases, including venereal diseases, severely damaged the local population and the construction of the settlement of Adelaide depleted the area's natural resources and drove off traditional sources of food.[40] By the end of the nineteenth century many European settlers believed that the original inhabitants of the Adelaide plains were 'extinct'.[41] This was untrue; as Gara points out, 'it is clear that a number of Kaurna people had settled at the missions at Point McLeay and Point Pearce on the Yorke Peninsula during the 1850s and 1860s and married into local families.'[42] Regardless, the myth of 'extinction' undoubtedly helped relegate Aboriginal peoples to the pre-colonial or early-colonial period, and this in turn helped justify settler occupation of Aboriginal land, as described in chapter one.[43]

The dispossession of the Kaurna Meyunna speaks to the fact that Europeans came to occupy and possess Aboriginal land across Australia in a wide variety of ways depending on the context of time and place. The initially amicable relationship between the Kaurna Meyunna peoples and the colonists of Adelaide contrasts sharply with the violence on the Eyre Peninsula described in chapter two. Yet, as Krichauff notes, the 'low numbers of people who

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Foundational Fictions in South Australian History, eds. Carolyn Collins and Paul Sendziuk (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2018), 66.

[36] Colonisation Commissioners for South Australia, "First Annual Report", 9; Robert Foster, "Truth Lies," 66; Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, "From Protectorate to Protection 1836-1911," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath,* 29.

[37] Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, "From Protectorate to Protection 1836-1911," 27-34.

[38] C. W. Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 19 June 1839, Schürmann correspondence 1838-1893, Lutheran Archives, Adelaide, cited in Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," 67.

[39] Lockwood, "Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay," 67.

[40] Krichauff, "Mullawirraburka and Kadlitpinna," 345.

[41] Tom Gara, "The Aboriginal Presence in Adelaide, 1860s-1960s: From exclusion to assimilation," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2020), 87.

[42] Gara, "The Aboriginal Presence in Adelaide, 1860-1960," 86.

[43] Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster, "Commemorating Foundation: A Study in Regional Historical Memory," *History Australia* 7, no.3 (2010): 57-59.

lost their lives in violent encounters' in Adelaide's early years, and the 'longevity of positive cross-cultural relations, … does not mean colonisation did not negatively impact the people of the Adelaide plains.'[44] Nor does it mean that the Kaurna Meyunna passively submitted to British colonisation, or that many European settlers did not actively seek to claim and exploit Aboriginal land. Rather, it demonstrates the autonomy of the Kaurna Meyunna in their decision to respond to colonisation by pursuing a diplomatic policy of co-existence, which was somewhat successful early on while they were able to negotiate on their own terms. Ultimately, the Kaurna Meyunna were not subjugated by military force, but were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of European arrivals, coupled with the colonists' destruction of the natural environment and the devastation caused by the European diseases.

Toponyms, Cultural Survival, and Place Identity in Adelaide

Today, the City of Adelaide can be understood as what anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose calls a 'wounded space', where the land 'has been torn and fractured by violence and exile, and … is pitted with sites where life has been irretrievably killed.'[45] Although Adelaide may not contain major massacre sites, and its foundation may not have initially resulted in widespread fatalities among the Kaurna Meyunna due to violent confrontations, it nevertheless resulted in their dispossession and the loss of their culture, language, and memory. As Amery points out, 'the Kaurna language declined in use and status in an extraordinarily short time' following colonisation, and Kaurna cultural sites were systemically violated and destroyed.[46] It was still, therefore, a site of frontier violence.

To a significant extent, Adelaide is a 'wounded space' due to its nature as a settler colonial city. The building of new cities was essential to the settler colonial project and urbanisation always radically reforms the landscape.[47] The settlement of Adelaide necessitated the reshaping of Kaurna Meyunna land and important Kaurna Meyunna sites were lost during that process. For instance, the rock formation known as Tarnta Kanya—Red Kangaroo Rock—appears to have been quarried for stone and Purtawarti—Ochre Cove—was mined to supply the colonial paint and pottery industries.[48] Further, in addition to this physical reshaping of the landscape, Adelaide's increasingly urban environment resulted in the Kaurna Meyunna themselves being both symbolically and physically banished. As cities grew and anxieties about miscegenation became more prominent in the nineteenth century, laws, policies, and regulations throughout the settler colonial world increasingly came to control where and how

[44] Krichauff, "Mullawirraburka and Kadlitpinna," 345 and 349.
[45] Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2004), 34; Skye Krichauff, "Recognising Country: tracing stories of wounded spaces in mid-northern South Australia," *History Australia* 17, no. 3 (2020): 437.
[46] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!*, 76.
[47] Karen Till, "Wounded Cities: Memory-work and a place-based ethics of care," *Political Geography* 31, no. 1 (2012): 6.
[48] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!*, 76; Chester Schultz, "Place Name Summary: ?Purtawarti/?Purtartilla/?Purditilla (Ochre Cove)," *Southern Kaurna Place Names Essays* (Adelaide: Kaurna Warra, 2020), 3, https://www.kaurnawarra.org.au/southern-kaurna-placenames.

Indigenous peoples lived, to remove them from urban-spaces, and to limit their interactions with non-Indigenous city dwellers.[49] Thus, in a wide range of ways, as Richard Drayton points out, 'our cities were curated by and for privileged minorities.'[50]

Yet wounded spaces not only physically dispossess a people from their country, they also erase the collective memories of those people by altering the land so it no longer functions as a historical site of memory.[51] As Edmonds notes, settler colonial cities are exemplars of this phenomenon because 'for too long historians … have imagined the colonial frontier as a problem of the backwoods, prairie, or bush.'[52] At the same time, the removal of Indigenous peoples from cities in the past has contributed to a social construction of 'indigeneity' as being distinctly non-urban and a subsequent dismissal of Indigenous cultures as incompatible with city life—at least for some non-Indigenous peoples.[53] Thus, as urban geographers Libby Porter and Oren Yiftachel point out, cities

> occupy Indigenous lands and form a central component of the settler society, yet at the same time render Indigeneity profoundly out of place … Cities barely register as the actual locations of claimed lands in global land rights struggles, and yet contain the very sites where the actions of those struggles, on the streets, in Parliaments and courtrooms, materialise.[54]

In other words, cities like Adelaide both demolish the Indigenous landscape that they occupy, and also project an aura of amnesia in which Indigenous histories are buried beneath the concrete and stone of colonial construction.[55]

Memories of Indigenous histories and cultures were and are further buried by the imposition of colonial toponyms, which often overwrote Indigenous names. Paraphrasing George Seddon, geographer Laura Kostanski and historian Ian Clark note that toponyms are symbolically and politically powerful because the 'words of the landscape invariably carry cultural baggage which may imply values and endorse power relations.'[56] Scholars interested in the social power of toponyms note that naming and renaming most often occurs during periods of political and social change or during times of increased social anxiety as groups

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[49] Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanising Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2010), 12.
[50] Richard Drayton, "Rhodes Must Not Fall? Statues, Postcolonial 'Heritage' and Temporality," *Third Texts* 33, no. 4 (2019): 653.
[51] Krichauff, "Recognising Country," 437.
[52] Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers,* 6.
[53] Peters, "'Urban' and 'Aboriginal,'" 60.
[54] Libby Porter and Oren Yiftachel, "Urbanising settler colonial studies: introduction to the special issue," *Settler Colonialism, Indigeneity and the City* 9, no. 2 (2019): 177.
[55] Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers,* 7; Peters, "'Urban' and 'Aboriginal,'" 48 and 59.
[56] Laura Kostanski and Ian Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," in *Indigenous and minority placenames: Australian and international perspectives,* eds., Ian Clark, Luise Anna Hercus and Laura Kostanski (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014), 189: George Seddon, "Words and Weeds: Some notes on Language and Landscape," in *Landprints: Reflections on Place and Landscape,* ed., George Seddon (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15-27, quoted in Kostanski and Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," 189.

seek to assert or reaffirm their social power.[57] European colonisation represents one such instance of significant social and political upheaval and so it is not surprising that colonists have named and renamed the landscape, especially because doing so assists European settlement in several ways. Maps and surveys using European terminologies and cartographical descriptions initially made it possible for settlers to comprehend the physical shape of the terrain, allowing them to navigate the unfamiliar land, identify sites for farms and new settlements, and create ports in safe harbours that would connect them with the wider empire.

At a deeper level, though, as interdisciplinary scholar and geographer Paul Carter points out in *The Road to Botany Bay* (1987), the use of European naming conventions located the country within a European understanding of the world which 'contextualised' Australia. Through this process, Carter notes, 'space [was] transformed symbolically into place, that is a space with a history.'[58] Preexisting Indigenous understandings of and cultural connections to the landscape were overwritten by European ones as the colonial government reshaped both the memory and the physicality of the land according to settler needs.[59] Thus, not only was the land physically claimed for European settlement and agriculture, but, through naming, it was also culturally claimed.[60]

Due to interactions between Aboriginal peoples and European settlers, it was not uncommon for Indigenous placenames to be incorporated into the European naming process. Despite using Indigenous words, colonists failed to respect the Indigenous histories contained within these placenames and refused to recognise that the existence of these words spoke to the fact of Indigenous land ownership.[61] Historian Tony Birch therefore argues that this use of Indigenous toponyms became a marker of dispossession.[62]

Around Adelaide, settlers used the language of the local people to name colonial townships and to describe local terrain features. For instance, the towns of Willunga and Noarlunga in the south were both named after Kaurna placenames meaning 'place of green trees' and 'place of the curve' respectively.[63] Similarly, the names of the North Para River and the South Para River also originated from the Kaurna language, in this case from the Kaurna word for 'river'—*pari*. South Australia, therefore, has the tautological North 'River' River and South 'River' River.[64] As Kostanski notes, these 'Anglo-Indigenous' toponyms served the colonial

[57] Olexiy Gnatiuk, "The renaming of streets in post-revolutionary Ukraine: regional strategies to construct a new national identity," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Geographica* 53, no. 2 (2018): 121.
[58] Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An exploration of landscapes and history (New Edition)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xxiv; Edmonds, *Urbanising Frontiers,* 74.
[59] Kostanski and Clark, 'Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes'
[60] Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay,* 325-327.
[61] Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation,* 65.
[62] Tony Birch, '"A Land So Inviting and Still Without Inhabitants": Erasing Koorie Culture from (Post)colonial Landscapes," in *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature, and History in South Africa and Australia,* eds. Kate Darian-Smith, Liz Gunner and Sarah Nuttall (London: Routledge, 1996), 177; Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation,* 65.
[63] "Kaurna Place Names," Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (with Kaurna Tappa Iri Regional Agreement and Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure), accessed 25 January 2024, https://www.kaurnaplacenames.com/index.php.
[64] "Kaurna Place Names."

state in part by helping to shape a European-Australian identity at a local level as well as at the national level after federation in 1901.[65]

At the same time, though, the survival of Indigenous words through toponyms ensured that the landscape continued quietly to reflect the original Indigenous character of the land and may have helped preserve Indigenous cultural knowledge and identities. The fact that these names were routinely spoken by settlers spoke to the reality of early colonial cross-cultural interactions, and colonial society remained latently aware of this history even if official acknowledgement waxed and waned, as described in chapter one.[66] The non-Indigenous denizens of Adelaide may not have consciously acknowledged the Aboriginal origins of names in their city in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the fact of their existence alluded to a deep history of Kaurna Meyunna occupation which existed before white settlement.

The Onkaparinga River, for instance, preserved memories of Kaurna Meyunna life prior to European arrival as well as traditional stories. History researcher Chester Schultz notes that the name 'Onkaparinga' derives from a corruption of a Kaurna word which translates as 'the Women's River' in English.[67] When asked about it in the early twentieth century, Kaurna woman Iparrityi—whose name was formally spelled Ivaritji and who was also called Amelia Taylor/Savage/Walker—provided two separate explanations for the name.[68] Linguist JM Black recorded one version in 1919, noting that:

> This name—'The woman's river' was derived by Amelia from the fact that near the stream was a place of refuge for women and children during tribal wars.[69]

In an interview with the *Advertiser* in 1929, though, Iparrityi herself appeared to relate a different story:

> Onkaparinga, she said, was so named because a woman of some note who had a quarrel with some of the members of her tribe, jumped into the river in a rage and swam across, but died shortly later. They called it Onkaparinga on that account. The word really means 'woman's river'.[70]

Schultz argues that both stories explaining the origins of the river's name may be accurate because both demonstrate the significance of the Onkaparinga as a woman's place, though in different ways. One story locates that explanation within the lived experiences of everyday

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[65] Laura Kostanski, "Toponymic books and the representation of Indigenous identities," in *Aboriginal Placenames,* eds., Harold Koch and Luise Hercus (Canberra: ANU Press, 2009), 175-176.
[66] Chris Healy, *Forgetting Aborigines* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), 192.
[67] Chester Schultz, 'Place name summary: Ngangki-Paringga', *The Southern Place Names Project: KaurnaWarraPintyandi* (2016), 12.
[68] Chester Schultz, "Place name summary: Ngangki-Paringga," Southern Kaurna Place Names Essays (Adelaide: Kaurna Warra, 2020), 13, https://www.kaurnawarra.org.au/southern-kaurna-placenames.
[69] JM Black, "Vocabularies of Four SA Languages," *Transactions and Proceedings of Royal Society of SA* 44 (1920): 83; Cited in Schultz, "Place name summary: Ngangki-Paringga," 13.
[70] "The Adelaide Tribe: A Member Still Survives: Princess Amelia Walker," *Advertiser,* 8 December 1927, 13; See also Tom Gara, "Life of Ivaritji," *Journal of Anthropological Society of SA* 28 (1990): 91.

social life while the other connects it to a deeper Dreaming story.[71] Either way, the name alludes to pre-colonial Kaurna Meyunna history, culture, and spirituality.

The survival of Kaurna place names was and is significant because, as geographers Lawrence Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho point out, toponyms are more than just words used to describe the environment; they are constructs of social power which shape the 'place identity' of those who interact with them.[72] Place identity refers to that aspect of personal or collective identity which is shaped by the physical environment in which a person lives their day-to-day life.[73] Environments exert influence over identity through a wide variety of physical features, unspoken attachments, and symbolic meanings, with each acting to shape the others. The physical environment is expected to reflect the norms, rules, and systems of power that govern our lives, and these are in turn shaped by the image created by 'those distinctive characteristics that historically more or less provide the place with a character.'[74] The interconnection between place identity and the spatial environment is recognised across disciplines which explore the importance of place to identity, including sociology, geography, and history. Historian Richard Bosworth, for instance, notes in *Nationalism* (2007) that a 'religious sense of belonging to land' has long had significant influence over personal and collective identities, both at the local level and at the imagined national level.[75]

Therefore, in a global context, some modern Indigenous protest movements have sought to reclaim Indigenous placenames from their co-opted place in the colonial landscape, or have sought to restore Indigenous toponyms for locations currently named in the languages of colonisers. Geographer Reuben Rose-Redwood, for instance, describes the 'efforts of Indigenous people in W̱SÁNEĆ and Lekwungen Territories to reclaim their "storyscapes" through the renaming of PKOLS, a mountain known in English as Mount Douglas in Saanich, British Columbia.'[76] Rose-Redwood recounts that nearly 600 members from various Canadian First Nations, along with their non-Indigenous allies, marched up Mount Douglas and re-enacted the signing of the Douglas Treaty (1852) on 22 May 2013. The re-enactment was followed by a ceremonial erection of a wooden sign recording the Indigenous name PKOLS. The sign caused some contention among local members of the settler-descendent community because it had intentionally been erected without the expressed approval of the local

[71] Schultz, "Place name summary: Ngangki-Paringga," 13-14.
[72] Lawrence Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho, *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming* (London: Ashgate publishing, 2009), 12; Gnatiuk "The renaming of the streets in post-revolutionary Ukraine," 120; Kostanski and Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," 197-198.
[73] Maria Lewicka, "Place attachment, place identity, and place memory: Restoring the forgotten city past," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 28 (2008): 211-212.
[74] Alex Deffner and Theodore Metaxas, "Place marketing, local identity, and branding cultural imagines in Southern Europe: Nea, Ionia, Greece, and Pafos, Cyprus," in *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions,* eds., Gregory Ashworth and Mihalis Kavarantzis (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2010), 52.
[75] Richard Bosworth, *Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2007), 2.
[76] Reuben Rose-Redwood, "'Reclaim, rename, reoccupy': Decolonising place and the reclaiming of PKOLS," *ACME International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 15 (2016): 187.

government.[77] Mohawk scholar and lead organiser of the PKOLS renaming initiative, Taiaiake Alfred, explained why the movement did not seek governmental permission:

> One of the biggest problems in Canadian politics is we're always asking for permission … I think the strongest move you can make is just to act Indigenous, and to act on your teachings.[78]

Yet, re-claiming or restoring Indigenous toponyms is not always a simple political issue, nor is there always a clear divide between settler-descendants and Indigenous peoples. For instance, in 2008 'Mount Niggerhead' was renamed by the Victorian Government.[79] Kostanski and Clark note that some settler-descendants recognised the inappropriateness of the racial slur contained within the mountain's name, but nonetheless opposed renaming because they felt that it was a 'historical artefact that highlights the views of its time.'[80] More significantly, though, some Aboriginal communities disagreed with the renaming of the mountain. The new name, Mount Jaithmathang, honoured the local Jaithmathang people who claimed that the mountain lay within their traditional territory.[81] However, the Dhudhoroa people also claimed traditional ownership of the mountain and they felt that 'Mount Jaithmathang' eradicated their historical and cultural connections to the area. In the words of Gary Murray, co-chair of the Dhudhuroa Native Title Group, it was 'a bit like renaming Australia as England.'[82]

The objection raised by the Dhudhoroa people in this way highlights a significant and enduring difficulty with Indigenous place naming initiatives. The historical ambiguity created by years of European colonisation and occupation means that there may be divergent views among contemporary Indigenous peoples about the appropriateness of specific renaming efforts even when they are enacted in the name of decolonisation. Yet to not attempt to restore pre-colonial toponyms risks perpetuating colonial histories of the land and the continued neglect of Indigenous spatial-identities.

When the Adelaide City Council initiated the Kaurna Place Names project during the final years of the twentieth century, their intention was to honour the Kaurna peoples' place identity and restore Kaurna history and culture to Adelaide's urban environment. As can be seen in the following section, it was undoubtedly hoped that the revival of Kaurna toponyms might help address the legacy of colonial dispossession and advance the process of reconciliation. To a certain extent the project was successful in the sense that Kaurna placenames were restored to many areas within the city and have entered into the everyday

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[77] Rose-Redwood, '"Reclaim, rename, reoccupy,", 191.

[78] David Ball, "Saanich people launch campaign to restore traditional landmark names," *Raven's Eye,* 19 June 2013, accessed 28 September 2022, https://www.ammsa.com/publications/ravens-eye/saanich-people-launch-campaign-restore-traditional-landmark-names; quoted in Rose-Redwood, "'Reclaim, rename, reoccupy'," 191.

[79] Victoria, Government of Victoria, *Victoria Government Gazette,* no. s 363 (Melbourne: Victoria Government Printer, 12 December 2008), 1.

[80] Kostanski and Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," 199-200.

[81] "Aboriginal group outraged over naming of mountain," *Saturday Morning Herald,* 17 November 2008, accessed 30 September 2022, https://www.smh.com.au/national/aboriginal-group-outraged-over-naming-of-mountain-20081117-68gq.html.

[82] "Aborigines oppose name change of Mt Niggerhead," *Reuters,* 17 November 2008, accessed 30 September 2022, https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-36534020081117.

vocabulary of some Adelaideans. Yet the project had to address difficulties inherent in renaming processes and, at times, struggled to overcome the unique difficulties of decolonisation in an urban settler colonial setting.

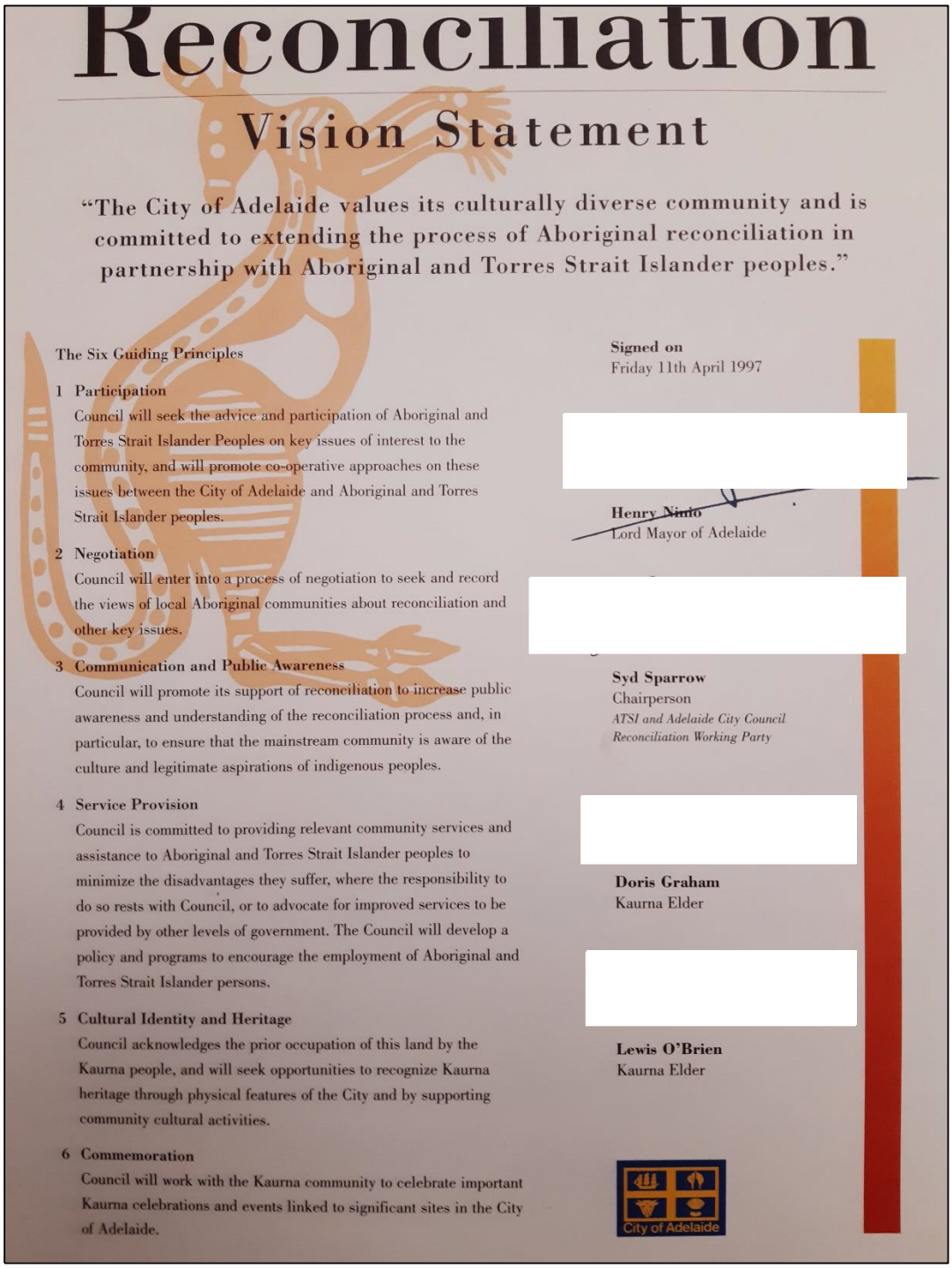
The Kaurna Naming Project, 1996 to 2003

The Kaurna Naming Project in the Adelaide City Council area appears to have been first suggested at a meeting of the Adelaide Council Reconciliation Working Party in 1996.[83] The Adelaide City Council formalised its intention to proceed with Kaurna naming after it signed a *Reconciliation Vision Statement* in 1997.[84] As with the 'Reconciliation Memorial' project undertaken by the District Council of Elliston in 2012, Kaurna naming in Adelaide was initiated by the local council but was conducted in conversation with the Kaurna community. Initially, the Adelaide City Council engaged with individual Kaurna Elders and the Kaurna Heritage Committee, but later it liaised with Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP), the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, and the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board—which ultimately evolved into the Kaurna Nation Cultural Heritage Association. The aim of the project was to give Kaurna names to all 29 parks within the Adelaide Park Lands, as well as to the River Torrens and the six public squares located within the City of Adelaide. This took place between 1996 and 2012, with a large period of inactivity occurring between 2003 and 2011.

The first phase of the Kaurna Naming Project involved sourcing appropriate Kaurna names for locations with the City of Adelaide, particularly as they related to the Adelaide Park Lands. This proved to be somewhat difficult, in part because the last recorded Kaurna speaker—Iparrityi—died in 1929.[85] Apart from a few notable sites recorded by early colonial writers and despite an ongoing language revival effort, 'authentic' or 'original' Kaurna place names were often unknown. Further, by the 1990s, the Adelaide Park Lands no longer resembled the lands originally occupied by the Kaurna Meyunna, especially after the *Municipal Corporations Act, 1861* allowed for the damming of the Torrens River and the general 'beautification' of the parks.[86] Therefore, a set of 'naming principles' were developed in 1997. The naming principles promoted the use of 'traditional names' where they were known but approved the creation of historically and culturally appropriate new names if the 'originals' were not recorded.[87] As a linguist and major participant in the Kaurna language revival movement at the time, University of Adelaide academic Rob Amery was appointed by the Adelaide City Council to assist in developing these new names. In this way, Amery took on a role similar to the one played by Timothy Haines during the negotiations over Elliston's Reconciliation Memorial; Amery spoke 'with special authority' as an academic regarding Kaurna language, history, and

[83] City of Adelaide (CoA), *Adelaide City Council Planning Services – Agenda Item No.5.1 Attachment D,* 1999, 00996-6*,* Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, City Archives, Adelaide (CAA).
[84] CoA, *City of Adelaide Reconciliation Vision Statement*, 11 April 1997, 2607ITEM0067, City of Adelaide Reconciliation Vision Statement—Item 9, City Archives, Adelaide.
[85] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Planning Services – General Manager Policy and Planning Meeting,* 1999, 00996-3*,* Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[86] *Municipal Corporations Act, 1861* (South Australia)*,* no. 16 (SA), 141-142.
[87] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Planning Services – General Manager Policy and Planning Meeting*, 1999, CAA.

memory, and through his personal connections he held influence within both the Kaurna and the non-Indigenous communities.[88]



Reconciliation

Vision Statement

"The City of Adelaide values its culturally diverse community and is committed to extending the process of Aboriginal reconciliation in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

The Six Guiding Principles

1 **Participation**
Council will seek the advice and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on key issues of interest to the community, and will promote co-operative approaches on these issues between the City of Adelaide and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2 **Negotiation**
Council will enter into a process of negotiation to seek and record the views of local Aboriginal communities about reconciliation and other key issues.

3 **Communication and Public Awareness**
Council will promote its support of reconciliation to increase public awareness and understanding of the reconciliation process and, in particular, to ensure that the mainstream community is aware of the culture and legitimate aspirations of indigenous peoples.

4 **Service Provision**
Council is committed to providing relevant community services and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to minimize the disadvantages they suffer, where the responsibility to do so rests with Council, or to advocate for improved services to be provided by other levels of government. The Council will develop a policy and programs to encourage the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons.

5 **Cultural Identity and Heritage**
Council acknowledges the prior occupation of this land by the Kaurna people, and will seek opportunities to recognize Kaurna heritage through physical features of the City and by supporting community cultural activities.

6 **Commemoration**
Council will work with the Kaurna community to celebrate important Kaurna celebrations and events linked to significant sites in the City of Adelaide.

Signed on
Friday 11th April 1997

[redacted]

Henry Nitschke
Lord Mayor of Adelaide

[redacted]

Syd Sparrow
Chairperson
ATSI and Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Working Party

[redacted]

Doris Graham
Kaurna Elder

[redacted]

Lewis O'Brien
Kaurna Elder

City of Adelaide

*Fig. 7. The City of Adelaide's 1997 Reconciliation Vision Statement. (*City of Adelaide Reconciliation Vision Statement*, 11 April 1997, 2607ITEM0067, City of Adelaide Reconciliation Vision Statement—Item 9, City Archives, Adelaide.)*

[88] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Planning Services – Agenda Item No. 5.1 Attachment B*, 1999, 00996-3, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.

Amery worked with the Kaurna Heritage Committee, which included Elder Lewis O'Brien and Elder Alitya (Alice) Rigney, to provide the Adelaide City Council with a list of potential names.[89] In some cases, these names related to a native species of plant that grew, or once grew, in the area. In other instances, names were suggested which referenced prominent Kaurna Meyunna individuals, such as Murlawirrapurka or Kadlitpina. Names were also put forward that related to the park's contemporary usage. For instance, Amery's list of names suggested that Park Two be called Pardipardinyilla—swimming place—because of the presence of the Adelaide Aquatic Centre in that park. Similarly, the list suggested naming Park Sixteen as Pakapakanthi—to trot—in reference to the park's current use as a course for horse racing.[90]

The fact that these names described the current colonial landscape in the Kaurna language was controversial. An internal Adelaide City Council reference sheet noted that 'There has been some objection to the use of … names based on current usage as these do not relate to Indigenous features of the landscape.'[91] However, the reference sheet included justifications for these names. It stated that it is extremely common for a toponym to be derived from a description of the location's human usage, and it noted that many 'original' Kaurna placenames recorded in the 1830s referenced the activities of European colonists in those sites.[92] For instance, one documented Kaurna Meyunna toponym—Tinninyawardli—meant 'iron-stores place' because the site was used by European settlers to store long strips of iron before they were shaped into wagon rims, barrel hoops, and other items necessary for the colonial settlement.[93] In 2009, in a book chapter for *The Land is a Map* (2002), Amery further justified the names by arguing that 'While few of these names are original retentions, the names applied do give a Kaurna perspective and serve to remind us of an Indigenous heritage.'[94]

Another difficulty for the creation of Kaurna toponyms, albeit one which only became apparent later, stemmed from the fact that a major revision of Kaurna spelling took place in 2010. Kaurna had originally been a spoken language. Its written form was first created by the missionaries Teichelmann and Schürmann, as well as other colonial authors, when they interacted with Kaurna Meyunna at Pirltawarldi.[95] Amery notes in *Warraparna Kaurna!* (2016) that he felt this original spelling had several 'deficiencies' and some Kaurna people, such as Jack Kanya Buckskin, found the written language to be confusing and frustrating to

[89] Rob Amery, *Adelaide City Council Consultancy on Kaurna Place and Kaurna heritage,* 1997, 00996-1, Kaurna Naming – Strategy and Policy Committee, CAA; CoA, *Item No 5.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the Business & Operational Committee held on 3 March 2003,* 3 March 2003, 00996-3, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[90] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Planning Services – On names derived from current usage of the parks,* 1999, 00996-3, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[91] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Planning-Infrastructure Maintenance – Reference Sheet,* 2003, 02490, Capital works project W114 – Park Lands Signage - Kaurna and Reconciliation Naming – Project Briefs, CAA.
[92] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Planning Services – On names derived from current usage of the parks,* 1999, 00996-3, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[93] Amery and Rigney, "Recognition of Kaurna Cultural Heritage in the Adelaide Parklands," 20.
[94] Amery and Williams, "Reclaiming through renaming: the reinstatement of Kaurna Toponyms in Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains," 262.
[95] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* xi.

pronounce.[96] After consultation with the Kaurna community, the language's spelling was reformed and, shortly thereafter, Amery and linguist Jane Simpson produced a new learning guide entitled *Kulurdu Marni Ngathaitya! Sounds good to me! A Kaurna Learner's guide* (2013).[97]

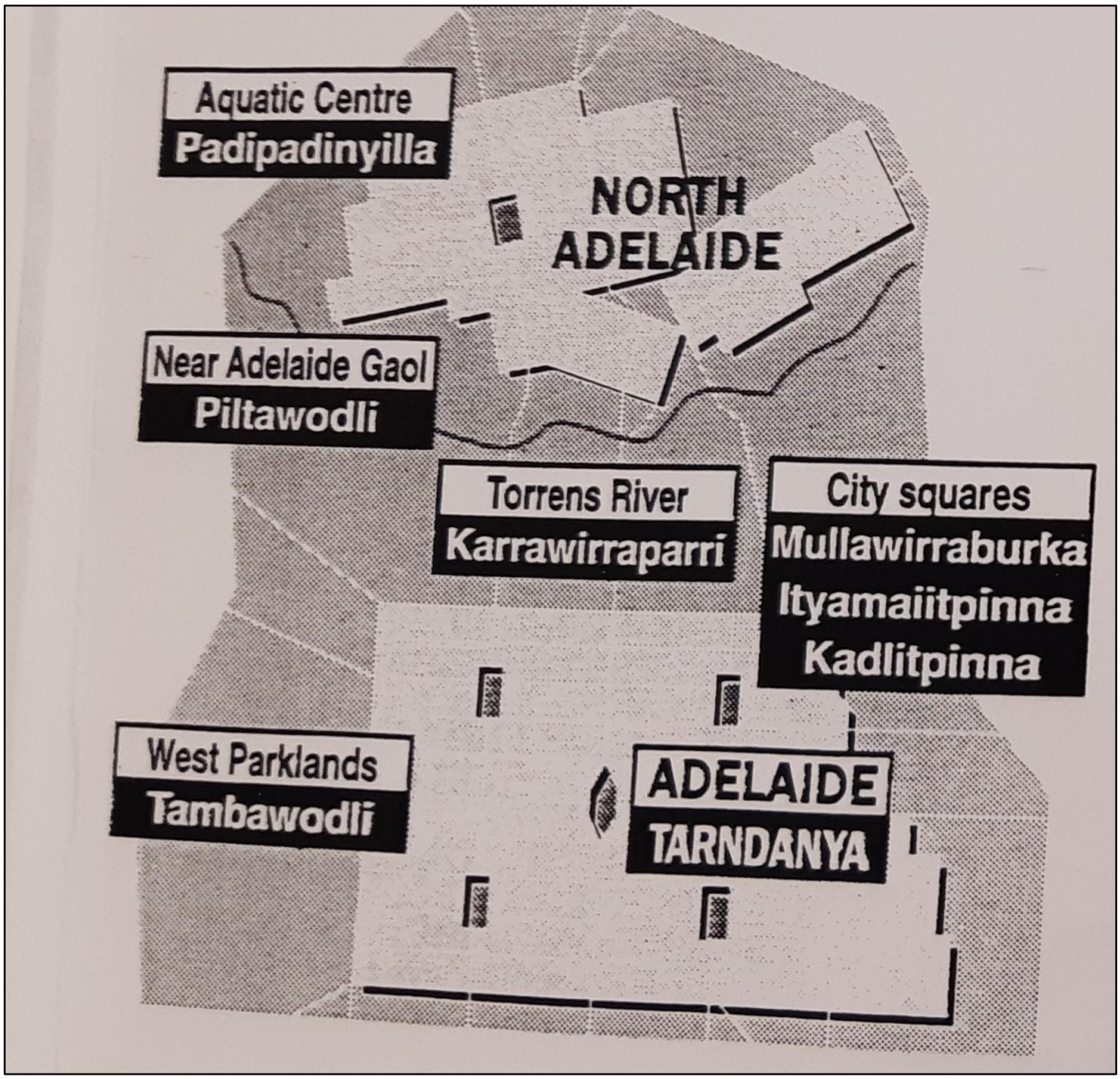


Fig. 8. An image of the City of Adelaide with several proposed Kaurna names, circulated by The Advertiser in 1997. (Photo by Author of an image included in Regina Titellus, "Tribal Twin Names for city landmarks," The Advertiser, *8 February 1997.)*

In theory, the revisions were supposed to distance the language from colonial influences in the original source material, but some sections of the Kaurna community opposed the revised spelling.[98] Reflecting on this opposition in *Warraparna Kaurna!*, Amery stated that some Kaurna people felt the consultation process had been too limited and that 'by changing the

[96] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 283.
[97] Rob Amery and Jane Simpson, *Kulurdu Marni Ngathaitya! Sounds good to me! A Kaurna Leaner's guide* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press (with Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi), 2013), xvi.
[98] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 284-5.

spelling, the substance of the Kaurna language [was] changed.'[99] These changes did not derail the Kaurna Naming Project, which shifted to Revised Spelling [RS] just prior to the dual naming of the city's squares, but it did speak to the underlying difficulties that can arise with attempts to restore Indigenous languages to the modern landscape. As the case of Mount Jaithmathang revealed, and was also clear here, renaming initiatives operate within structures created by the legacies of colonisation and it may be difficult to find consensus for methods designed to decolonise the existing environment.

Nevertheless, the Adelaide City Council assented to the proposed Kaurna toponyms. In early 2000 the Kaurna Naming Project proceeded, albeit cautiously. The Adelaide City Council seemed aware of potential community backlash to the Kaurna Naming Project. Perhaps because of this, the Council decided to conduct a trial of Kaurna names in four city parks before moving further with the naming project.[100] The first four parks to be named in Kaurna were Park One, Park Twelve, Park Twenty-Three, and Park Twenty-Four, which were given the names 'Piltawodli' (RS Pirltawardli), 'Karrawirra', 'Wirranendi' (RS Wirrarninthi), and 'Tambawodli' (RS Tampawardli) respectively. Additionally, the Adelaide City Council formally asked the South Australian Geographical Names Board to establish an alternative name for the River Torrens: Karrawirra Pari.[101]

Adelaide City Council staff recorded and documented relevant coverage of the naming project in letters to the editor, newspaper articles, and radio reports.[102] Some members of the public questioned the value of the Kaurna Naming Project and argued that it was 'unnecessary' or a 'waste of time'. When the topic of Kaurna naming was raised on Adelaide's commercial talkback radio station FIVEaa on 14 March 2000, the presenter, Bob Francis, stated that he believed that the Adelaide City Council had 'too much time on their hands.'[103] Several of his callers also expressed their concerns regarding the Kaurna Naming Project. One caller argued that the practice of Indigenous place naming 'could open up the flood gates.' The caller did not elaborate on what these flood gates would unleash once they were opened, nor did they explain the negative outcomes that they felt might come about as a result.[104]

The views of Francis and his callers were not entirely surprising. Even at the time he was known for his controversial on-air statements, and in 2005 the Australian Broadcasting Authority noted that comments made on Francis's show were likely to incite or perpetuate 'hatred against Aboriginal people on the basis of their race.'[105] Francis's comments were concerning, but what was more worrying was that some members of the Campbelltown City Council refused to endorse Kaurna naming. The River Torrens passed through an area

[99] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 284.
[100] CoA, *City Strategy Committee Meeting on 5 March*, 2000, 02951, Capital Works Project H038 – Cultural Heart of SA – Kaurna Naming – Correspondence, CAA.
[101] Bill What (Secretary for the Geographical Names Advisory Committee) to Dot Davey (CoA Aboriginal Development Officer), 9 December 1999, 00996-1, Kaurna Naming – Strategy and Policy Committee, CAA.
[102] Recorded in Folder 00996-1, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[103] Mary Cherian (Media Monitors) to Adelaide City Council, 15 March 2000, 00996-1, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CCA; Bob Francis, *Morning Talkback with Bob Francis,* aired 14 March 2000, on 5AA (Adelaide).
[104] Cherian to Adelaide City Council.
[105] "Radio station guilty of vilification," *ABC News,* 16 May 2005, accessed 2 February 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2005-06-15/radio-station-guilty-of-vilification/1592842.

administered by the City of Campbelltown, and so the Adelaide City Council requested support from the Campbelltown City Council for their plan to grant the river an alternative Kaurna name. In an interview with the *Advertiser*, Campbelltown Councillors Ray Duffield and Jim Durden echoed the views of Bob Francis and called the idea 'bizarre' and 'ridiculous' and stated that 'the council had more important things to do.'[106]

Other members of the public expressed outright hostility towards the Kaurna Naming Project. On 13 June 2000, an exasperated Adelaide City Council employee involved in the Kaurna Naming Project sent an internal memo to a colleague because he had received an email from a woman who supposedly had 'serious concerns with the naming process.' According to the Adelaide City Council employee, this woman felt that the council was 'putting up airy-fairy names' as part of an 'agenda that is being manipulated by unidentified persons.'[107] Similarly, in a letter to the editor published in the *Advertiser* on 27 March 2000, J.E. Cross strongly disapproved of the appellation of an additional Kaurna name for the River Torrens. Cross questioned how the river's Kaurna name had been devised because 'the Kaurna language hasn't been spoken for some 70 years.' He further stated that 'in general, all substantial proven and documented history of this land stems only from colonisation.'[108]

It is possible that this kind of opposition to the Kaurna Naming Project stemmed from a feeling that the revival of Kaurna toponyms threatened the place identity of non-Indigenous Australians who strongly identified with colonial narratives of Adelaide's settlement. Environmental psychologists Harold Proshansky, Abbe Fabian and Robert Kaminoff note that:

> One dimension of the person's experience of environmental stability lies in the affirmation of the belief that the properties of his or her day-to-day physical world are unchanging … The perceived stability of place and space that emerges from such recognitions correspondingly validates the individual's belief in his or her own continuity over time.[109]

It follows from this that when toponyms are 'highlighted for change, the people involved in using the toponym as a symbol of their place identity could be said to face a threat to their self-identity,' as Kostanski and Clark argue.[110] In this case, Cross showed discomfort with the idea that the River Torrens might have a name other than the one known to him. He noted, in defence of his opposition to Kaurna naming, that 'Every map, chart and book even to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* refers to the river running through Adelaide as the "Torrens" so I would suggest that, in fact, Torrens is the traditional name.'[111] With these words in mind, it may be that Cross's comments stemmed in part from a concern that a new toponym for the

[106] "River's dual name plan," *East Torrens Messenger,* 18 July 2001, 5.
[107] CoA, *Internal Memo*, 13 June 2000, 00996-2, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[108] J.E. Cross, letter to the editor, *The Advertiser,* 27 March 2000, in 00996-2, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CA.
[109] Harold Proshansky, Abbe Fabian and Robert Kaminoff, "Place Identity: Physical World Socialisation of the Self," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 1, no. 3 (1983): 66; Kostanski and Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," 197-198.
[110] Kostanski and Clark, "Reviving old Indigenous names for new purposes," 198.
[111] Cross, letter to the editor.

river would erode his sense of 'environmental stability' and this in turn threatened his personal sense of place identity.

The majority of stakeholders, though, did not seem to feel that the Kaurna Naming Project was a threat to their place identity or a waste of the Adelaide City Council's time. In contrast to her less supportive colleagues, Councillor Judy Black from the City of Campbelltown spoke in favour of the Kaurna Naming Project.[112] Meanwhile, the City of West Torrens, another local council which administered area through which the River Torrens flowed, voted to support the introduction of Karrawirra Pari as an alternative name.[113] Further support came from local community groups, such as The Friends of Park 23, the Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association, and the North Adelaide Society. Admittedly, some of these community groups were more enthusiastic than others. The Friends of Park 23, for instance, stated that they 'wholeheartedly endorse the naming of Park 23 as Wirranendi' and subsequently referred to themselves informally as 'The Friends of Wirranendi.'[114] The North Adelaide Society was more restrained. In a letter to the Adelaide City Council they assented to Kaurna naming, but with the proviso that 'it is assumed you will make contact again should it be proposed to identify further landmarks jointly in Kaurna and English.'[115]

To a certain degree, part of the early success of the Kaurna Naming Project stemmed from the involvement of Kaurna woman Dot Davy, who was employed by the Adelaide City Council in the 1990s. As social scientist David Bargal and historian Emmanuel Sivan note in the context of post-war Europe, reconciliation projects may be driven or influenced by key individuals in positions of secondary or tertiary authority as much as by governments or community groups.[116] Davy was certainly a passionate and influential advocate of the Kaurna Naming Project. Amery notes in *Warraparna Kaurna!* that Davy had 'a vision of establishing a Kaurna trail through the city of Adelaide' and that she possessed a keen personal desire to make Kaurna heritage in the city more visible.[117] Meanwhile, her personal connections to both the Adelaide City Council and the Kaurna community meant that Davy was able to facilitate close cooperation between both groups, as Kaurna Elders noted in a letter to the Geographical Names Advisory Committee in 2000.[118] Although she left the Adelaide City Council in February 2001, many of the letters from local community groups acknowledged her advocacy as an important factor in their decision to support the Kaurna Naming Project.

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[112] "River's dual name plan," 5.

[113] Leanne McEwan (Representative for the City of West Torrens Council) to Bob Fidock and the Adelaide City Council, 18 February 2000, 00996-1, Kaurna Naming – Strategy and Policy Committee, CAA.

[114] Marilyn Kaitatzis (Friends of Park 23) to Dot Davey, 3 February 2000, 00996-1, Kaurna Naming – Strategy and Policy Committee, CAA.

[115] Jack Glanville (North Adelaide Society) to Dot Davy, 18 February 2000, 00996-1, Kaurna Naming – Strategy and Policy Committee, CAA.

[116] David Bargal and Emmanual Sivan, "Leadership and Reconciliation," in *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation,* ed. Yaavoc Bar-Simon-Tov (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 126 and 132-133.

[117] Amery, "Warraparna Kaurna!," 224; Personal Correspondence.

[118] Lewis O'Brien, Doris Graham, Veronica Brodie, Pearl Nam, and Alice Rigney to Bill Watt (Geographical Names Advisory Committee), 24 January 2000, 00996-1, Kaurna Naming – Strategy and Policy Committee, CAA.

Overall, the Adelaide City Council seemed to feel that the official Kaurna naming of Park One, Park Twelve, Park Twenty-Three, and Park Twenty-Four and the introduction of the alternative name Karrawirra Pari for the River Torrens had been successful. In particular, Adelaide City Council staff took note of an article entitled 'Reconciliation's sign of the times' in the *Advertiser*, which reflected positively on the new names and commended the Kaurna Naming Project.[119] By November 2001, the Council had committed to naming a further 19 parks in the Kaurna language, and Victoria Square—Adelaide's central and most prominent square—was granted the alternative name 'Tarndanyangga' (RS Tarntanyangga) in 2002. By the end of the following year, all parks in the park lands without pre-existing English names were officially named in Kaurna. In reference to the project in 2002, Kaurna Elder Lewis O'Brien observed that the successful restoration of Kaurna placenames demonstrated the Adelaide City Council's admirable ongoing commitment to recognising Adelaide's Kaurna heritage. He also stated that the project was an example of effective and genuine collaboration between the Kaurna community, the local government, and university academics.[120]

English/Kaurna dual naming and the Park Lands Naming Committee, 2003 to 2017

The final phase of the Kaurna Naming Project involved introducing Kaurna names to those parks and city squares which already had a name in English, such as Rymill Park and Bonython Park. This process proved more difficult as it raised questions about how to deal with the city's long-established colonial toponyms. Reporting on a letter sent to the Lord Mayor's office, the City Council's Lead Reconciliation Officer, Warren Guppy, noted in early 2000 that there existed 'general concerns … including a belief that the Kaurna names will replace English names' in culturally significant locations around Adelaide.[121] To address these concerns, a dual naming process was adopted for certain locations so that new Kaurna names could be introduced and established English names could be retained.

The Adelaide City Council's adoption of dual naming in the early 2000s was strongly influenced by their observation of naming practices in Aotearoa New Zealand which jointly celebrates the country's Māori and Pakeha heritage. Locations with dual place names had always existed in Aotearoa New Zealand, but they became more widespread in the late twentieth century and by 1998 the New Zealand Geographic Board was actively encouraging the use of Māori toponyms alongside English ones.[122] Officially, the New Zealand Government states that dual Māori/English toponyms serves to 'recognise the equal and special significance of both the original Māori and non-Māori name.'[123] Social scientists Nathan

[119] "Reconciliation's Sign of the Times," *Advertiser,* 15 March 2000, 11.
[120] Amery and Rigney, "Recognition of Kaurna Cultural Heritage in the Adelaide Parklands," 17.
[121] Warren Guppy to Jane Sandercock, 24 March 2000, 00996-6*,* Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[122] New Zealand Geographical Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, *Protocols for Māori Place Names* (Wellington: NZGB NPTA, 2002), 1.
[123] "Place-naming in New Zealand," New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, accessed 4 November 2021, https://www.linz.govt.nz/system/files_force/media/pages-attachments/nzgb-brochure.pdf?download=1.

Albury and Lyn Carter express a slightly more tempered view. They observe that dual naming in Aotearoa New Zealand has seen 'incomplete, though admittedly extensive, application' which reflects the fact that the country is 'notionally, if not in practice, a bicultural society.'[124] In 2000, an Adelaide City Council Meeting reflected on dual naming in Aotearoa New Zealand as an example for the Kaurna Naming Project.[125] However, in contrast to Aotearoa New Zealand—where dual naming conventions place the Māori name before the European one—the Adelaide City Council decided that the Kaurna toponym would follow the non-Indigenous name.

In March 2002, the concept of dual English/Kaurna naming for the city's English-named parks and squares was presented to the public. This pronouncement did not seem to provoke the same level of debate as had earlier been observed when Kaurna toponyms were first introduced in 2000. Perhaps because the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari and Victoria Square / Tarntanyangga had already been dual named in early 2001 and early 2002 respectively, many members of the community actually seemed supportive of further acts of dual naming. A letter to the editor published in the *Advertiser* on 4 March 2002 argued that the process ought to be uncontroversial and the author, Rhonda Pooley, pointed out that 'dual place names are used in many parts of the world without causing either confusion or derision.'[126] Less publicly, but no less significantly, the Lord Mayor Alfred Huang received numerous letters from local residents indicating support for dual naming. In one of these letters, the author noted that she was looking 'forward to seeing … the new signage which will proclaim the Kaurna name.'[127]

One of the few notable people recorded as having voiced discomfort with dual naming in Adelaide was Michael Harbison, an Adelaide City Council member. Harbison was not opposed to Kaurna recognition. He had been involved in a wide range of local reconciliation initiatives and had long been a supporter of the Kaurna Naming Project. During an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Advisory group meeting on 2 May 2001, he noted that he supported Kaurna toponyms for parks without English names. However, Harbison stated that he 'didn't agree with dual naming, as it did not seem to fit with Colonel Light's vision for Adelaide.'[128] His pronouncement provoked Kirstie Parker, a Yuwallarai woman serving as director at Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, to state in response that 'Colonel Light's vision was not consistent with the original Kaurna people's vision of Adelaide either.' Therefore, she argued, 'a gentle compromise needed to be reached' so that Kaurna culture could be recognised and reconciliation could be advanced.[129]

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[124] Nathan Albury and Lyn Carter, "A typology of arguments for and against bilingual place-naming in Aotearoa New Zealand," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (2017): 831.
[125] CoA, *Agenda Item No. 5.4 for Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting to be Held 13 March 2000*, 00996, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[126] Rhonda Pooley, letter to the editor, *The Advertiser,* 4 March 2002, 17.
[127] Vilia Bone to Alfred Huang (Lord Mayor), 8 June 2002, 00996, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[128] CoA, *Minutes from Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Advisory Group on 2 May 2001,* 2001, 00996-2, Kaurna – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[129] CoA, *Minutes from Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Advisory Group on 2 May 2001,* CAA.

In this context of seemingly broad, popular support, the dual naming process proceeded in 2003 for the remaining parks and squares that had not yet been named in Kaurna. Interestingly, by this time Alfred Huang had been replaced as Lord Mayor by Michael Harbison. Whether or not Harbison still held concerns about dual English/Kaurna naming is not indicated in Adelaide City Council records, but it seems he did not impede the project's progress. In early 2003, Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP)—a forum of Kaurna people advised by academics involved in Kaurna language revival—proposed alternative Kaurna toponyms for the six English-named parks, as well as potential names for the five remaining city squares.[130] The Adelaide City Council endorsed these names and sought approval from the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board.[131] In late 2003 the remaining parks were officially given the dual names of Rundle Park / Kadlitpina, Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka, Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi, Bonython Park / Tulya Wardli, Palmer Gardens / Pangki Pangki, and Brougham Gardens / Tantutitingga.[132] However, the names proposed by KWP for the five city squares did not receive the assent of the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board.

The reason for this stemmed from disagreement within the Kaurna community over the names that were proposed. As the English names for the city squares recalled notable British or colonial figures, it was assumed that the Kaurna names should also reference historic Kaurna Meyunna individuals.[133] KWP suggested that the five squares celebrate Kaurna womanhood by recalling known ancestral women.[134] They suggested Hindmarsh Square be named Mogata (RS Mukata), after a wife of Murlawirrapurka; Hurtle Square be named Tangkaira, after the wife of Ityamai-itpina; Light Square be named Wauwi, after the wife of Kadlitpina; Wellington Square be named after Kudnarto (RS Kudnartu), whose marriage to Thomas Adams in 1848 was the first recorded legal union conducted in South Australia between an Aboriginal person and a settler under British Law; and Whitmore Square be named after Ivaritji (RS Iparrityi), who was falsely claimed to be the 'last woman of the Adelaide Tribe' following her death in 1929.[135] However, the fact that these women, with the exception of Iparrityi, were relatively unknown other than through their relationships to significant men seemed to cause consternation. The Adelaide City Council records report that the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board 'sought alternative ancestral names.'[136] Consequently, the dual naming process for the city squares were not finalised and the squares were not given Kaurna names in 2003.

These debates, once again, speak to the difficulty involved in building consensus within and between communities, but they also demonstrate some of the problems inherent in the memorialisation of specific individuals. In his study of statuary in nineteenth century France, historian William Cohen indicated that the selection of individuals for memorialisation has

[130] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Committee Meeting – Agenda – 22 February 2012,* 22 February 2012, 03621, Capital Works Project H038 – Cultural Heart of SA – Kaurna Naming – Council Reports, CAA.
[131] CoA, *Minutes for the Business and Operational Committee Meeting held on 3 March 2003,* 3 March 2003, 00996-3, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[132] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Committee Meeting – Agenda – 22 February 2012,* CAA.
[133] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Committee Meeting – Agenda – 22 February 2012,* CAA.
[134] CoA, *Minutes for the Business and Operational Committee Meeting held on 3 March 2003,* CAA.
[135] "Kaurna Place Naming," CoA.
[136] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Committee Meeting – Agenda – 22 February 2012,* CAA.

often evoked debate within communities.[137] He explained this phenomenon by noting that, because statues 'were ways of constructing and communicating a political culture,' debates over which specific historical figures deserved to be memorialised implicitly involved a political debate over the messages that those figures might represent.[138]

To a certain extent, a debate over messaging could be seen during the debates over the Kaurna toponyms for the city squares. Although Mukata, Tangkaira, Wauwi, and Kudnartu were important Kaurna ancestors, some members of the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board felt that their comparative historical obscurity might lead non-Indigenous members of the public to view these women as less historically significant than the British men after whom the squares were named in English. In an email exchange between Warren Guppy and Rob Amery in April 2003, Amery discussed the possibility of naming the squares after male Kaurna leaders instead, including Murlawirrapurka, Kadlitpina, and Ityamai-itpina.[139] These individuals were more prominent in the colonial record, but they also had the advantage of being warriors and statesmen who might simultaneously echo and rival the narratives of their colonial counterparts. Thus, these debates were evidently not just about selecting appropriate Kaurna names, but also about the role those names might play in challenging the British history inscribed onto the urban environment by the pre-existing colonial toponyms.

Negotiations over Kaurna names for the five city squares only resumed in 2011. In October, KWP reiterated their support for the names honouring Mukata, Tangkaira, Wauwi, Kudnartu, and Iparrityi. The following year, in February 2012, the Adelaide City Council met with representatives of the Kaurna Nation Cultural Heritage Association—the successor organisation of the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board—to further 'discuss the naming of the remaining Squares as proposed and reaffirmed by KWP.'[140] This time, the Kaurna Nation Cultural Association agreed to the proposed names and requested that 'it remains engaged with the Kaurna (dual) naming process when the Council designs interpretive signage for the City Squares.'[141] A report on dual naming was presented to the Adelaide Park Lands Authority on 8 March 2012, and the Adelaide City Council officially approved Kaurna names for the city squares following an Adelaide City Council Meeting on 27 March 2012.[142] With this, the Kaurna Naming Project ended after having successfully applied Kaurna names to all the parks of the Adelaide park lands, as well as the six city squares and the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari.

By-and-large, the Adelaide City Council considered the Kaurna Naming Project a triumph for recognition of Aboriginal histories within Adelaide and a positive development for reconciliation. Kaurna naming is currently noted on the Adelaide City Council website as one of their 'significant steps towards reconciliation', and references to the Kaurna Naming

[137] William Cohen, "Symbols of Power: Statues in Nineteenth-Century Provincial France," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 3 (July 1989): 499-500, and 502-4.
[138] Cohen, "Symbols of Power," 512.
[139] Robert Amery to Warren Guppy, 16 April 2003, 00996-4, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[140] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Committee Meeting – Agenda – 22 February 2012,* CAA.
[141] CoA, *Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Committee Meeting – Agenda – 22 February 2012,* CAA.
[142] CoA, *Adelaide Council Agenda and Reports for the Meeting 27 March 2012,* 03621, Capital Works Project H038 – Cultural Heart of SA – Kaurna Naming – Council Reports, CAA.

Project have featured in every Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Action Plan since 1997.[143] The Council has also continued to support and promote the use of Kaurna names after the conclusion of the Kaurna Naming Project. In accordance with requests from the Kaurna Nation Cultural Association, the Adelaide City Council erected in each park and city square an interpretive sign explaining the meaning and significance of the Kaurna name along with a description of its etymology. More recently, the Adelaide City Council placed QR codes on these signs which link to an audio app that verbalises the correct pronunciation of the Kaurna name. More broadly, the Adelaide City Council has introduced Kaurna names into the names of official council-affiliated organisations, such as when the Adelaide Park Lands Authority was renamed as the Kadaltilla / Park Lands Authority in 2022.[144]

Yet, the introduction of dual naming as a concept by the Kaurna Naming Project may have led to unintended consequences. Notably, in 2013 the Adelaide City Council decided that dual naming should be extended so that 'all parks in the Park Lands … have a non-indigenous or English language name to be used *together* with existing Kaurna names.'[145] The Adelaide Parklands Authority authorised the creation of the Park Lands Naming Committee to facilitate this English naming process, overseen initially by Councillor Michael Henningsen and later by Councillor Anne Moran.[146] In an information pamphlet produced for the general public in 2017, the Adelaide City Council explained that the 'purpose of the additional names is to be able to better identify areas and build affection for the Park Lands.'[147] An article for *The Adelaide Review* reflected positively on the move by arguing that Kaurna names 'had the potential to baffle unless one speaks the Kaurna language.'[148]

The actions of the Park Lands Naming Committee seemed to be against the original spirit of the Kaurna Naming Project, though. In 2002, the Adelaide City Council reflected on the value of introducing Kaurna toponyms after reviewing an article in which Rob Twomey, the Chairman of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, had praised the adoption of Indigenous words by non-Indigenous peoples.[149] While discussing Aboriginal place naming projects in New South Wales, Twomey had noted:

> it's encouraging to see Aboriginal words in the white vocabulary. Initiatives such as these, although they may seem small, can help to promote greater understanding

[143] "Kaurna Place Naming," CoA; CoA, *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2024* (Adelaide, CoA, 2021), 13.
[144] Angela Skujins, "'It's not tokenism': Lord Mayor explains Kaurna language push," *CityMag,* 3 May 2022, accessed 14 March 2023, https://citymag.indaily.com.au/happening/council/its-not-tokenism-lord-mayor-explains-kaurna-language-push/.
[145] Adelaide Park Lands Authority (APLA), *Park Lands Naming: Proposing additional non-indigenous Park names* (Adelaide: CoA, 2017), 1.
[146] APLA, *Annual Report 2014-15* (Adelaide: CoA, 2015), 224.
[147] APLA, *Park Lands Naming: Proposing additional non-indigenous Park names*, 1.
[148] Ash Whitefly, "Slings and Arrows: Indigenous Names and Catholic Claims in Adelaide's Park Lands," *The Adelaide Review,* 29 March 2017, accessed 16 February 2023, https://www.adelaidereview.com.au/latest/opinion/2017/03/29/slings-arrows-indigenous-names-catholic-claims-adelaides-park-lands/.
[149] CoA, *Minutes for General Manager, Policy and Planning Meeting on 21 January 2002* (Adelaide: CoA, 2002), 00996-3, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.

between black and white and highlight the need to preserve Aboriginal culture and heritage.[150]

But, the appellation in 2017 of new English names to parks formerly known solely in Kaurna undermined this goal of promoting 'Aboriginal words in the white vocabulary.' In a society where English remains the dominant language, dual English/Kaurna naming ensures that the non-Indigenous community need not learn or use the Kaurna language to describe their everyday environment. This is a broader limitation of dual naming initiatives in contexts where the coloniser's language remains the language of power and where some people continue to dismiss Indigenous languages because they perceive them to be 'baffling.'[151]

To a certain extent, many of the limitations of the Kaurna Naming Project more broadly can be connected to the fact that the existing urban, colonial landscape restricted the shape and scope of the project. For instance, in June 2000, participants of the Kaurna Warra Pintyandi meeting had unanimously expressed a desire for the site of Tinninyawardli to be publicly recognised within the Park Lands.[152] This was reported to the Adelaide City Council, but Tinninyawardli was not recalled by the Kaurna Naming Project because the site existed within the boundaries of Park One, which was already planned to be named after Pirltawardli.[153] As one of the largest parks in the park lands, Park One could have been divided into two new parks, with one being named Tinninyawardli and the other named Pirltawardli. This relatively small act could have set a precedent that may have been transformative. As urban geographer Libby Porter argues, because systems of urban planning created colonial spaces in the first instance, the decolonisation of settler colonial cities may necessitate a rethinking of current city plans and zones.[154] However, at no point during the Kaurna Naming Project did the Adelaide City Council consider re-shaping the boundaries of the Adelaide park lands to more fully accommodate Kaurna history.

These limitations may speak to the fact that, as Rose-Redwood argues, the decolonising potential of officially-sanctioned naming processes are inevitably constrained by their 'positioning within the institutions and powers of the settler state.'[155] This reality caused Pinto to reflect that, while Indigenous naming processes can be well meaning, they may still be 'difficult, drawn-out and at times, deeply problematic processes' that recreate 'the long history of appropriation in Anglo-Indigenous naming practices.'[156] Pinto also reminds us to consider the question of scope when assessing the impact of renaming initiatives, especially within urban landscapes that remain dominated by the symbols and structures of colonial

[150] "NSW landmarks to have dual names," *Australian Linguistics Society* (2002), 3; included with CoA, *Minutes for General Manager, Policy and Planning Meeting on 21 January 2002*.
[151] Albury and Carter, "A typology for arguments for and against bilingual place-naming in Aotearoa New Zealand," 835.
[152] Amery and Rigney, "Recognition of Kaurna Cultural Heritage in the Adelaide Parklands," 20.
[153] Steve Hemming and Rhondda Harris (for the Kaurna Aboriginal Community Heritage Committee), *Tarndanyungga Kaurna Yerta: A report on the Indigenous Cultural Significance of the Adelaide Parklands* (Adelaide: CoA, 1998), 64.
[154] Libby Porter, "Indigenous People and the Miserable Failure of Australian Planning," *Planning Practice and Research* 32, no. 5 (2017): 565-567.
[155] Rose-Redwood, "'Reclaim, rename, reoccupy'," 193-194.
[156] Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation,* 68.

occupation.[157] In the case of Adelaide, the Kaurna naming of squares and parklands may have begun to disrupt the colonial toponymic landscape, but currently Kaurna names still remain outnumbered by English ones.

Yet, while it is important to acknowledge these limitations, it would be unfair and inaccurate to claim that the Kaurna Naming Project merely created an illusion of biculturalism rather than deeper decolonisation. For one thing, this would be unfair to those Kaurna people—such as Lewis O'Brien, Alitya Rigney, and Dot Davy—who actively advocated for Kaurna naming and who collaborated and consulted with the Adelaide City Council to make it a reality. It would also overlook the project's place within a broader movement designed to promote Kaurna history within Adelaide. The Kaurna Naming Project did not exist in isolation. Rather, it was associated with, and contributed to, a range of other initiatives aimed at reconciliation. The following section explores two of these other initiatives and demonstrates the interconnected and multidirectional relationship between these projects and the Kaurna Naming Project.

Kaurna naming, the Pirltawardli memorial, and Kaurna language revival

Two notable examples of initiatives that raised awareness of Adelaide's Aboriginal heritage in the early 2000s were the erection of the Pirltawardli memorial and the development of the Kaurna Language Revival movement. These initiatives were contemporaneous with the Kaurna Naming Project and were, in some ways, connected to it. However, where the Kaurna Naming Project was initiated and overseen by the Adelaide City Council, these projects were largely led by Kaurna people and approached decolonisation from outside the structures of the settler colonial state. When taken together, the Pirltawardli memorial, the Kaurna Language Revival movement, and the Kaurna Naming Project demonstrate that decolonisation cannot be understood as a single road. Rather, it is an intertwined network of pathways, each with their own advantages and difficulties, but which nonetheless all travel in the same direction.

The memorialisation of Pirltawardli was particularly noteworthy for the city's recognition of Kaurna history because the site was, and continues to be, of 'special relevance' and emotional significance for many Kaurna people.[158] Partly, this is because the location is associated with the preservation of the Kaurna language thanks to the writings of the Lutheran missionaries who taught there. It is also a site connected to key Kaurna Meyunna individuals such as Murlawirrapurka and Kadlitpina, who interacted with colonists at Pirltawardli. But, the location is also considered important because the relocation of children from the missionary-run school at Pirltawardli to the Native School Establishment on Kintore Avenue in 1845 has been interpreted by some Kaurna people as a 'trial run' for later policies of child removal, as

[157] Pinto, *Places of Reconciliation,* 68-69.
[158] Hemming and Harris, *Tarndanyungga Kaurna Yerta*, 32; Harris, "The 'Aboriginal Location' in the Adelaide Parklands," 69.

is noted in *Survival in our own Land* (1988).[159] Pirltawardli is therefore a site of memory associated with a mixture of emotions regarding dispossession, resistance, and survival. Until 2000, however, there was no official public recognition or acknowledgement of the Pirltawardli 'Native Location' at the original site.

In May 1999, Kaurna people and their allies, acting on their own initiative, erected a temporary plaque in Park One memorialising 'the significance of Piltawodli's history and place' during an event that was part of the national 'Journey of Healing' movement.[160] A month later, after consultation between the Kaurna community and local government, the Adelaide City Council agreed to establish an official and permanent memorial to the Native Location in the park lands, as the University of Adelaide's *Adelaidean* magazine reported.[161] The official memorial consisted of a hollow tree, ten granite boulders affixed with plaques, and three bronze sculptures, consisting of a ring-tailed possum and two frogs crafted by local non-Indigenous artist Silvio Apponyi.[162] As with the inscription on the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial, the historical story related by the plaques at Pirltawardli did not completely align with colonial records, but this did not necessarily mean that the story being told was historically inaccurate. Rather, it depicted a Kaurna narrative of the 'native location' which spoke to broader experiences of dispossession and reflected the complex emotions associated with the site. The permanent memorial was unveiled on 26 May 2000 during a local 'Sorry Day' event that symbolically located Kaurna experiences within the national commemorations for the victims of Australia's Aboriginal child removal policies.[163]

The creation of the memorial at Pirltawardli was an example of Kaurna people actively and unilaterally reclaiming their history and heritage on their own terms. Local government formalised recognition only after the initial act. This kind of 'recognition premised on self-actualisation, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices,' seemingly without prior official approval, has been described by Rose-Redwood as being fundamental to the shift away from practices of Indigenous recognition which consolidate and reaffirm 'the power of the settler colonial state.'[164] Yet it is important to recognise that this moment of grassroots memorialisation occurred at a point in time where the history and significance of Pirltawardli was already in the minds of Adelaide City Council staff because of the concurrent Kaurna Naming Project. Only a few months after the erection of the unofficial memorial, Park One was officially named 'Piltawodli' (RS Pirltawardli). This perhaps speaks to the fact that government-initiated policies of recognition like the Kaurna Naming Project—although not

[159] Christobel Mattingley and Ken Hampton (ed), *Survival in our own Land: 'Aboriginal' experiences in 'South Australia' since 1836 told by Nungas and others* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1988), 3-6, 14-16. 99-110.
[160] David Washington, "Piltawodli: remembering the 'possum house'," *Adelaidean,* 14 June 1999, 4; Warren Guppy, *Internal Correspondence,* 1999, 00996-6, Reconciliation – Kaurna Naming, CAA.
[161] Washington, "Piltawodli: remembering the 'possum house'," 4.
[162] "Kaurna People – Pirltawardli," Monuments Australia, accessed 22 January 2024, https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/culture/indigenous/display/117729-kaurna-people-pirltawardli.
[163] Amery and Rigney, "Recognition of Kaurna Cultural Heritage in the Adelaide Parklands," 19.
[164] Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 24.

always necessarily transformative by themselves—can lend vital support to other movements.[165]

Further, many of the actors responsible for the erection of the Pirltawardli memorial were themselves involved in the Kaurna Naming Project at the time. The *Adelaidean* reported that the inscriptions on the memorial's plaques were written by Rob Amery—who was at this point in regular contact with the Adelaide City Council—'with the help of Nelson Varcoe, Kaurna elders, and others.'[166] After the Adelaide City Council agreed to erect a permanent memorial at Pirltawardli in June 1999, local newspapers depicted Councillor Michael Harbison shaking hands with Lester Irabinna Rigney. Both men had connections to the Kaurna Naming Project. As already shown, Harbison was involved in council meetings related to the project and Lester Irabinna Rigney was the son of Kaurna Elder—and Kaurna naming advocate—Alitya Rigney.[167] It is likely these personal connections facilitated dialogue between the city council and the Kaurna community, and it is possible this contributed to the success of the Pirltawardli memorial project.

Interpersonal connections were also evident between people involved in the Kaurna Naming Project and those involved in the Kaurna language revival movement, particularly as it pertained to the establishment of Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP). Although language revival projects had existed prior to the turn of the twentieth century, KWP helped advance the Kaurna language's 'reawakening' after it was established in 2002 by Elder Lewis O'Brien and Elder Alitya Rigney.[168] With the support of Amery and others, the KWP facilitated close cooperation between academic researchers and members of the Kaurna community in order to work on Kaurna language projects and promote the use of the Kaurna language.[169] As has already been indicated, these founding figures of KWP were advocates for, and were themselves involved in, the Kaurna Naming Project throughout the early 2000s. Many of them also participated in the creation of the Pirltawardli memorial. In this sense alone, one can again see crossover between actors involved in different reconciliation initiatives.

Circumstantial evidence also suggests that the connections between language revival and the Kaurna Naming Project may have run deeper than just the sharing of historical actors. Amery notes in *Warraparna Karuna!* (2016) that part of his interest in supporting the establishment of KWP stemmed from the fact that he often received requests for help regarding Kaurna names from community organisations in the 1990s. Yet, he states:

> As a non-Indigenous linguist, I felt uncomfortable about addressing these requests. Sometimes I would liaise directly with Kauwanu Lewis O'Brien or would tell people

[165] Michael McCrossan, "Reconsiderations of Reconciliation and Recognition," *Acadiensis* 1 (2020): 161.
[166] Washington, "Piltawodli," 4.
[167] Washington, "Piltawodli," 4.
[168] "Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP) Team," The University of Adelaide, accessed 22 January 2024, https://able.adelaide.edu.au/humanities/kaurna-warra-pintyanthi-kwp-team#about-kwp-and-kwk.
[169] Rob Amery, "Reclaiming the Kaurna Language: a long and lasting collaboration in an urban setting," *Language, Documentation, and Conservation* 8 (2014): 416.

> that they really should consult with a Kaurna person and ask for permission. But I was often unsure whether they followed it up or not.[170]

Considering that the City of Adelaide engaged Amery in the late 1990s for advice regarding Kaurna toponyms, and bearing in mind that KWP was formed shortly after in 2002, it is possible that Amery's involvement in the Kaurna Naming Project was an example of a 'request' that motivated his support for the creation of KWP. Indeed, after its formation, KWP became the primary provider of Kaurna toponyms to the City of Adelaide as the Kaurna Naming Project progressively moved away from correspondence with individual Kaurna Elders and towards official engagement with Kaurna community organisations. It is likely Kaurna language revival would have proceeded and Kaurna community organisations like KWP would have developed even without local government interest in Kaurna culture and histories in the early 2000s. Still, it is notable that these organisations developed at a time when the Adelaide City Council was seeking formal input from Kaurna people, in part because of the Kaurna Naming Project.

Even beyond these possible personal and organisational connections, the Kaurna Naming Project can be conceptualised as an extension of the broader Kaurna language revival movement in that it restored formerly lost words to the general vocabulary through reference to everyday spaces. This is significant because Indigenous language revival is a radical project by its very nature.[171] The ability of Indigenous peoples to use traditional languages to describe their everyday lives is meaningful not only because the act itself is emotionally resonant, but also because it allows Indigenous communities to locate their culture and their lived experiences within a unique linguistic space.[172] In this instance, Kaurna place naming restores the Kaurna language to its traditional geographical place and helps Kaurna people describe and connect with Country in and around Adelaide without using English—the language of the coloniser. More broadly, it recognises that all Indigenous peoples have enduring connections to place, even in urban city spaces where the land has been irrevocably changed by colonisation. In doing so, Indigenous place naming initiatives reveal that settler colonial cities are contested spaces and that Indigenous peoples conceive of a world outside of the structures set down by settler colonialism.

Thus, language reclamation often goes 'hand in hand with rebuilding … culture,' which has proven especially significant for the Kaurna after the purported 'extinction' of Kaurna culture, language, and identity in the early twentieth century, as Amery states.[173] Kaurna woman Taylor Tipu Power-Smith made these connections between Kaurna language use and place identity in her foreword to the Kaurna-English Dictionary *Kaurna Warrappiipa* (2021). She noted:

> For Kaurna people, this is not only a reclamation of our language, but a reclamation of our space; helping us secure the future for the generations to come and honouring

[170] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 291.
[171] Kristen Tcherneshoff and Daniel Borge Udell, "Clearing Space: Language reclamation, decolonisation, and the Internet," *Book 2.0* 9, no. 2 (2019): 106-107.
[172] Teresa McCarty, et al., "Hear Our Languages, Hear Our Voices," *Daedalus* 147 (Spring 2018): 160-161.
[173] Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 13.

> those that paved the way for us. Kaurna is the future for the Adelaide Plains and the future belongs to us.[174]

Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps worth viewing the Kaurna Naming Project, the erection of the memorial at Pirltawardli, and the Kaurna language revival movement as being separate, but interrelated, parts of a wider, Kaurna-led movement that demanded cultural recognition in the early 2000s. Recognition of the multifaceted and interconnected nature of this movement may slightly reframe debates about the limitations and difficulties of specific memorial approaches to reconciliation in urban settler colonial spaces. The Kaurna Naming Project advanced official dialogue between the city council and the Kaurna community in ways that deepened local government's capacity to consult and collaborate on other reconciliation projects. Not only did this aid concurrent projects approaching decolonisation from outside the structures of official government, but it also led to an ongoing process of recognition for Kaurna culture and language which continues slowly to reshape the cultural landscape of Adelaide.

Ongoing Arguments, Ongoing Recognition, and Six Statues to Aboriginal figures

Since the Kaurna Place Naming Project ended in March 2012, ongoing collaboration between local governments and the Kaurna community has contributed to growing recognition of Kaurna culture across the cityscape of Adelaide. The City of Adelaide continues to highlight Kaurna history and endorse Kaurna cultural activities within their local council area, including through cultural burns in the Adelaide Park Lands, which were described by Kaurna man Clem Newchurch as 'an amazing example of reconciliation.'[175] More recently, during Reconciliation Week in 2024, the City of Adelaide launched an interactive website in partnership with the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation which maps significant Kaurna sites throughout the city.[176] Beyond the City of Adelaide, researcher Chester Schultz has expanded on the Kaurna Naming Project by researching Kaurna toponyms in collaboration with local city councils, the South Australian Geographical Names Unit, and KWP since 2007.[177] Some sections of the general public have shown eagerness to recognise Kaurna culture and history in their local communities. For instance, the naming of the Inparri Wama community space in Thebarton

[174] Rob Amery, Susie Greenwood and Jasmin Morley, *Kaurna Warrapiipa. Kaurna Dictionary. Kaurna to English, English to Kaurna* (Adelaide: Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi, 2021), vii.
[175] "Park Lands cultural burn," City of Adelaide, accessed 22 January 2024, https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/blog/cultural-burn-park-lands/.
[176] Helen Karakulak, "Kaurna cultural map launched for Reconciliation Week," *InDaily,* 29 May 2024, accessed 28 July 2024, https://www.indaily.com.au/news/adelaide/2024/05/29/kaurna-cultural-map-launched-for-reconciliation-week.
[177] Chester Schultz, "Introduction to Southern Kaurna Place Names," *Southern Kaurna Place Names Essays* (Adelaide: Kaurna Warra, 2017), 1-2, https://www.kaurnawarra.org.au/southern-kaurna-placenames; Amery, *Warraparna Kaurna!,* 280.

followed a local campaign, supported by GetUp, which argued that it is essential that 'our society … begins to embed this lost [Kaurna] history into our day to day life.'[178]

Many of these efforts are being led by community groups or local councils, but efforts to raise awareness of South Australia's Aboriginal heritage in urban spaces are also being conducted by the state government. One of the more recent examples of a state-level project to reshape the urban memorial landscape is the current Labor Government's plan to erect six statues to Aboriginal individuals across the state. Although this project is ongoing, which limits the accessibility of primary documents and makes it impossible to speak to the long-term project's outcomes, the plan is noteworthy because some media outlets reported criticism of the project for being based in settler colonial approaches to memorialisation. In this sense, the project has encountered questions—akin to those that arose during the Kaurna Naming Project—about the limitations of Indigenous recognition within landscapes shaped by the ongoing legacy of colonisation.

Interestingly, though, the move to erect statues to Aboriginal individuals may have had its origins in calls made by Aboriginal activists. Following the global Black Lives Matter protests and the toppling of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol in 2020, colonial statues in the City of Adelaide came under public scrutiny. Adnyamathanha and Ngarrindjeri woman, Jacinta Koolmatrie, provoked controversy in the local media after she called for the removal of a statue to Charles Cameron Kingston from its plinth in Victoria Square / Tarntanyangga.[179] The following year, one of the organisers of the South Australian Black Lives Matter protests, Kaurna and Arabunna woman Janette Milera, called for 'more Aboriginal content' with regards to the statues in Adelaide.[180] Milera did not demand the tearing down of colonial statues, but rather requested the erection of new statues 'dedicated solely to "resilient and strong" First Nations figures,' including David Unaipon and Indigenous basketballer Michael AhMatt.[181] A few days after Milera's comments, the South Australian Labor Party announced that it would construct new statues and monuments celebrating key Aboriginal figures if it won government in the 2022 state election.[182] Kyam Maher, Labor member of the Legislative Council and then Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, stated 'It's time for our statues and

[178] West Torrens Council, *Minutes of the Council Meeting of the City of West Torrens held 15 August 2023* (Adelaide: City of West Torrens, 15 August 2023), 11; "To West Torrens Council: How Important is it for you that we have Kaurna language as part of our community," GetUp, accessed 23 January 2024, https://me.getup.org.au/petitions/taking-admella-space-back-to-kaurna-time.

[179] Jacinta Koolmatrie, "Anyone else been thinking…" Twitter, 8 June 2020, https://twitter.com/jkoolmatrie/status/1269936618275696640?lang=en; Camron Slessor and Eugene Boisvert, "Black Lives Matter Protests renew push to remove 'racist' monuments to colonial figures," *ABC News,* 10 June 2020, accessed 29 August 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-10/black-lives-matter-protests-renew-push-to-remove-statues/12337058.

[180] Angela Skujins, "A call for Aboriginal representation in city statues and Town Hall," *CityMag,* 20 May 2021, accessed 29 August 2022, https://citymag.indaily.com.au/commerce/a-call-for-aboriginal-representation-in-city-statues-and-town-hall/.

[181] Skujins, "A call for Aboriginal representation in city statues and Town Hall."

[182] Tim Dornin, "South Australia Labor Party Promises Indigenous Statues," *Zenger,* 28 May 2021, accessed 29 August 2022, https://www.zenger.news/2021/05/28/south-australia-labor-party-promises-indigenous-statues/.

monuments to celebrate those whose history dates from tens of thousands of years in the past and lives on today.'[183]

Shortly after Labor's electoral victory, Roger Thomas, the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, consulted with Aboriginal communities in South Australia to hear their views on the 'plan to erect new statues and monuments recognising Aboriginal leaders'.[184] The process of engagement involved a formal speaking tour of Aboriginal communities—during which Thomas gave an official presentation on the state government's plan—but the Commissioner also communicated with local Aboriginal leaders through direct personal correspondence.[185] The government organised online consultation through the 'yourSAy' website and circulated an online survey in the second half of 2022. The survey asked community members a range of questions, including 'do you think it is a good idea to install new statues and monuments that celebrate South Australian Aboriginal leaders and heroes?' and 'Is there a leader or hero that has contributed to South Australia that should be recognised?'[186]

During his formal speaking tour, Thomas pointed out that statues and cultural markers dedicated to Indigenous history were uncommon, whereas monuments which told a history of Australia from the perspective of the European colonisers seemed to be omnipresent. In this, Thomas echoed Kaurna Elder Lewis O'Brien's 2006 statement that 'so-called European "pioneers" and "explorers" are elevated through monuments while the great deeds of our people the Kaurna are silenced.'[187] Nevertheless, Thomas drew attention to those statues of Aboriginal figures that are present in Adelaide's cityscape. As Cultural Geographer Gavin Malone observes, Adelaide's public spaces have progressed through multiple 'phases of Aboriginal inclusion' since the 1960s, and varying depictions of Aboriginal peoples can be found throughout the city as a consequence.[188]

Thomas highlighted the ways in which some of these statues spoke to aspects of contemporary Aboriginal identity. For instance, Thomas highlighted the two memorial statues erected in Colebrook Reconciliation Park to commemorate experiences of the children of the Stolen Generation and their families.[189] One of these statues, 'The Fountain of Tears', depicts the faces of several Aboriginal figures with water streaming constantly down their faces in a symbolic representation of tears. The second statue, 'Grieving Mother', consists of a sculpture

[183] Kyam Maher, "Aboriginal Monuments and Statues," Facebook, 1 June 2021, https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=393015965248885.
[184] "Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement," Attorney-General's Department (SA), accessed 24 October 2022, https://www.agd.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs-and-reconciliation/commissioner-for-aboriginal-engagement#:~:text=Dr%20Roger%20Thomas%2C%20a%20well,and%20communities%20across%20the%20state.; Nicholas Ward, "Aboriginal South Australians to be honoured with more statues, monuments," *ABC News,* 22 August 2022, accessed 29 August 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-22/aboriginal-south-australians-honour-statue-monument/101355926.
[185] Personal correspondence, Thursday 17, November 2022.
[186] Office of the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, *Celebrating Aboriginal leaders and heroes: Information Sheet* (Adelaide: YourSAy, 2022), https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-statues-and-monuments.
[187] O'Brien and Rigney, "Conversation," 26.
[188] Gavin Malone, "Phases of Aboriginal Inclusion in the Public Space in Adelaide, South Australia, since Colonisation," (PhD diss., Flinders University, 2012): 21-22; Malone, "Ways of Belonging," 161.
[189] Personal correspondence, Thursday 17, November 2022.

of an Aboriginal woman frozen in a stance of maternal sorrow with her arms positioned to hold a child who is not there. These two statues were established in 1998 and 1999, with support from former residents of the Colebrook Training Home, the Colebrook Tji Tji Tjuta, the Blackwood Reconciliation Group, and the Aboriginal Lands Trust.[190] Thomas also pointed to more recent statues, including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial, located on the Torrens Parade Ground and unveiled in 2013, and the statue of Kamilaroi cricketer Jason Gillespie at Adelaide Oval, unveiled in 2010. Respectively, these two statues spoke to Australia's growing recognition of Aboriginal wartime experiences and to the centrality of sport to many Aboriginal cultures.

During his speaking engagements across South Australia, Thomas used these pre-existing statues as examples that demonstrated how statues of Aboriginal people might contribute to recognition of Aboriginal cultures and experiences. However, *ABC News* reported on 4 December 2022 that 'some South Australian Aboriginal elders are worried about the plan, fearing statues are not culturally appropriate.'[191] In this, the article spoke to deeper discussions about tensions between western memorial practices and Indigenous knowledge systems. As historian Richard Drayton points out, the erection of statues to 'great men' stemmed in part from eighteenth centuries European ideas about citizenship, individuality, and history.[192] Therefore, statues might be understood as being inherently settler colonial by their nature, and the plan to build statues to Aboriginal 'leaders and heroes'—despite depicting Aboriginal narratives—might reinforce settler methods of memorialisation. Malone raised this very point within the context of South Australia's Aboriginal memorials in 2007. Reflecting on different methods of commemorating Aboriginal history, he suggested that we should ask ourselves 'whether utilising Western based forms of representation and commemoration are the most appropriate or whether locations and forms stipulated by Indigenous groups should be utilised.'[193]

Having said this, the framing of the 2022 *ABC News* article was slightly misleading. The plan to construct statues of Aboriginal figures was largely well received by Aboriginal communities in South Australia.[194] In an interview, Thomas reported that 'The community were very clear and very passionate that it was "about time" and they fully supported this initiative.' Further, he observed that Aboriginal communities were showing uncommon interest in the project considering their traditional, and well-founded, mistrust of government-run initiatives.[195] Concerns largely stemmed not from the statue-based nature of the project, but from the fact that it is limited to the construction of only six statues and did not include a broader plan for ongoing recognition. As Tim Aguis, CEO of the Kura Yerlo community organisation, stated:

[190] Malone, "Ways of Belonging," 162-163.
[191] Eric Tlozek, "SA Aboriginal communities nominate more than 100 leaders for statue consideration," *ABC News*, 4 December 2022, accessed 20 February 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-04/sa-statue-nominations-to-honour-first-nations-history/101729986.
[192] Drayton, "Rhodes Must Not Fall?," 652-653.
[193] Malone, "Ways of Belonging," 165.
[194] Ward, "Aboriginal South Australians to be honoured with more statues, monuments."
[195] Tlozek, "SA Aboriginal communities nominate more than 100 leaders for statue consideration"; Thomas repeated these views to me via Personal correspondence, Thursday 17, November 2022.

> An initiative like this, while it is well-received, it is also being divisive because it's splitting the community about identifying six heroes and six people of the community … Some people aren't in support because it doesn't recognise all the founding people that were responsible for what we have today. I think we're heading down a path of difficulty if we're only going to recognise six people.[196]

To an extent, these debates echo the tensions that arose between KWP and the Kaurna Cultural Heritage Board over the figures selected for the Kaurna names of the city squares during the Kaurna Naming Project.

In fact, many members of the Aboriginal community in South Australia were aware of the tension inherent in the use of European mnemonic methods to memorialise Aboriginal peoples but nonetheless supported the project. When she called for the erection of statues to Aboriginal figures in 2021, Milera noted that statues are a fundamentally European form of memorialisation, but she argued that they still have value when they recall Aboriginal histories. She stated: 'If that's the way that white people acknowledge their historical things and pay tribute to them, then I think that we can add on so our stuff gets acknowledged as well.'[197] This same view was advanced during the consultation with Aboriginal communities over the six statues to Aboriginal leaders. Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna Elder Major Moogy Sumner noted in a discussion with the ABC in December 2022 that 'Building statues and stuff like that is not really our way in culture … but we live in a different time now, we have to live in two worlds.'[198] Adnyamathanha Elder Vince Coulthard similarly noted in August 2022 that statues would make 'the wider [non-Indigenous] community aware of our existence and the battles that our people face over the years.'[199]

These comments perhaps demonstrate a recognition of the reality of the colonial system in which most Indigenous peoples currently live. They may also speak to the determination of some to pursue meaningful recognition within the framework of that system. Many modern Indigenous peoples are entangled within colonial society and their lived experiences reflect that reality. Yet, the idea of 'authentic Aboriginal culture' has long been socially constructed as being external to, and irreconcilable with, the settler colonial world.[200] In response to this tension, some Aboriginal peoples have argued that part of the process of decolonisation involves conceptualising Aboriginal people's place within modern society beyond the 'now familiar settler/Aboriginal dichotomy and into a more cultural complex context,' as geographer Sarah James states.[201] Nowhere is this more apparent than in the context of urban environments, where reshaping settler spaces may require the use of settler methods of memorialisation so that Aboriginal peoples can 'engage with the state and with dominant

[196] Tlozek, "SA Aboriginal communities nominate more than 100 leaders for statue consideration."
[197] Skujins, "A call for Aboriginal representation in city statues and Town Hall."
[198] Tlozek, "SA Aboriginal communities nominate more than 100 leaders for statue consideration."
[199] Ward, "Aboriginal South Australia to be honoured with more statues, monuments."
[200] Peters, "'Urban' and 'Aboriginal'," 47-48.
[201] Sarah James, "Indigeneity and the intercultural city," *Postcolonial Studies* 15, no. 2 (2012): 250.

societies on numerous critical questions.'[202] Sumner sums up this view as it relates to the question about the cultural appropriateness of Aboriginal statues: 'We could just go and sit out in the bush and no-one knows we're there, or we can stand up and be recognised for what we do.'[203]

It is yet to be seen how the state government's plans to erect statues of Aboriginal South Australians might challenge the settler narratives of South Australian history, or the extent to which they might contribute to other meaningful reforms. Nevertheless, the existence of the project demonstrates two points relevant to discussions about the memorialisation of Indigenous narratives in settler colonial urban spaces. First, that reconciliation is an ongoing process which does not simply come to an end following the conclusion of individual reconciliatory projects such as the Kaurna Naming Project. Second, many of the tensions and debates over the memorialisation of Indigenous narratives in settler colonial spaces are still being navigated even as new projects build on the legacies of older ones.

Conclusion

Reshaping Adelaide's urban environment so that it might more fully reflect its Aboriginal heritage will take time. The city was initially built within a framework of space shaped by colonialist ideas about place, history, and culture. As environmental studies scholar George Seddon once said, Adelaide

> was settled by a group of men and women from English towns like Bedford … [who] brought their values with them … Although the city is built in a semi-arid environment on the Adelaide Plains, both its governance and self-image are substantially influenced by people who don't live in that environment.'[204]

This has been the case for almost 200 years and, in that time, Adelaide's urban environment has radically transformed the landscape and entrenched settler ways of conceptualising the city. It is no doubt unreasonable to expect recent initiatives—such as the Kaurna Naming Project and the state government's plan to erect statues to Aboriginal figures—to overturn the enduring legacies of the city's colonial foundations on their own.

In many ways, the limitations of these government-initiated projects in reforming urban settler colonial spaces reflect the difficulties of reconciliation projects more widely. At a practical level, both of the projects explored in this chapter have experienced issues around funding, scope, urban planning, and dissent from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the community. More generally, it may be important to bear in mind the argument made by Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu that the disruptive potential of all government-run reconciliation projects are constrained by their position within the

[202] Ravi de Costa, "Two Kinds of Recognition: The Politics of Engagement in Settler Societies," in *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation,* eds. Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, and Ravi de Costa (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 52.
[203] Tlozek, "SA Aboriginal communities nominate more than 100 leaders for statue consideration."
[204] George Seddon, "Adelaide's Alter-Egos," in *The Parklands Symposium,* 185.

institutions of the settler colonial state.[205] Both projects may also raise similar questions about the extent to which these forms of recognition actually reform urban landscapes, especially when they utilise practices associated with settler colonial mnemonics, such as place naming initiatives and the building of public statues.

Yet, while acknowledging these limitations, it is also important to recognise that both projects challenge the aura of amnesia created by Adelaide's nature as a settler colonial city. For instance, restoring Kaurna names to the city recognises that Kaurna people possess connections to, and a claim over, Adelaide's landscape despite the radical changes to the original environment that have occurred since colonisation. Similarly, like the Kaurna Naming Project, the plan to construct new statues of Aboriginal figures reframes the city's past as a shared history and places Aboriginal figures back into the urban landscape, where they are acknowledged to have always been. Further, both projects exist within a wider Indigenous-led movement which has raised, and continues to raise, awareness of both South Australia's and Adelaide's Aboriginal heritage, and this context is important. This larger movement speaks to the ongoing dialogue between Indigenous traditional owners and state and local governments that, even when incomplete, aims to 'disrupt' or 'denormalise' the settler colonial landscape.

Processes of decolonisation may always be contested in some way, yet ongoing dialogues prioritising Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences nonetheless occur not just at the local and regional level but also as national conversations. Reconciliation is a nation-wide program, and while acts of truth telling through commemorative spaces demonstrate similar tensions and difficulties across local and national levels, national projects are often framed and enacted differently. The next chapter shifts the focus from South Australia to explore how Indigenous histories are being memorialised in national spaces of memory. Where regional commemoratives sites may reveal hidden or neglected local stories, national reconciliation projects tend to be differently constrained by the structures of national narratives and national identities.

[205] Rose-Redwood, "'Reclaim, rename, reoccupy'," 193-194; Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu, "Collective Memory and the Politics of Urban Space: an Introduction," *GeoJournal* 73 (2008): 161.

Chapter Four: Frontier Conflict in National Institutions of Memory

At the local and regional level, many Australian citizens today seem to be more ready to discuss and to memorialise histories of frontier violence than they were in the early 2000s. As the previous chapters have explored, local communities, councils, and heritage groups have shown considerable willingness to establish or re-establish narratives of frontier violence within local public spaces. These regional processes of memorialisation have often utilised local stories or memories of frontier conflict to more broadly recognise Australia's history of colonial conflict. As Amanda Nettelbeck points out, this trend in regional memorialisation reflects the regional nature of frontier violence, where 'hostilities and contestations over occupation of Country took place between settler and Indigenous groups who lived in close proximity and often knew one another, at least by reputation.'[1]

While frontier conflict was largely a regional phenomenon, the 'frontier wars' hold significance at the national level in several ways. Firstly, frontier wars were 'national' in the sense that violence between settlers and Indigenous peoples over control of the land occurred in some form or another throughout all of the colonies that now make up the Australian nation. Secondly, public debates about the legacies of colonialism have often played out on the national stage, including through media directed at a national audience, nationally organised campaigns for Indigenous rights, and discussions within Australia's federal parliament. In this way, local histories of frontier violence have become conduits for national conversations. This can still be seen in Australia's ongoing 'statue wars', when local discussions about the appropriateness of memorials dedicated to regional figures enter the national consciousness and become connected to a broader dialogue.[2]

Arguably, there appears to be a disconnect between a growing local desire to recognise the history and legacy of frontier violence, and an enduring hesitancy to engage with Australia's violent foundations at the national level. For instance, psychologists Tamara Lipscombe, Peta Dzidiv, and Darren Garvey point out that the continued celebration of 26 January as 'Australia Day' represents a dismissal of Aboriginal experiences of colonisation and an act of dis-remembering regarding colonial Australia's violent origins.[3] Yet, despite annual public debates highlighting the inappropriateness of Australia Day being held on the anniversary of Sydney's settlement, neither major federal political party has seriously pursued an exploration of an alternative date. Conversely, more than 80 local councils have moved their annual citizenship ceremonies from 26 January 'due to feedback from Indigenous

[1] Amanda Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence: Reconciling with the Australian frontier," in *Aftermaths: Colonialism, Violence and Memory in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific*, eds. Angela Wanhalla, Lyndall Ryan, and Camille Nurka (Otago: University of Otago Press, 2023), 41.

[2] Bruce Scates, "Set in Stone?: Dialogical Memorialisation and the Beginnings of Australia's Statue Wars," *Public History Review* 28 (2021): 78; Penelope Edmonds, "Monuments on trial: #BlackLivesMatter, 'travelling memory' and the transcultural afterlives of empire," *History Australia* 18, no. 4 (2021): 802-803; Kiera Lindsey and Mariko Smith, "Setting the Scene: Statue Wars and Ungrateful Citizens," *Public History Review* 28 (2021): 9.

[3] Tamara Lipscombe, Peta Dzidic, and Darren Garvey, "Coloniser control and the art of disremembering a 'dark history': Duality in Australia Day and Australian history," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2019): 332-333.

communities.'[4] Recognition at the local level, therefore, has not necessarily translated to a national engagement with the history of frontier violence or a discussion about what an acknowledgement of this history might mean for Australia's national identity. As Nettelbeck points out, 'the foundational violence of Australia's frontiers still remains a contested subject, especially at the national level where the iconographies and commemorations of foundational moments are most laden with longstanding values and traditions.'[5]

Many historians, academics, politicians, journalists, and others have argued that more should be done to memorialise frontier wars within the country's national institutions in light of this continuing national process of dis-remembering.[6] Most notably, in February 2023, the newly appointed chairman of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) Kim Beazley stated on *ABC Radio National* that he supported 'proper recognition of the frontier conflict' within the AWM. There have long been calls for the AWM to include exhibits on frontier violence in Australia and Beazley questioned how the institution could 'have a history of Australian wars without [a depiction of frontier wars]'.[7] Beazley went further and directly connected frontier violence to the creation of the Australian nation, arguing: 'You have to have the frontier wars reflected in [the AWM] because it is by that means we established ourselves.'[8] These comments were met with enthusiasm from some and anger from others, in part because his implication that the Australian nation arose from colonial conflict implicitly challenged a number of foundational national narratives, including the idea that the nation was born at Gallipoli.

This chapter explores the complex and contested position of frontier violence at the national level in the context of three of Australia's national forums of memory: the heritage lists overseen by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water (DCCEEW); the National Museum of Australia (NMA); and the Australian War Memorial (AWM). All these institutional spaces, to varying degrees, seek to portray an accurate and inclusive narrative of Australian history that recognises a diversity of experiences, and each has attempted to incorporate Aboriginal experiences into an Australian national narrative. Yet, all three have encountered limitations in their efforts to engage deeply with histories of frontier violence, in part because of restrictions inherent in Australia's enduring structure of settler nationalism. By exploring memorialisation in these national spaces, this chapter

[4] Charles Rushforth and Kate Aubrey, "Local councils move Australia Day ceremonies from January 26 as attendance declines," *ABC News,* 24 January 2024, accessed 30 January 2024, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-24/council-citizenship-awards-moved-from-australia-day-january-26/103382548

[5] Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence," 39-40.

[6] See: Henry Reynolds, *Truth-Telling: History, Sovereignty, and the Uluru Statement* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2021), 206; Peter Stanley, "The Australian War Memorial goes AWOL," *Pearls and Irritations,* 1 September 2022, accessed 30 January 2024, https://johnmenadue.com/the-australian-war-memorial-goes-awol/; Lipscombe, Dzidic, and Garvey, "Coloniser control and the art of disremembering a 'dark history'," 332-333.

[7] Kim Beazley, interview by Cathy Van Extel, *Radio National Breakfast,* ABC, 6 February 2023.

[8] Kim Beazley, interview by Cathy Van Extel; Christopher Knaus, "Kim Beazley backs 'proper recognition of frontier conflict' at Australian War Memorial" *Guardian Australia*, 6 February 2023, accessed 30 January 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/feb/06/kim-beazley-recognition-frontier-wars-conflict-australian-war-memorial.

examines how national processes of remembering frontier conflict have advanced, as well as been restricted, in the last decade.

Settler Nationalism and the 'Aboriginal Turn'

Memorialisation at the national level is entwined with nationalism in a two-way process. As a large body of scholarship has established, museums, heritage sites, and other forms of commemoration have long helped disseminate widely-held beliefs about the nation, while at the same time being themselves shaped and influenced by nationalist claims and nation-building processes.[9] That beliefs about the nation can be shaped by commemorative sites partly reflects the fact that nations themselves are not a 'natural' social formation and no human possesses an in-born sense of nationality. Historian Benedict Anderson famously argued nations are 'imagined communities' whose members 'will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[10] Therefore, as historian Lloyd Kramer reminds us, 'the belief in national selfhood must develop through specific cultural experiences.'[11]

The telling of national stories is one of the ways in which national identity is formed.[12] At the most basic level, in Kramer's words, 'all nationalisms require narratives about the distinctive historical, cultural, and political traits that make the nation different from all other nations or societies.'[13] More deeply, though, national stories provide the national community with a sense of moral legitimacy, and it is this sense of being a 'moral community' that 'give nationalisms their greater or lesser appeal or staying power,' as historian Gyanendra Pandey argues.[14] Pandey goes on to state that 'there is an unrealisable quality of the nationalist search for clarity and 'purity' in the midst of the blurring, mixing and uncertainty that is the actual existing condition of all nations and nationalisms.'[15] These words recall Homi Bhabha's famous argument regarding the authors of national stories, who he argues utilise

[9] Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius, "Introduction: Making Museums and Nations," in *National Museums and Nation-Building in Europe 1750-2010,* eds. Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius (London: Routledge, 2015), 2-3; David Boswell and Jessica Evans, *Representing the nation: a reader: histories, heritage and museums* (London: Routledge, 1999), 10.
[10] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1986), 15.
[11] Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Culture, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 2.
[12] Stefan Berger, "Narrating the Nation: Historiography and Other Genres," in *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts,* eds. Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas, Andrew Mycock (New York: Berghahn, 2011), 1-2.
[13] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*, 200.
[14] Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 152; cited in Bain Attwood, "Unsettling pasts: reconciliation and history in settler Australia," *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005): 243.
[15] Pandey, *Remembering Partition,'* 152.

assumptions and unacknowledged sources in their unending quest for internal narrative coherence.[16]

Narratives based on 'history' are of particular importance for all nationalisms, because—although these stories may simplify or distort the events of the past to project imagined 'national values'—their basis in 'history' imbues them with a special sense of truthfulness. Indeed, the very creation of history as an academic discipline arose within, and was influenced by, the same political, cultural, and temporal context that led to the rise of the nation-state.[17] Stefan Berger notes that history, heritage, and historians helped to establish national narratives on a 'scientific basis' despite the fact that they rarely corresponded to reality.[18] Therefore, as Bain Attwood eloquently puts it, nationalist stories of the past 'are best called myths, since this characterises their function, which is one of providing a simple charter for the nation's present and future rather than seeking to understand the past in all its messiness.'[19]

In settler societies, national myths have been significantly shaped by the 'logic of elimination' that Patrick Wolfe notes was essential to the structure of settler colonialism.[20] In Europe, national narratives justified the nation's territorial claims by making assertions about a people's supposedly deep and enduring connections to the land.[21] Modern European colonies, however, could make no such claims because of the existence of Indigenous cultures. As historian Paul Litt explains, national identity in settler societies is built on this anxiety:

> The question of who the land belonged to morphed into the question of who belonged to the land. To be true to its European heritage the settlerium had to become a nation, but in order to do that it had to indigenize. Confused by this paradox, it nevertheless sought to demonstrate its belonging to the land, only to encounter the indigenium's superior claim. [The Indigenous peoples' claims to land] had to be suppressed symbolically just as it had been materially.[22]

Historically, settler colonial national myths ignored or appropriated Indigenous connections to land as part of the process of asserting a settler version of nationhood.[23] In recent decades,

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[16] Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration,* ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 297.
[17]Bain Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 13.
[18] Stefan Berger, "On the Role of Myths and History in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe," *European History Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (July 2009): 491-492.
[19] Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History,* 13.
[20] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), 21; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-388; Anthony Moran, "As Australia decolonises: indigenizing settler nationalism and the challenges of settler/indigenous relations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 6 (2002): 1016.
[21] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*, 57-59; Anthony Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-19.
[22] Paul Litt, "Settler Colonial theory and Canadian cultural nationalism," *Settler Colonial Studies* 13, no. 3 (2023): 440.
[23] Litt, "Settler Colonial theory and Canadian cultural nationalism," 441, and 445-446.

though, references to Indigenous histories and cultures have been regularly incorporated into the narratives of settler nationalism after Aboriginal activists and 'Aboriginal histories … contested the legitimacy of the nation state', as Attwood points out.[24] Historian Anthony Moran notes that many in Australia responded to this perceived threat to national legitimacy by advocating for a 'sharing [of] culture and heritage, under the tutelage of an expanded and transformed vision of national identity.'[25] Nettelbeck summarises the process, with reference to historian James Gore, by noting that the 'rising attention to indigenous rights … and an accompanying rise of indigenous historical scholarship in the wake of the civil rights movements of the 1960s now means that no representation of national origins is possible "without reference to indigenous cultures."'[26]

Attwood argues that the stories of Australian history represented within national institutions might be characterised as having recently experienced 'an Aboriginal turn—a turn to an Aboriginal historical perspective of Australia.'[27] To an extent, the shift towards a more poly-vocal version of Australian national history echoes a broader trend towards 'multicultural nationalism' seen globally within liberal democracies.[28] This trend has certainly transformed national representations of the past, but it does not necessarily mean that the underlying structures of nationalism have changed, as Kramer points out.[29] Moran captures this tension within settler societies well. He notes that 'all settler nationalisms negotiate from a position of power: the nation-state is the reality, and Indigenous peoples must find ways to voice their claims within it, usually with some tacit acceptance of the realpolitik of ultimate nation-state sovereignty.'[30] Yet, Moran also recognises that national narratives which accommodate or incorporate Indigenous histories still 'represent a significant change, and provide a moral resource for the extension of Indigenous rights and claims.'[31]

As repositories of national narratives, the federal Heritage Lists, the National Museum of Australia, and the Australian War Memorial have all experienced an 'Aboriginal turn', and today attempt to represent Aboriginal experiences of the past alongside the established narratives and myths of European settlers. Yet each institution functions within a framework of nationalism, and, to a greater or lesser degree, attempts to tell the story of the Australian nation. Further, each must contend with pre-existing Anglo-Australian national stories, which have been diluted, but not yet overwritten, by the more recent inclusion of Aboriginal histories. The next section explores how these questions manifest in those Heritage Lists

[24] Bain Attwood, "Unsettling pasts: reconciliation and history in settler Australia," *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005): 244.
[25] Moran, "As Australia decolonises," 1030.
[26] Nettelbeck, "Remembering indigenous dispossession in the national museum: The National Museum of Australia and the Canadian Museum of Civilisation," *Time & Society* 21, no. 1 (2012): 41; James Micheal Gore, Representations of History and Nation in Museums in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (Doctoral thesis, University of Melbourne, 2002), 53.
[27] Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History,* 18.
[28] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*, 184-185.
[29] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America,* 182.
[30] Moran, "As Australia decolonises," 1035.
[31] Moran, "As Australia decolonises," 1036.

managed by the federal government in their growing, but still limited, engagement with frontier violence.

Histories of Colonial Conflict in the Federal Heritage Lists

The destruction of Aboriginal cultural sites at Juukan Gorge by the mining company Rio Tinto in May 2020 poured petrol onto the smouldering fire of debate about Australia's protection of, and respect for, Aboriginal heritage. The sites were sacred to Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura peoples and contained evidence of over 46,000 years of continuous human occupation, but their destruction was entirely legal under Western Australia's *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. In the decades prior, Aboriginal activists and legal scholars had voiced concerns about Western Australia's heritage laws.[32] Yet, attempts to strengthen those laws, such as through an amendment of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* in 2014, were described by legal scholars Ambelin Kwaymullina, Blaze Kwaymullina, and Lauren Butterly as being 'more likely to result in less heritage protection.'[33] Following the destruction at Juukan Gorge, Western Australia's state government faced substantial criticism for its failure to protect the sacred sites, but the sites' destruction also triggered a nationwide conversation about Aboriginal heritage that went beyond questions of state-level legal protection.

During this national conversation, questions were raised about the recognition of Indigenous sites in Australia's heritage lists and registers. This section focuses on the heritage lists that are recorded and managed by the federal government, and specifically those national heritage sites that record moments of conflict between settlers and Indigenous peoples on colonial frontiers. However, the federal heritage lists are not the only heritage registers in Australia.[34] State and territory governments, along with local councils and community organisations, also record and manage heritage sites within a wider heritage system that Butterly describes as 'a web of state/territory and federal laws that too often are not viewed as a whole.'[35] All states maintain a dedicated Aboriginal heritage list, register, or inventory, and in South Australia the State Aboriginal Heritage Committee responsible for the register is

[32] Blaze Kwaymullina, Ambelin Kwaymullina, and Sally Morgan, "Reform and resistance: an Indigenous perspective on proposed changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)," *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 8, no. 1 (2012): 10; Alex Jones and Rhys Davies, "Proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)," *Australian resources and energy law journal* 33, no. 2 (2014): 134.

[33] Amberlin Kwaymullina, Blaze Kwaymullina, and Lauren Butterly, "Opportunity Lost: Changes to Aboriginal Heritage Law in Western Australia," *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 8, no. 16 (2015): 24.

[34] Prior to the creation of the federal heritage lists in 2003, the Register of the National Estates recorded and managed Australia's heritage sites, including both national and state level heritage sites. However, in 1997, the Council of Australian Governments "agreed that heritage listing and protection should be the responsibility of the level of government best placed to deliver agreed outcomes". Therefore, the RNE was slowly phased out and eventually closed in 2007. Heritage sites of "national" significance were transferred to the newly-created National Heritage List or Commonwealth Heritage List while state heritage sites became the responsibility of the state governments. "Register of the National Estate," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 9 October 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/register-national-estate.

[35] Lauren Butterly, "Introduction: Aboriginal cultural heritage special edition," *Australian Environment Review* 35, no. 9 (June 2021): 198.

comprised entirely of 'South Australian Aboriginal persons.'[36] Additionally, many local Indigenous groups maintain their own heritage lists separately from the government, in part because, as was noted in the *Australia State of the Environment* (2021) report, 'Many Indigenous communities distrust existing registers, and hesitate to disclose sites and knowledge of significance.'[37]

Nonetheless, the federal lists are important, especially after *A Way Forward* (2021)—the report detailing the findings of the Australian federal government's parliamentary inquiry into the destruction of heritage sites at Juukan Gorge—suggested that the Commonwealth take on greater responsibility for the country's Aboriginal heritage.[38] Two recommendations made by the *A Way Forward* report were for the federal government firstly to 'legislate a new framework for cultural heritage protection at the national level,' and secondly to coordinate 'a process by which cultural heritage sites will be mapped.'[39] These recommendations speak to the limited role played by the Commonwealth in mapping and protecting Australia's Indigenous heritage sites thus far.

The federal heritage lists are also important because of what they say about Australia's national story. There is a multidirectional interaction between the concept of 'national heritage' and national identity. As scholars have pointed out, heritage sites serve 'as a stimulus for collective and individual memory and historical associations,' and, when these sites are collated within a national framework, 'the official lists of protected heritage cumulatively represents the national narrative.'[40] At the same time, heritage sites are often only granted the status of 'national heritage' based on their ability to speak to a preconceived sense of what is important for the national story and national identity. In the words of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water (DCCEEW), nominations for a heritage site's inclusion in one of the federal lists 'must set out the qualities or values of the place that make it of outstanding heritage value to the nation.'[41]

The need to reference the 'nation' often leads to applications or statements of significance which make nationalist assertions about Australia's history and which locate the heritage site

[36] "State Aboriginal Heritage Committee," Attorney-General's Department (SA), accessed 30 January 2024, https://www.agd.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs-and-reconciliation/aboriginal-heritage/state-aboriginal-heritage-committee.
[37] Anne McConnell, Terri Janke, Zena Cumpston, and Ian Cresswell, "Heritage," in Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, *Australia State of the Environment 2021* (Canberra: DAWE, 2021), 33, https//soe.dcceew.gov.au/heritage/environment/indigenous-heritage, DOI: 10.26194/7w85-3w50
[38] Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia, *A Way Forward: Final report into the destruction of Indigenous Heritage sites at Juukan Gorge* (Canberra: Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, October 2021), xi-xii and xxv.
[39] JSCNA, *A Way Forward*, xxvi.
[40] Neil A. Silberman, "Heritage Places: Evolving Conceptions and Changing Forms," in *A Companion to Heritage Studies,* eds. William Logan, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Ullrich Kockel (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 30 and 33.
[41] "Nominating a Heritage Place," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, accessed 16 January 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/nominating-heritage-place.

within an Australian national story. For instance, the official 'statement of significance' for the Commonwealth Heritage Listed shipwreck of the HMS *Sirius* listed in 2011 reads as follows:

> The loss of HMS *Sirius* at Norfolk Island on 19 March 1790 was a disaster to the fledgling colony … It can be argued that the adaptability, ingenuity and grim determination to survive, demonstrated by the colonists at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island following this disaster, became an enduring trait of the Australian people.[42]

This heritage narrative makes claims about 'enduring traits' of the Australian people and links a supposed 'Australian character' to a broader narrative of struggle and hardship experienced by the early European settlers. In this way, local heritage sites become imbued with a sense of national significance and, in conversation with other heritage sites, contribute to a national story which informs what it means to be 'Australian'.

Currently, there are two federal heritage lists, both managed by the DCCEEW. These are the National Heritage List, which is a list of 'natural, historic, and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation', and the Commonwealth Heritage List, which are those places owned or controlled by the Commonwealth of Australia considered to have heritage significance.[43] Additionally, there is Australia's World Heritage List, which is a list of Australian heritage sites considered to have global significance by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).[44] Management arrangements for World Heritage sites varies from property to property, but all of Australia's declared World Heritage sites are jointly registered on the National Heritage List. Although not technically a federal heritage list, the Commonwealth is responsible for nominating sites for the World Heritage List and for overseeing their protection by ensuring 'a person [does] not take an action that has, or will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of declared World Heritage properties.'[45] Unlike the states and territories, the federal government does not maintain an Indigenous heritage register, although sites can be listed on the federal heritage lists because of their Indigenous Heritage Value.[46]

Despite the 'Aboriginal turn' within Australia's national institutions, all heritage lists overseen by the DCCEEW include a disproportionally greater number of colonial heritage sites when

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[42] "HMS Sirius Shipwreck, Norfolk Is Kingston, EXT, Australia," Australian Heritage Database, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 16 January 2024, http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=list_code%3DCHL%3Blegal_status%3D35%3Bkeyword_PD%3D0%3Bkeyword_SS%3D0%3Bkeyword_PH%3D0;place_id=105179.

[43] Australian Heritage Council, *Guidelines for the assessment of places for the National Heritage List* (Canberra: Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2009), 6, "Australia's Commonwealth Heritage List Criteria," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 16 January 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/commonwealth-heritage-list.

[44] "Australia's World Heritage," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 16 January 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/about/world-heritage.

[45] *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999,* (Commonwealth), No. 51, 11.

[46] "Australia's Commonwealth Heritage List Criteria," DCCEEW; "World Heritage Criteria," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 16 January 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/about/world/world-heritage-criteria; Australian Heritage Council, *Guidelines for the assessment of places for the National Heritage List,* 7.

compared with the number of sites recorded for their significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[47] Currently, of the 119 National Heritage locations in Australia, 38 are related to 'Indigenous National Heritage' whereas 78 hold 'Historic National Heritage Values' due to their association with colonial Australia. Indeed, a review conducted by the Australian Heritage Council in 2017 into National Heritage locations in the arid regions of Australia found that only four sites held 'Indigenous value' while 61 were listed because of their relation to 'water'.[48] Meanwhile, of the 389 Commonwealth Heritage listings only three locations are listed for their value to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. The World Heritage lists are more encouraging; five of the 20 World Heritage listings recognise Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures. However, according to environmental sociologist Peter Larsen, 'given the size and complexity of Australia and its more than 60,000 years of continuing connection to Country, many Indigenous communities and others consider twenty World Heritage Listings to be nowhere near enough.'[49] Recent reports authorised by the government, such as *Australia State of the Environment* (2021), *Dhawura Ngilan* (2021), and, to a lesser extent, *A Way Forward* (2021), demonstrate an awareness within heritage institutions that Australia's national heritage currently does not adequately recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories.[50]

To a certain extent, the comparatively low numbers of Indigenous heritage sites across all three heritage lists are a consequence of bureaucratic inertia, although in recent years the federal government has attempted to register more Indigenous sites. For instance, in 2023, eight sites which held cultural significance for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples were submitted to the DCCEEW for assessment to be placed on the National Heritage list.[51] In the same year, only one site which held significance for colonial Australia was submitted for assessment.[52] This movement towards greater recognition of Indigenous heritage at the national level is ongoing. The Australian Heritage Council's Strategic Plan for 2023-2025 noted that its foremost priority was to 'Prioritise assessment, recognition, protection and celebration of Indigenous heritage and use *Dhawura Ngilan* as a roadmap for improving approaches to recognise First Nations' peoples' heritage.'[53] And yet, *Australia State of the Environment* makes clear that, despite this effort, the very slow rate at which the DCCEEW assesses nominations means that 'it is unlikely that the biases and gaps in the National Heritage list can be addressed, even in the long term.'[54] Between 2016 and 2021, only 12

[47] Heritage Chairs of Australia and New Zealand, *Dhawura Ngilan: A Vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage in Australia* (Canberra: DAWE, 2020), 13; McConnell, Janke, Cumpston, and Cresswell, "Heritage," 29.
[48] Ingereth Macfarlane and Anne McConnell, *'The Waters of Australian Deserts' Cultural Heritage Study* (Canberra: Department of Environment and Energy, and the Australian Heritage Council, 2017), 13.
[49] Peter Larsen, *World Heritage and human rights: lessons from the Asia-Pacific and global arena* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), 5-6.
[50] McConnell, Janke, Cumpston, and Cresswell, "Heritage," 26-27; HCANZ, *Dhawura Ngilan,* 13-16; JSCNA, *A Way Forward,* 185-187.
[51] Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, *National Heritage List and Commonwealth Heritage List Assessments* (Canberra: DCCEEW, 21 August 2023), 1-2.
[52] DCCEEW, *National Heritage List and Commonwealth Heritage List Assessments*, 1.
[53] Australian Heritage Council, *Strategic Plan 2023-2025* (Canberra: AHC, 2023), 5.
[54] McConnell, Janke, Cumpston, and Cresswell, "Heritage," 92.

places on the 'priority assessment list' were actually reviewed.[55] This bureaucratic inertia applies to both Indigenous and colonial sites, but its effect arguably has greater significance for Australia's Indigenous history at this point in time due to the pre-existing predominance of colonial heritage sites. Thus, Australia's memorial landscape, as it is reflected through the concept of 'national heritage', still largely reflects the history and memory of European settlement despite moves to rectify this fact.

Heritage sites which explicitly speak to histories of violence between settlers and Indigenous peoples are even less well represented in the federal heritage lists. Notably, sites that recall frontier conflict are currently almost absent from the Commonwealth Heritage List, although some sites may quietly speak to this aspect of Australian history. For instance, the Victoria Barracks in Queensland is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List. Between 1870 and 1885, the Barracks was utilised by the Queensland Police Force who were implicated in frontier wars.[56] However, this potential connection is not made by the heritage site's 'Summary of Significance' recorded in the Australian Heritage Database. Rather, the Victoria Barracks is noted as being 'historically important for its long association with Queensland's and Australia's defence' and special mention is made of the site being 'a good example of a mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century British Empire military establishment.'[57] The fact that Queensland's defence during this time period included defending the colony from Aboriginal resistance movements is nowhere mentioned. This tendency to perceive and celebrate 'defence' as an inherent national good while failing to acknowledge the existence and motives of the Indigenous 'enemy' is a common method of engaging with histories of frontier conflict in settler colonial nationalisms, as cultural anthropologist Joyce Dalsheim notes.[58]

The extent to which the World Heritage List engages with histories of frontier violence is more complicated. The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape—which is registered on both the World Heritage list and the National Heritage List—may be Australia's only World Heritage site which speaks to the country's history of frontier violence. However, the heritage site is represented differently depending on whether it is discussed in the context of the World Heritage List or the National Heritage List. The gazette for the inclusion of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape into the National Heritage List in 2004 stated explicitly that 'The landscape of the Tyrendarra lava flows in the Mt Eccles/Lake Condah area is of outstanding heritage value because it provides a particularly clear example of the way that Aboriginal people used their environment as a base for launching attacks on European settlers and escaping reprisal raids

[55] McConnell, Janke, Cumpston, and Cresswell, "Heritage," 93.
[56] Timothy Bottoms, *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's frontier killing-times* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 4-7.
[57] "Victoria Barracks, 83 – 129 Petrie TCE, Petrie Terrace, QLD, Australia," Australian Heritage Database, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 16 January 2024, http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=list_code%3DCHL%3Blegal_status%3D35%3Bkeyword_PD%3D0%3Bkeyword_SS%3D0%3Bkeyword_PH%3D0;place_id=105226.
[58] Joyce Dalsheim, "Settler Nationalism, collective memories of violence and the 'uncanny other'," *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2004): 160.

during frontier conflicts.'[59] This aspect of the area's history was included in Australia's nomination application for the addition of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape to the World Heritage List in 2017.[60] Yet, the landscape's role in Australia's frontier wars was not mentioned in the World Heritage Committee's final decision, and nor does it appear in the description of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape's significance on the current UNESCO or DCCEEW websites. It is therefore an open question as to whether or not the World Heritage List represents histories of frontier violence; there is a World Heritage Site which contains histories of frontier conflict, but this history is not presented when discussed in the context of the World Heritage List.

The disconnect between the representation of Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in the National Heritage List and its representation in the World Heritage List is partly a reflection of the fact that, as the DCCEEW states, 'the criteria and processes for National Heritage listing differ from those for World Heritage listing.'[61] Yet, this in itself may reflect UNESCO's limitations regarding heritage sites associated with colonial violence. As Lynn Meskell notes, World Heritage is still influenced by UNESCO's Eurocentric origins and is still dominated by Western perspectives of heritage, although ideas about what constitutes 'significant heritage' at the global level have broadened in the past thirty years.[62] In particular, the development of 'cultural landscapes' as a category of heritage in 1992 has created greater space for global recognition of non-European, and especially Indigenous, heritage.[63] In this way, UNESCO's movement towards greater engagement with non-European histories echoes national movements towards recognition of Indigenous histories in many settler colonial countries, including Australia. Nonetheless, World Heritage prioritises 'cultural' or 'natural' values in heritage sites in ways that obscure global histories, partly in an effort to 'downplay politics' and avoid international controversies, as heritage scholar Christina Cameron notes.[64] Consequently, the global community, at least as it is represented by UNESCO, has not yet utilised the concept of the Indigenous 'cultural landscape' as a framework to fully engage with histories of Indigenous resistance against 'international regimes of violence' such as colonialism.

This limited engagement with political histories of colonial resistance at the global level stands in contrast to the growing number of sites related to histories of colonial violence that have been registered with Australia's National Heritage List in the last twenty years. Notable examples include: the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct (listed in 2006), the Myall Creek

[59] Commonwealth of Australia, *Gazette - Inclusion of Places in the National Heritage List*, no. P 704 (Canberra: CoA, 20 July 2004), 4.
[60] Department of the Environment and Energy, *Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage Nomination* (Canberra: DEE, December 2017), 46-47.
[61] "Protecting World Heritage," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, accessed 9 October 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/about/world/management-australias-world-heritage-listed/managing-world-heritage-australia/protecting-world-heritage#management-arrangements.
[62] Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, world heritage, and the dream of peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 14-15.
[63] Christina Cameron, "UNESCO and Cultural Heritage," in *A Companion to Heritage Studies,* eds. William Logan, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Ullrich Kockel (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), 331.
[64] Cameron, "UNESCO and Cultural Heritage," 330.

Massacre and Memorial Site (listed in 2008), the West Kimberley (listed in 2011), and the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve (listed in 2011).[65] Each of these sites engage with the violence of Aboriginal dispossession, although their focus might be on wider settler colonial structures that shaped the relationships between settlers and Aboriginal peoples rather than instances of frontier conflict. For example, the Australian Heritage Database entry for Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve primarily explores the site's influence on later policies 'of segregation, and protection … and subsequently the forced absorption and assimilation of Aboriginal people,' but this is contextualised as being part of a response to a 'pattern of frontier violence.'[66] Meanwhile, the Australian Heritage Database entry for the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct discusses the role of Christian missions in Australia both 'as a refuge for Aboriginal people during the violent frontier conflict' and for their role in 'the loss of language, breakdown of traditional practices, the removal of people from their traditional country and their families.' The emphasis, though, is mainly on the humanitarian activities of missionaries and on Hermannsburg's 'special association with Albert Namatjira and Aboriginal artists who paint in the watercolour tradition.'[67]

On the other hand, the Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial site and the West Kimberley site explicitly discuss frontier conflict and the impact of this violent history on the Australian nation. Both the Australian Heritage Database entry for the 'Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site' and the government gazette detailing the site's inclusion in the National Heritage List note that 'The Myall Creek massacre in 1838, the subsequent court cases and the hanging of seven settlers, played a pivotal role in the development of the relationship between settlers and Aboriginal people.'[68] The West Kimberley was included in the National Heritage List for a range of reasons, but a government gazette notes that one reason was because it was the site where 'Bunuba resistance held back the advance of European settlement for 13 years, an unusual achievement by Aboriginal people in the history of Australian frontier conflict.'[69] A recent Australian Heritage Council report on the West Kimberley Heritage site makes similar observations and locates Bunuba resistance within a wider historical narrative of conflict and frontier violence. Interestingly, the Heritage Council report also acknowledges the complex and contesting memories of different peoples regarding the Australian frontier. It notes:

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[65] "Australia's National Heritage List," Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, accessed 24 January 2024, https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/national-heritage-list.
[66] "Coranderrk, 19 Barak La, Healesville, VIC, Australia," Australian Heritage Database, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, accessed 24 January 2024, https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=106033.
[67] "Hermannsburg Historic Precinct, Larapinta Dr, Hermannsburg, NT, Australia," Australian Heritage Database, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, accessed 24 January 2024, https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=105767.
[68] "Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site, Bingara Delungra Rd, Myall Creek via Bingara, NSW, Australia," Australian Heritage Database, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, accessed 24 January 2024, https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=105869; Commonwealth of Australia, *Special Gazette - Inclusion of a Place in the National Heritage List*, no. S11608 (Canberra: CoA, 2 June 2008), 2.
[69] Commonwealth of Australia, *Special Gazette - Inclusion of a Place in the National Heritage List*, no. S13211 (Canberra: CoA, 31 August 2011), 10.

> Throughout Australia, the history of pastoralism displays some common patterns, though the various participants have different memories and interpretations of this history. One legacy of pastoral history is a sense of identity valued by many Australians today …
>
> Many Aboriginal people have a different view of this history. In the Kimberley, as throughout Australia, the expansion of pastoralism was founded on the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from their lands.[70]

The inclusion of sites which explicitly detail colonial massacres and Aboriginal resistance to European settlement certainly demonstrates growing engagement with Australia's history of violence in the National Heritage Lists. Yet, it is notable that the Myall Creek Massacre and the Banuba resistance were well documented in colonial historical records and were already broadly known in popular culture prior to their inclusion in the National Heritage List. The Myall Creek massacre is, as Lyndall Ryan and Jane Lydon note, 'the best known … frontier massacre in Australia, in which it is estimated that about 30 Wirrayaraay men, women, and children were assassinated.'[71] The massacre was extensively documented in colonial records, largely because 11 of the 12 white perpetrators were arrested for the crime and were brought to trial, and seven of their number were hanged. A memorial at Myall Creek was constructed in 2000, and since then an annual memorial service has been held at the site which attracts a large number of people, including politicians and other public figures.[72]

Meanwhile, the Bunuba resistance has been made familiar through the role of Jandamarra, who led a 'campaign of resistance [that] was unprecedented in Australian history, as was the ferocity of the police and settler response.'[73] Jandamarra's original cooperation with and eventual turn against European colonial authorities was extensively discussed in official colonial records and the colonial press, and he remains a known figure of Aboriginal resistance in modern popular culture.[74] For instance, a popular community-made mod for the critically-acclaimed video game *Civilization 5* included Jandamarra as the 'faction leader' of a playable 'Kimberley' civilization.[75] Thus, both heritage cases raise an important question: does the incorporation of frontier violence into the National Heritage Lists still require a high threshold of proof within European records?

It is also worth considering the ways in which these individual sites of frontier conflict are represented within a broader Australian national narrative. When the federal Labor politician Peter Garett gave a speech at the Myall Creek National Heritage Site in 2008, he explicitly connected the site to a progressive interpretation of Australian nationalism. Garett, who

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[70] Australian Heritage Council, *West Kimberley Place Report* (Canberra: AHC, 2011), 58.

[71] Jane Lydon and Lyndall Ryan, *Remembering the Myall Creek Massacre* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018), 1.

[72] Lydon and Ryan, *Remembering the Myall Creek Massacre,* 10-13.

[73] AHC, *West Kimberley Place Report*, 206.

[74] Howard Pedersen and Banjo Woorunmurra, *Jandamarra and the Bunaba resistance* (Broome: Magabala Books, 2016), 8-7 and 202.

[75] "Colonialist Legacies: Histories of the New World," Civilizations Fanatics Center, accessed 2 February 2024, https://forums.civfanatics.com/threads/colonialist-legacies-histories-of-the-new-world-colonial-pre-colonial-civs.512802/.

approved Myall Creek's application for inclusion in the National Heritage List as Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, noted that the Memorial was 'a sign of how we continue to grow and mature as a nation.'[76] In this way, he engaged in a form 'indigenising settler nationalism', which Moran notes 'involves a mournful orientation, arguing for a full confrontation with the past' but which nonetheless allows settler Australians to feel comfortable in their sense of national identity through a process of recognition.[77] Garett's words may indicate that the memorialisation of sites of frontier violence are still framed by the structure of national story-telling and specifically by what political theorist Nadim Khoury describes as a structure that arranges historical events in a positive trajectory 'from regressive to progressive.'[78]

Similar themes could be identified in the Australian Heritage Council's 2017 publication *Australia's National Heritage List: The Story so Far.* The publication 'documents the places of outstanding heritage importance to Australia as a nation' and ties them together within a broader national story. The section on the 'Story of the Indigenous Places on the National Heritage List' is framed by a preamble which notes:

> The places on the National Heritage List tell an extraordinary, unique, often devastating, but ultimately inspiring story of Australia's first peoples. The story is one of amazing survival and cultural achievement across thousands of years in a sometimes harsh and changing environment, of aggression, violence, murder and cultural assault, humanitarian but paternalistic policies, giving way to heroic politics as descendants of the nation's first peoples used Australia's democratic institutions to claim equal recognition and rights.[79]

Within this historical framing of Indigenous mistreatment and dispossession eventually 'giving way' to 'equal recognition and rights,' the publication ties heritage sites of colonial conflict, such as West Kimberly, Myall Creek, Hermannsburg, and Coranderrk, with sites celebrated for their role in the advancement of Aboriginal civil rights, such as the Cyprus Hellene Club, the Moree Baths, and Wave Hill. As Khoury argues, this approach may allow for potentially fruitful recognition of past wrongs, but equally 'can impose peace where there is none, fabricating a story of reconciliation before establishing it on the ground, thus perpetuating a status quo that is advantageous to one party and not the other.'[80]

Although the national heritage lists are still shaped by settler colonial stories of nationhood, and while recognition of Indigenous heritage sites are hindered by a glacial rate of change, the shift towards a less-Eurocentric heritage landscape is noticeable at the national level. Arguably, more change is needed at both national and state levels of the heritage sector. As the *Australia State of the Environment* report noted, while 'all states maintain an Indigenous heritage register or inventory, and both territories have heritage registers … these registers

[76] *Moree Champion,* 4 June 2010, cited in John Maynard, "Myall Creek Memories," in *Remembering the Myall Creek Massacre,* 112.
[77] Moran, "As Australia Decolonises," 1034.
[78] Nadim Khoury, "The Negotiation of National Narratives," (doctoral thesis, University of Virginia, 2012), 97.
[79] Australian Heritage Council, *Australia's National Heritage List: The Story so Far* (Canberra: CoA, 2017), 18.
[80] Khoury, "The Negotiation of National Narratives," 99.

represent only a very small proportion of Indigenous heritage places that actually exist.'[81] Ultimately, however, heritage lists are not particularly prominent in the public eye and do not face significant levels of public scrutiny. In comparison, the ways in which national museums present frontier conflict to national audiences have been more visible in public and political debates.

Representations of Frontier Violence in National Museums

As historian Graeme Davison points out, national museums are increasingly caught between their role as the place 'where the nation is publicly on show' and their duty as institutions of education to engage truthfully with complex histories.[82] Over the years, this has meant that national museums have occasionally become visibly contested spaces when questions about which histories they depict, and in what ways, become entangled in societal debates about national history and national identity.[83]

In Australia, questions about the dual responsibilities of museums entered the national conversation in the early 2000s. To an extent, the seeds of these debates were sown after the Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections 1975 ('The Pigott Report') called for the establishment of an Australian national museum which 'should display controversial issues.'[84] In particular, the Pigott Report mandated that the national museum should address Australia's history of colonisation and consult with Indigenous communities in the production of museum exhibitions.[85] Yet, the move to establish a national museum which would invite visitors to recall the history of violence on which Australia was founded proved controversial. As Davison stated in 2006, the National Museum became a 'lightning rod' for many contentious and unresolved questions regarding Australia's history.[86]

In particular, the National Museum's 'Contested Frontiers' exhibit—which was designed to explore the violent conflicts that arose as Europeans advanced into Aboriginal lands—faced criticism. The exhibit examined the weapons, combat tactics, and strategies utilised by both Aboriginal peoples and settlers in the fight over land, and it incorporated oral histories in order to present a Wiradjuri perspective on the well-known 'Bells Falls massacre'.[87] This last

[81] McConnell, Janke, Cumpston, and Cresswell, "Heritage," 29.
[82] Graeme Davison, "Conflict in the Museum," in *Frontier Conflict,* eds. Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 201.
[83] Shailendra Kharat, "Identity, Dominance and Contestation: Young People's Engagement with Heritage and Culture," *Slovak Ethnology* 3, no. 69 (2021): 424 -425.
[84] Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections, *Museums in Australia 1975* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975), 73.
[85] Davison, "Conflict in the Museum," 202; Nettelbeck, "Remembering Indigenous Dispossession in the National Museum," 48.
[86] Graeme Davison, "Museum and the Culture Wars: In Defence of Civic Pluralism," *Open Museum Journal* 8 (August 2006), www.amol.org.au/omj/volume8/volume8_index.html; originally cited in Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (Summer 2011), 1117.
[87] Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," 1117; Bain Attwood, "Contesting Frontiers: History, Memory and Narrative in a National Museum," *ReCollections* 1, no. 2 (2006), https://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_1_no_2/papers.

point proved particularly divisive and caused the infamous History Wars combatant Keith Windschuttle to denounce the museum in a 2001 *Quadrant* article entitled 'How Not to Run a Museum.'[88] The debate over the exhibit contributed to a controversial review of the National Museum which demonstrated enduring expectations about the museum's role in presenting a national narrative.

The report produced by that review led to significant criticism from historians and others who felt that the review panel sought a museum which would present the kind of problematic nationalist story of unity which Anderson famously critiqued in *Imagined Communities*.[89] The chair of the review panel responded by arguing, as Nettelbeck put it, 'that although the museum could express the diversity of Australian life, a too-pluralist approach "would resemble a Jackson Pollock painting" and fail to capture the purpose of a national museum; that is, to express a "collective" sense of identity.'[90] These debates in the early 2000s suggested enduring anxieties at the time over the National Museum's role in modern Australian society.

Twenty years on from these debates about representations of frontier violence in the National Museum, many state and regional museums have demonstrated an increased willingness to engage with poly-vocal histories of colonial conflict. In 2021, the Australian Museum in Sydney held the *Unsettled* exhibition, which encouraged the viewer to 'Learn how Australia was not peacefully settled but taken by force through the decades of armed, violent conflicts.'[91] Unlike the 'Contested Frontiers' exhibit, which Nettlebeck notes responded to public criticism by re-framing the reality of colonial violence into a question of 'how we know what we know,' *Unsettled* approached the frontier wars as an indisputable fact.[92] *Unsettled* included an exhibit on the significance of 'Recognising Invasions', and, on the Australian Museum's website, the *Unsettled* webpage stated that:

> Defining the decades of armed, violent conflicts between sovereign First Nations and the colonists as "wars" is often contested. However, the historical records from this period included this specific term to describe events on the frontier.
>
> The ongoing refusal to recognise this history of First Nations warriors and their adversaries denies them the memory, and the respect, they deserve.'[93]

The *Unsettled* exhibition demonstrates the ways in which museums can challenge comforting stories of the nation in certain circumstances. From its conception, *Unsettled* was designed to highlight histories of frontier violence and re-frame narratives of European national origins. The curator of the exhibition, Laura McBride, noted that she had been approached to curate an Indigenous-led exhibition about Captain James Cook in response to the 250-year

[88] Keith Windschuttle, "How Not to Run a Museum: People's History at the Post Modern Museum," *Quadrant*, September 2001, 11.
[89] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 14-16; Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," 1116-1117.
[90] Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," 1117.
[91] "Fighting Wars," Unsettled Exhibition, Australian Museum, accessed 7 August 2023, https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/unsettled/fighting-wars/.
[92] Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the Museum," 1117-1118; "Fighting Wars."
[93] "Fighting Wars."

anniversary of Cook's voyage along the East Coast. McBride noted that she was aware of Cook's role as a 'founding father' for many settler-descendant Australians, but she wanted to show that 'he was but a small footnote in a more expansive history' which included much pain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[94] The Australian Museum's capacity to engage with, and challenge, the nation's story of British colonial origins was enhanced by the museum's location in Sydney. As the foundation point of the colonial nation and as Australia's most populous city, Sydney resembles, and is sometimes mistaken for, Australia's capital city and this allows the Australian Museum to act as a *de facto* national museum. However, as the Australian Museum is not officially the national museum, it also likely faces less public and political scrutiny regarding the content of its exhibits, which may give it more freedom to challenge established settler colonial narratives.

Comparatively, the National Museum of Australia has been more circumspect in its engagement with histories of frontier conflict since the debates of the 2000s. Unlike the Australian Museum, the National Museum does not currently have an exhibition dedicated purely to frontier violence. Instead, frontier violence appears in other ways. For instance, both the Myall Creek Massacre and the Coniston Massacre are noted by the National Museum as being among 'Australia's defining moments' in its Digital Classroom program aimed at Australian schools.[95] The webpage for the Myall Creek Massacre, which includes information directed at school students, references a broader pattern of colonial violence in Australian history, stating:

> While it is likely that only a fraction of the violence is recorded in the conventional historical record, it is telling that a contemporary authority and eyewitness, Muswellbrook police magistrate Edward Denny Day, termed this conflict 'a war of extermination'.[96]

The page further goes on to note that:

> One of the most powerful and pervading legacies of 19th- and early 20th-century colonialism in Australia has been the failure to discuss how the British colony was established through frontier conflict such as the Myall Creek Massacre.[97]

The fact that the museum highlights frontier violence in its Digital Classroom program is probably demonstrative of a public desire to engage with these histories. However, the focus on the massacres at Myall Creek and Coniston over other examples of frontier conflict may still reflect the enduring legacy of Windschuttle's attacks on the National Museum in the 2000s. As Attwood noted during the controversy over the 'Contested Frontiers' exhibit in 2001, some critics who were sympathetic to the museum's desire to explore frontier violence recommended that the Myall Creek Massacre or the Coniston Massacre be used rather than

[94] "Introduction by Laura McBride, First Nations Director and Curator," Laura McBride, Unsettled Exhibition, Australia Museum, accessed 7 August 2023, https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/unsettled/.
[95] "Australia's Defining Moments Digital Classroom," National Museum of Australia, accessed 7 August 2021, https://digital-classroom.nma.gov.au/.
[96] "Defining Moments: Myall Creek Massacre," National Museum of Australia, accessed 7 August 2021, https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/myall-creek-massacre.
[97] "Defining Moments Myall Creek Massacre."

the Bells Falls Gorge incident.[98] These incidents could be better defended against those who wished to downplay histories of settler violence because they were prominent within Aboriginal collective memories while also being well documented in the colonial records. Attwood argued at the time that it was precisely the incontrovertible nature of these two massacres in the colonial records that meant they should not be the focus of an exhibition. Said Attwood, 'This would be tantamount to saying that the Museum should only tell stories according to the traditions which usually privilege white storytellers.'[99] Like the National Heritage List—which registers sites of colonial violence that are established in settler historical memory—the National Museum's focus on episodes of frontier violence grounded in colonial records raises the question of how national institutions might engage with violent events grounded in Aboriginal knowledge systems.

The National Museum's *Talking Blak to History* exhibition addresses some of these questions. The exhibition explores Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences in 'the aftermath of colonisation' and the grief that, among other things, has come from losing country and sovereignty.[100] While *Talking Blak to History* is not explicitly about nineteenth and early twentieth century frontier violence, it speaks to that deeper history by exploring the enduring legacies of violent settlement. One of the first art pieces which sets the tone for the broader exhibition is Queenie McKenzie's 1997 artwork *Mistake Creek Massacre.* The painting connects the Mistake Creek Massacre—an event in 1915 in which a number of Gija people were shot and killed in East Kimberley—to contemporary issues about Indigenous deaths in custody.[101] Like the Massacre of Waterloo Bay, several elements of the Mistake Creek Massacre remain historically ambiguous and contested, most notably the responsibility of those involved. In addition to a white ex-policeman, Michael Rhatigan, two of his Aboriginal employees, Jim Wynne and Nipper, were implicated in the massacre. It was these two Aboriginal men who were initially pursued by the colonial authorities over the murders, and Wynne was shot dead while attempting to evade arrest. Rhatigan was also detained, but he was acquitted after a coronial inquest.[102] The *Mistake Creek Massacre* artwork was acquired by the National Museum in 2005, but doubt about who was responsible for the killings and public outcry from conservative figures, including Keith Windschuttle, meant that it was not

[98] Attwood, "Contesting Frontiers," https://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_1_no_2/papers; Attwood was speaking to comments made in Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 215.
[99] Attwood, "Contesting Frontiers," https://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_1_no_2/papers.
[100] "First Australians: Talking Black to History," National Museum of Australia, accessed 7 August 2021, https://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/first-australians/talking-blak.
[101] Amy Martin, "The National Museum artwork too sensitive to be displayed openly," *The Canberra Times,* 15 August 2020, accessed 7 August 2023, https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6879566/the-national-museum-artwork-too-sensitive-to-be-displayed-openly/; Nicki Burnside, "Queenie McKenzie's 'Mistake Creek Massacre' displayed by National Museum after years of controversy," *ABC News,* 23 July 2020, accessed 7 August 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-22/talking-blak-to-history-indigenous-exhibition-at-national-museum/12472370.
[102] Cathie Clement, *National Museum of Australia Review of Exhibitions and Public Programs Submission* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 7-8, https://www.nma.gov.au/about/corporate/reports-reviews/review-of-exhibitions-and-programs-2003; Pam Smith, "Frontier Conflict: Ways of remembering contested landscapes," *Journal of Australian Studies* 31, no. 91 (2007): 19-22.

initially displayed.[103] Consequently, art historian Ian McLean notes that the inclusion of the painting in an exhibition in 2020 represents a small but significant step in the museum's desire to move away from the combative legacy of the History Wars and towards engagement with enduring memories of frontier violence without being constrained by debates about 'what actually happened.'[104]

Nonetheless, the cautious pace of engagement seen in Australia's National Museum contrasts with the more open assessment of frontier violence seen in the national museums of other Anglophone settler colonial states. The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Aotearoa New Zealand is a significant example. Opened in 1998 after the merger of the National Museum of New Zealand and the National Art Gallery, Te Papa claims to hold a 'commitment to biculturalism' and to be 'committed to reconciliation and healing'.[105] Indeed, under the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992, the museum is legally expected to 'endeavour to ensure both that the Museum expresses and recognises the mana and significance of Māori, European, and other major traditions and cultural heritages, and that the museum provides the means for every such culture to contribute effectively to the Museum as a statement of New Zealand's identity.'[106] Te Papa does this by exploring Aotearoa New Zealand's past through a tripartite thematic structure which explores Papatunuku (the natural environment), Tangata Whenua (Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand), and Tangata Tiriti (people in New Zealand by right of the Treaty of Waitangi).[107] In the words of public humanities scholar Kylie Message, this structure 'aims to link the past, present and future, and to give greater authority to the bicultural legislation underpinning the institution by centralizing the Treaty of Waitangi'.[108] Te Papa is thus intimately implicated with processes of reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

To a certain extent, Te Papa has an advantage over the NMA regarding representations of frontier violence because warfare between settlers and Indigenous peoples has always been more visible in the national history of Aotearoa New Zealand than it has in Australia.[109] Even still, Te Papa's bicultural framework has allowed it some freedom to fold these histories of frontier violence into Aotearoa New Zealand's national war experience. For instance, on 28 October 2017, Te Papa opened the *Rā Maumahara New Zealand Wars* exhibition. The opening of the exhibition coincided with the first Rā Maumahara National Day of Commemoration of the New Zealand Wars—a day advocated for by Iwi leaders, Māori

[103] Keith Windschuttle, "Wrong on Mistake Creek," *Australian Financial Review,* 18 June 2001, accessed 7 August 2023, https://www.afr.com/companies/media-and-marketing/wrong-on-mistake-creek-20010618-j6z7f. Pam Smith, "Frontier Conflict: Ways of remembering contested landscapes," *Journal of Australian Studies* 31, no. 91 (2007): 9-10.
[104] Burnside, "Queenie McKenzie's 'Mistake Creek Massacre' displayed by National Museum after years of controversy."
[105] Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of Intent 2020-24* (Wellington: MNZ TPT, 2020), 5.
[106] *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992* (New Zealand) s. 1(2) https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1992/0019/latest/dlm260204.html.
[107] MNZ TPT, *Statement of Intent 2020-24,* 5.
[108] Kylie Message, "Representing cultural diversity in a global context: The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the National Museum of Australia," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 4 (2005): 475.
[109] Message, "Representing cultural diversity in a global context," 466-68.

activists, and New Zealand school students since 2010.[110] The exhibition explored the New Zealand Wars through a framework which foregrounded a national history of unresolved colonial violence and tightly linked the New Zealand Wars to ongoing Māori disadvantage. At the same time, it attempted to uphold Māori dignity and autonomy and demonstrate their staunch defence of 'their lands and authority'.[111]

While the *Rā Maumahara New Zealand Wars* exhibition was being held, Te Papa also ran the *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* exhibition on the floor below. The Gallipoli exhibition was the result of a collaboration between the museum, expert historians, and New Zealand's renowned Wētā Workshop, best known for building props and creating the special effects for the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy. *The Scale of Our War* explored Aotearoa New Zealand's experience of World War One by displaying monumentally large models of historical figures who were known to have fought at Gallipoli.[112] As visitors stood looking at each exhibit, an audio accompaniment narrated a story from a first-person perspective about the exhibit's figure or figures and their experiences during the campaign. A cinematic musical score performed by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra also featured in the audio accompaniment, punctured by the noises of warfare. On their website, Wētā Workshop noted that the exhibit was an 'immersive and profoundly moving experience' with a soundtrack which 'challeng[ed] guests to confront the horror and humanity of war'.[113] Simply by platforming *The Scale of Our War* and the *Rā Maumahara New Zealand Wars* exhibitions in close proximity within the same space, Te Papa indicated a narrative connection between Aotearoa New Zealand's internal, colonial wars and its wars in the service of the British Empire.

However, the connection between World War One and the New Zealand Wars could also be detected in the symbolism of some of the exhibits. In *Gallipoli: the Scale of Our War,* one of the six exhibits featured three men from a machine gun unit in the Māori Contingent. By exploring the fighting around Rhododendron Ridge during the battle of Chunuk Bair, this exhibit depicted both an exciting battle scene and served as a reflection on the visceral horrors of combat. It also spoke to Māori contributions to the war. Two of the three soldiers, Friday Hawkins (Ngāti Kahungunu) and Rikihana Carkeek (Ngāti Raukawa), were Māori; the third figure, Colin Warden, was their Pakeha commander.[114] The exhibit's audio narration explains that after Warden and the first gunner were shot dead, Hawkins and Carkeek stepped forwards, manned the unit's machine gun, and maintained covering fire for the Allied troops

[110] "Rā Maumahara – the Journey to a National Commemoration," Te Puni Kōkiri Ministry of Māori Development, accessed 8 August 2023, https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/nga-putea-me-nga-ratonga/community-and-commemoration/te-putake-o-te-riri-wars-and-conflicts-in-nz/ra-maumahara-the-journey-to-a-national-commemorati.
[111] "Rā Maumahara New Zealand Wars," Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, accessed 8 August 2023, https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/about/past-exhibitions/ra-maumahara-new-zealand-wars.
[112] "Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War Karipori: Te pakanga nui," Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, accessed 8 August 2023, https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/visit/exhibitions/gallipoli-scale-our-war.
[113] "Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War: Exhibition design and manufacture," Wētā Workshop, accessed 8 August 2023, https://www.wetaworkshop.com/projects-in-depth/gallipoli-the-scale-of-our-war/.
[114] Christopher Pugsley, Michael Keith, and Puawai Cairns, *Gallipoli: The scale of our war* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2022), 4-6.

as they advanced on the Ottoman trenches. As the narrator approaches the story's climax, the exhibit's orchestral score suddenly ceases. In its place swells the chant of a haka.[115]

The symbolism of the haka chant in this moment is noteworthy. As a Māori cultural practice, Haka have been incorporated into a broader sense of bicultural national identity in Aotearoa New Zealand.[116] The use of the chant in this story therefore imposes a nationalist meaning onto the actions of the soldiers while also reinforcing the exhibit's focus on Māori combatants. However, importantly, Haka also have a long association with Māori warfare, both prior to European arrival and during the wars that arose from colonisation. Themes which imply continuity between historical struggles are common in national narratives of warfare generally, and this use of a Haka in the context of the fighting at Gallipoli symbolically links experiences of fighting during World War One with earlier experiences of conflict during the New Zealand Wars. Thus, stories of conflict between Māori and Pakeha peoples are joined with stories which show Māori and Pakeha peoples working together in the interests of the nation.

Te Papa's assertion of a bicultural national identity in this manner has not been without criticism. Over the years, Te Papa has been accused both of a trivialisation of the New Zealand state's colonial origins and heritage as well as an insincere appropriation of Māori traditions and knowledge systems.[117] Indigenous studies scholar and Māori man Paul Tapsell goes so far as to argue that Te Papa utilises Māori language, traditions, and culture in a politically expedient way so as to present the image of a post-colonial Aotearoa New Zealand without actually engaging with the country's long and continuing history of colonisation.[118] Cultural heritage researcher Marilena Alivizatou similarly claims that by incorporating and blending the complex, and sometimes contradictory historical narratives of Māori iwi, Pakaha settlers, and more recent migrant groups, Te Papa establishes itself as a 'postcolonial museum in a country with a complex colonial past and a much divided present'.[119]

In some ways, these criticisms of Te Papa can also be applied to the National Museum of Australia and are representative of the difficulties facing modern national museums more generally. Despite the increasing desire of museum staff to explore and present unorthodox or subaltern narratives of the past, as a national museum Te Papa is still a charged space

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[115] *Chuniuk Bair: Maori Contigent machine-gun section*, by Kirstie Ross and Richard Taylor. In exhibition "Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War," at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. Seen in August 2018; additionally, can be viewed at: Adam Savage, "Weta Workshop's 'The Scale of Our War' Exhibit," 8 August 2018, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1tL6-xCTN4.

[116] Isabella Tekmaumārua Wilson, "The Misappropriation of the Haka: Are the Current Legal Protections around Mātauranga Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand Sufficient?" *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 51, no. 4 (2020): 529; David Murray, "*Haka* Fracas? The Dialectics of Identity in Discussions of a Contemporary Maori Dance" *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (2000), 347.

[117] Nettelbeck, "Remembering indigenous dispossession in the national museum," 48; Message, "Representing cultural diversity in a global context," 475 and 479.

[118] Paul Tapsell, "Taonga marae, whenua – negotiating custodianship: A Māori tribal response to Te Papa: the Museum of New Zealand," in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa,* ed. Annie E Coombes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 87.

[119] Marilena Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation* (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), 51.

where national mythmaking is expected to take place.[120] The *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Act 1992* charges the museum to 'make the best use of the [museum]'s collections in the national interest', to make 'a statement of New Zealand Identity', and to 'endeavour to ensure that the Museum is a source of pride for all New Zealanders'.[121] As is also the case with national heritage lists, the legal necessity to meet these expectations implicitly limits the museum's ability to engage with the past by requiring that it be done through a framework of 'national interest', 'national pride', and national identity. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Te Papa might embrace an image of biculturalism, celebrate moments of supposed national unity, and sometimes omit 'darker sides of the country's history' in pursuit of a 'narrative that aims to foster pride in bicultural identity and a collective sense of belonging,' as Alivizatou argues.[122]

Nonetheless, Te Papa is able to present a blended national narrative which unites colonial frontier warfare with Aotearoa New Zealand's involvement in more recent wars. By contrast, the NMA explores Australia's own histories of colonial violence more cautiously, although recent events may contribute to a change in this approach. Perhaps ironically, in response to Beazley's suggestion that histories of frontier warfare be incorporated into the Australian War Memorial, some commentators opposed the move by proposing that the NMA could establish permanent exhibits with fuller depictions of frontier conflict. Speaking to *The Weekend Australian* about Beazley's comments, historian Geoffery Blainey stated that 'frontier warfare between Indigenous groups and European settlers should be recorded in the National Museum in Canberra, as well as other state museums, but would not be appropriate in the Australian War Memorial.'[123] Public commentary in *The Australian* reflected a similar stance, with one reader stating: 'Surely the National Museum of Australia in Canberra is the right and proper place for this? Not the War Memorial?'[124]

Such comments indicate growing acceptance for histories of frontier violence to be depicted at a national level, and they demonstrate that some people are willing to accept the NMA as a place to do this. However, they equally raise important questions about the role of the Australian War Memorial as a site for national memories of warfare. As an institution, the AWM combines the functions of a historical archive, a museum, and a memorial, and it faces

[120] Bain Attwood, "Difficult Histories: The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the Treaty of Waitangi Exhibit," *The Public Historian* 35, no. 3 (2013): 64-65; Message, "Representing cultural diversity in a global context," 478.
[121] *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992* (New Zealand) s. 1(2) https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1992/0019/latest/dlm260204.html.
[122] Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum,* 50. See also: Joanna Kidman, "Pedagogies of Forgetting: Colonial Encounters and Nationhood at New Zealand's National Museum," in *Teaching and Learning Difficult Histories in International Contexts: A Critical Sociocultural Approach,* eds. Terrie Epstein and Carla Peck (New York: Routledge, 2017), 104.
[123] Peter O'Brien, "The Shameful Capitulation of AWM's Brendan Nelson," *Quadrant,* 23 October 2022, accessed 27 March 2023, https://quadrant.org.au/opinion/aborigines/2022/10/an-open-letter-to-the-awms-brendan-nelson/.
[124] Comment on Ben Packham, "Marking Frontier Wars 'fits original vision for memorial,'" *The Australian,* 4 December 2022, accessed 27 March 2023, https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/beazley-says-marking-frontier-wars-fits-charles-beans-original-vision-for-memorial/news-story/aeed1b7e3eb92b1eaf151c54e9e758ab.

many of the same difficulties as the NMA regarding its competing duties to national identity and truthful historical engagement.[125] Yet while the NMA has seen careful movement towards depictions of frontier violence, questions about whether, and to what extent, the AWM might explore histories of colonial conflict between settlers and Indigenous peoples remain contentious.

Warfare on the Australian Frontier and the Australian War Memorial

In 2022, a three-part documentary series called *The Australian Wars* aired on SBS. Created by Arrernte and Kalkadoon filmmaker Rachel Perkins, the series explored the frontier wars from 1788 to 1920.[126] The documentary used archaeological evidence and colonial records, as well as testimonies from Australian historians and oral histories from Indigenous communities, to relate the well-established realities of frontier violence to a national audience.[127] While the series explored case studies of local violence, the documentary situated these local incidents within the broader context of a nationally significant war. The series openly called for national engagement with the memory of this war. Significantly, it called on the Australian War Memorial (AWM) to acknowledge and recognise those who had died during the frontier wars and to incorporate the history of the conflict into its exhibitions.[128]

The Australian War Memorial is a key institution which promotes a sense of national identity fashioned by experiences of war. Conceived of, and heavily shaped by, historian and World War I war correspondent Charles E.W. Bean, the AWM is especially a facilitator of the Anzac legend which has become central to many Australians' sense of national identity.[129] Yet, historically speaking, membership within the Anzac legend was quite exclusive. Like all narratives, the Anzac legend cannot incorporate all the events, experiences, and viewpoints of all Australians in wartime because, as philosopher Paul Ricoeur points out, 'The idea of an exhaustive narrative is a performatively impossible idea.'[130] In the past, the story of the Anzacs tended to focus closely on the exploits and memories of white, Anglo-Celtic men and largely ignored or excluded the experiences of women, migrant groups, and particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.[131] In fact, historian Frank Bongiorno observes

[125] Guy Hansen, "Museums and the Great War: A Curator's Perspective on the History of Anzac," in *Nation, Memory and Great War Commemoration: Mobilizing the Past in Europe, Australia and New Zealand,* eds. Shanti Sumartojo and Ben Wellings (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), 244-245; Tiina Roppola, David Uzzell, Jan Packer, and Roy Ballantyne, "National Identities and war heritage: acceptance and resistance of an authorised heritage discourse among visitors to the Australian War Memorial" *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27, no. 4 (2021): 381-382.
[126] Rachel Perkins, *The Australian Wars,* aired 21 September to 5 October 2022, on SBS Television.
[127] Dylan River, "In The Australian Wars, Rachel Perkins dispenses with the myth Aboriginal people didn't fight back," *The Conversation,* 21 September 2022, accessed 18 March 2023, https://theconversation.com/in-the-australian-wars-rachel-perkins-dispenses-with-the-myth-aboriginal-people-didnt-fight-back-190967.
[128] River, "In The Australian Wars"; Perkins, *The Australia Wars*.
[129] Hansen, "Museums and the Great War," 244.
[130] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2005), 448.
[131] Shanti Sumartojo, "Commemorative atmospheres: Memorial Sites, Collective events and the experience of national identity," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41, no. 4 (2016): 542.

that throughout much of the twentieth century 'those who were most responsible for policing [the Anzac legend's] boundaries and regulating its rituals essentially courted—and often received—criticism from other citizens and groups.'[132]

Recently, though, the Anzac legend has become more inclusive. Women are increasingly represented among the Anzacs, with the experiences of female nurses and orderlies being depicted on screen in 2014 by the Australian television drama series *ANZAC Girls*.[133] Stories of Australian soldiers who served at Gallipoli but who did not have Anglo-Celtic backgrounds—including Italian-Australians or Chinese-Australians—have become more prominent in public discourse.[134] The growth of a more poly-vocal and inclusive representation of Australian wartime experiences since the 1990s has in part stemmed from the actions and advocacies of previously marginalised groups. Many of these groups, Noah Riseman points out, 'wanted to prove their Australianness through claiming a part of the Anzac legend.'[135] This opening up of the Anzac legend demonstrates both the shifting ways in which Australians have engaged with war memory and the shifting focus of Australian nationalism. In this sense, as Bruce Scates *et al* note in their examination of Anzac Day commemorations, 'changes in how Anzac Day has been observed might be a way of tracking the historical transformation of national identity in Australia … from a unitary conception underpinned by a British race patriotism, to the more pluralistic understandings of the era since the early 1960s.'[136]

In line with the 'Aboriginal Turn', the AWM has demonstrated growing engagement with the history of the 'black diggers' at Gallipoli, which has seen the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples incorporated into Anzac narratives.[137] In 1993, on public land at the base of Mount Ainslie behind the AWM in Canberra, a memorial was erected to 'Remember the Aboriginal people who served in the Australian Forces.'[138] More recently, with the appointment in 2009 of Gary Oakley as the first Indigenous Liaison Officer, the AWM itself has made a concerted effort to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have fought in the Australian military since 1914. Today, the names and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers can be found in AWM run exhibitions as well as in official

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[132] Frank Bongiorno, "Anzac and the Politics of Inclusion," *Nation, Memory and the Great War Commemoration*, 86.
[133] Lisa Scott and Felicity Packard, *ANZAC Girls,* aired 10 August to 14 September 2014, on ABC Television.
[134] For instance: "Cultural diversity in Australia's forces during World War I," Department of Veterans' Affairs, accessed 18 March 2023, https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/personnel/cultural-diversity; Jason Fang, Robert Burton-Bradley and Michael Walsh, "Anzac Day 2019: Historic racism hides the true extent of Chinese soldiers' legacy, historian says," *ABC News,* 25 April 2019, accessed 18 March 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-25/chinese-soldiers-reflect-on-forgotten-anzac-history/11037594.
[135] Noah J. Riseman, "'Just another start to the denigration of Australia Day': Evolving Commemorations of Australian LGBTI Military Service," *Australian Historical Studies* 48, no. 1 (Jan 2017): 28.
[136] Bruce Scates, et al., "Anzac Day at Home and Abroad: Towards a History of Australia's National Day," *History Compass* 10, no. 7 (2012): 524 – 525.
[137] Noah Riseman, "Evolving Commemorations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Military Service," *Wicazo Sa Review* 32, no. 1 (2017): 90-91.
[138] "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Memorial," Monument Australia, accessed 2 February 2023, https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/multiple/display/90011-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders-memorial.

public commemorative rituals.[139] For instance, the AWM's *For Country, For Nation* exhibition, which ran from 2020 to 2021, used artwork from Indigenous artists, alongside interpretive signage produced by AWM staff, to tell stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resilience during war.[140] Discussions about the 'black diggers' also appears within a broader public discourse, both at the national and local level. It is increasingly common to find articles published in major news outlets in the lead up to Anzac Day which explore stories of 'First Nations peoples [who] have sacrificed for this land in war here and overseas.'[141] These representations of Indigenous soldiers in Australia's public discourse and official war commemorations are a potentially positive step towards reconciliation and seem to represent a desire to see Indigenous narratives within the wider national war narrative.

However, many Indigenous peoples see a continuity between histories of Indigenous wartime service to Australia and histories of conflict between settlers and Indigenous peoples on Australia's colonial frontiers. Journalist and Wiradjuri man Stan Grant articulated this connection in an *ABC* article in the lead up to Anzac Day in 2023. In the article, Grant describes the Wiradjuri resistance leader Windradyne as being a role model for his great-uncle and his grandfather who both fought for the British during the two World Wars. It was the stories of Windradyne's defiance in the face of imperial aggression in the 1820s, Grant suggests, that convinced his great-uncle to enlist in the 1910s because that was 'what he was raised to do.'[142] Grant's framing of his great-uncle's motives paints a picture of national history akin to that represented within Te Papa. In this interpretation, the frontier wars are connected with the World Wars because memories and experiences of frontier violence provide essential, emotional context to the experiences of those who served overseas. In the context of this historical narrative, representations of the past which recall the 'black diggers' who fought for Australia without acknowledging the deeper context and impact of colonial warfare on the frontier may be read as an act of assimilation rather than decolonisation.

Currently, the AWM does not connect warfare on Australia's colonial frontiers to later conflicts in its memorialised representation of the country's national experience of warfare. Some scholars have even accused the AWM of intentionally obscuring references to frontier conflict in exhibits which are ostensibly dedicated to Indigenous memories or experiences. International relations scholar Frederica Caso notes that the curatorial text produced by the AWM for the *For Country, For Nation* exhibition focused narrowly on Indigenous peoples as members of the Australian Defence Force. This, Caso argues, obfuscated the intentions of

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[139] "Indigenous Stories," Australian War Memorial, accessed 2 February 2023, https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/indigenous-stories.

[140] "For Country, For Nation," Australian War Memorial, accessed 2 February 2023, https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/for-country-for-nation.

[141] For instance, Stan Grant, "On Anzac Day, I honour the story of my uncle, a Wiradjuri warrior killed in a war he was never meant to fight," *ABC News,* 23 April 2023, accessed 2 February 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-23/anzac-day-lament-uncle-wiradjuri-warrior-war-remember/102251090; Tim Lee, "'They were back to being black': The Land withheld from returning Indigenous soldiers," *ABC News,* 14 April 2019, accessed 2 February 2023, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-14/land-withheld-from-indigenous-anzacs/10993680>;

[142] Grant, "On Anzac Day, I honour the story of my uncle, a Wiradjuri warrior killed in a war he was never meant to fight."

many of the Indigenous artists who wished to connect their collective memories of frontier conflict with the experiences of Indigenous soldiers in service to Australia.[143] Cultural studies scholar Fiona Nicoll's assessment of the AWM is more blunt. Partly in reference to AWM exhibits, she argues that 'the exclusion of frontier wars from official military commemoration is a powerful symbolic means by which white Australian subjectivity is affirmed and Indigenous Australians are kept in their place as controllable objects of domestic policy.'[144] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that Grant suggested in a 2019 article for the *Sydney Morning Herald* that this issue be partly addressed by including a permanent exhibition to the 'frontier wars' as part of the AWM's multi-million dollar upgrade.[145]

Grant was not alone in his call; historians have long argued publicly that the AWM should engage more fully with histories of frontier violence. As early as 1979—in contrast to his current preference for Australian frontier violence to be represented in the NMA—Geoffrey Blainey suggested that the AWM should consider memorialising the violent conflict that took place as a result of colonisation.[146] Reflecting on his suggestion in an interview in 2009, Blainey stated 'I think warfare is a legitimate term to use … I was quite happy with the idea that there should be a section on irregular warfare, [including] conflicts between Aborigines and Europeans.'[147] In 1990, historian Ken Inglis also publicly suggested that the AWM recall colonial frontier violence. His suggestion was dismissed by Prime Minister John Howard, who claimed that a 'state of war didn't exist' between settlers and Aboriginal peoples and argued that 'the Australian War Memorial is to honour Aboriginal Australians and other Australians who died defending Australia.'[148]

Despite Howard's dismissal, historians have continued to recommend that the AWM include frontier wars in its exhibits, and they are increasingly joined by others. In 2009, the ABC's *7.30 Report* interviewed historians Peter Stanley, Michael McKernan, and Ken Inglis, as well as Marduntijara and Pitjantjatjara academic Gordon Briscoe and General John Coates, all of whom called on the AWM to recognise and memorialise frontier conflict.[149] Many of these historians, especially Stanley who was a senior historian at the AWM until 2007, have

[143] Federica Caso, "Representing indigenous soldiers at the Australian War Memorial: a political analysis of the art exhibition *For Country, For Nation*," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 4 (2020): 347-349 and 357.
[144] Fiona Nicoll, "War by other means: the Australian War Memorial and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in national space and time," in *The Aboriginal Tent Embassy: Sovereignty, Black Power, Land Rights and the State* eds. Gary Foley, Andrew Schaap, and Edwina Howell (New York: Routledge, 2013), 267.
[145] Stan Grant, "$500 million war memorial upgrade should recognise unspoken conflicts," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 28 March 2019, accessed 20 March 2023, https://www.smh.com.au/national/500-million-war-memorial-upgrade-should-recognise-unspoken-conflicts-20190328-p518nz.html.
[146] Commonwealth, *Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Budget Estimates 2022-2023*, Senate, 8 November 2022, 36 (Matt Anderson, Director of the Australian War Memorial).
[147] Matt Peacock, "War Memorial battle over frontier conflict recognition," *7.30 Report*, aired 26 February 2009, on ABC TV.
[148] Christopher Dore, "Howard against Black War Memorial," *Australian, 2*3 November 1998, 3, quoted in Riseman, "Evolving Commemorations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Military Service," 88; See also Peacock, "War Memorial battle over frontier conflict recognition."
[149] Peacock, "War Memorial battle over frontier conflict recognition."

remained long term campaigners.[150] In 2013, a coalition of historians founded the Honest History group to challenge what they perceived as the perverse preoccupation with the Anzac legend in Australian history, and the group has regularly called on the AWM to recognise the history of frontier violence.[151] Outside of the academic sphere, journalist Paul Daley has been pressing the AWM to incorporate exhibits on frontier wars for at least ten years. In 2013 he argued in the *Guardian Australia* that 'It is time for our cultural amnesia about the frontier to end. And where better to start than in the Australian War Memorial?'[152] More recently in 2022, Daley chastised the War Memorial's 'refusal to adequately chronicle Aboriginal resistance in the frontier conflicts'.[153] Meanwhile, in an opinion piece for the ABC in 2014, journalist and former Royal Australian Air Force pilot Alan Stephens wrote that 'the Australian War Memorial's refusal to acknowledge the Frontier Wars between Indigenous Australians and white settlers is historically dishonest and is holding back reconciliation.'[154]

Alongside these continuing calls on the AWM from journalists and historians over a long period of time, online discussion boards and national research surveys seem to indicate that there is growing popular support for acknowledgement of frontier violence at a national level. For instance, the r/australia and r/australianmilitary subpages on the online discussion website *Reddit* occasionally features discussions on the merits and faults of memorialising frontier violence as part of Australia's history of warfare. In 2016, many *Reddit* uses reacted negatively to the idea; an SBS article detailing Aboriginal resistance to colonisation was deemed by some *Reddit* users a 'vile article and in extremely poor taste so close to Anzac day, which is to commemorate legitimate heroes.'[155] Six years later, though, many users expressed their support for Kim Beazley's suggestion that the AWM incorporate exhibits detailing frontier violence. One user stated: 'It's time Australians were better educated regarding the frontier wars.' Another user noted: 'I guess, like the US, we haven't really come to terms with the shit we did *en route* to coast-to-coast nationhood.'[156] Although these views expressed on

[150] Peter Stanley, "War and Australia's Museums," in *Understanding Museums: Australian Museums and Museology*, eds. Des Griffin and Leon Paroissien (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2011), https://nma.gov.au/research/understanding-museums/index.html; Peter Stanley, "The Australian War Memorial goes AWOL," *Pearls and Irritations,* 1 September 2022, accessed 18 March 2023, https://johnmenadue.com/the-australian-war-memorial-goes-awol/.

[151] "About Us," Honest History*,* last modified 26 June 2013, accessed 20 March 2023, https://honesthistory.net.au/wp/about-us/our-objectives/.

[152] Paul Daley, "Why does the Australian War Memorial ignore the frontier war?" *Guardian (Australia),* 12 September 2013, accessed 20 March 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/12/australian-war-memorial-ignores-frontier-war.

[153] Paul Daley, "An Australian War Memorial sponsored by weapons dealers is not place for quiet reflection on Anzac Day," *Guardian (Australia),* 25 April 2022, accessed 18 Marsh 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2022/apr/25/an-australian-war-memorial-sponsored-by-weapons-dealers-is-no-place-for-quiet-reflection-on-anzac-day.

[154] Alan Stephens, "Reconciliation means recognising the Frontier Wars," *ABC,* 7 July 2014, last accessed 20 March 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-07/stephens-reconciliation-means-recognising-the-frontier-wars/5577436.

[155] "The Frontier Wars were the bloodiest conflict on Australian soil. We look at five of the warriors who fought for their people and their land against colonial forces," r/australia, Reddit, accessed 21 March 2023, https://www.reddit.com/r/australia/comments/4g0z4x/the_frontier_wars_were_the_bloodiest_conflict_on/.

[156] "Kim Beazley backs 'proper recognition of frontier conflict' at Australian War Memorial, r/AustralianMilitary, Reddit, accessed 21 March 2023,

Reddit are not necessarily an accurate representation of the views of the wider public, the findings of 2022 Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Barometer survey show similar signs. In 2022, 63% of respondents in the non-Indigenous community agreed that 'frontier wars occurred across the Australian continent as First Nations people defended their traditional lands from European invasion.' A further 84% of respondents believed that 'knowing about the histories of Indigenous people' was important.[157]

The combination of ongoing advocacy from historians, journalists, and Indigenous activists, alongside what appears to be an increasing public willingness to accept and engage with histories of Indigenous dispossession, makes the AWM's longstanding reticence to depict frontier wars potentially damaging for its reputation. The implication of the criticisms made by historians and others suggests that the AWM is currently failing in its duty to be a site of 'authentic' historical truth by not meaningfully acknowledging the documented violence on which Australia was founded. In this way, the displays and the narratives contained within the AWM are not keeping up either with trends in historical literature or with a broader societal movement towards recognition of frontier wars. This situation leads one to wonder why the AWM—despite being an institution invested in national memory—has been so slow to reflect shifts in both academic and public understandings of Australia's past.

In fact, there have been times, particularly more recently, when the AWM has seemed open to representations of frontier wars in its exhibitions or exhibits. On 29 September 2022, a week after 'The Australian Wars' series aired, the AWM appeared to reconsider its stated refusal to memorialise frontier violence. The outgoing chair of the War Memorial, Brendan Nelson, announced that the AWM Council had resolved to incorporate a 'much broader, a much deeper depiction and presentation of the violence committed against Indigenous people, initially by the British, then by pastoralists, then by police, and then by Aboriginal Militia.'[158] According to a report by *The Weekend Australian Inquirer*, the apparent shift in the AWM's position regarding frontier violence was prompted by a number of factors, including the cultural impact of *The Australian Wars*, as well as an internal lobbying campaign by AWM staff to give greater attention to the topic.[159]

This shift in the AWM's position was widely supported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, historians, and the governing Australian Labor Party. The Labor Party told *The Australian Financial Review* that the party 'viewed positively the creation of new exhibits on

https://www.reddit.com/r/AustralianMilitary/comments/10vwrit/kim_beazley_backs_proper_recognition_of_frontier/.

[157] Polity Research and Consulting (for Reconciliation Australia), *Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2022* (Sydney: Polity Research, 2022), 166, https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/2022-australian-reconciliation-barometer/.

[158] Christopher Knaus, "Australian War Memorial promises 'much broader, deeper' depiction of frontier wars," *Guardian Australia,* 29 September 2022, accessed 18 March 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/sep/29/australian-war-memorial-promises-much-broader-deeper-depiction-of-frontier-wars/.

[159] Cameron Stewart, "War Memorial Caught in the Crossfire," *The Weekend Australian Inquirer,* 22 October 2022, accessed 2 April 2023, https://www.rarnational.org.au/war-memorial-caught-in-the-crossfire/.

the Frontier Wars.'[160] Rachel Perkins, the director of *The Australian Wars*, responded to the announcement by calling the move 'a watershed moment in Australian history' and she stated that 'It can't be underestimated, the change that this heralds.'[161]

But, there was also backlash to Nelson's announcement and the AWM ultimately walked back their commitment. Although they did not rescind the commitment to include references to frontier violence, the AWM Council placed boundaries around the scope of any future representation in the memorial. AWM Council member Greg Melick stated that 'Brendan Nelson didn't say we were having major new galleries on the Frontier Wars. He said we will probably do a wider and deeper treatment of it.' Echoing John Howard's comments in 1990, Melick went on to state: 'This is a war memorial and the frontier violence was not a war … it was not a war between nations.'[162] Later, when asked about the move during a Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Estimates meeting on 8 November 2022, Matt Anderson, Director of the AWM, noted that Australia's history of frontier violence would be exhibited within a 'pre-1914' gallery.[163] This gallery would be located within a new space created by the AWM's upgrade and would include exhibits on the Boer Wars, the Boxer Rebellion, the Anglo-Sudan War, and the New Zealand Wars.[164] Based on Anderson's statements, as public historian David Stephens noted, only about two percent of the AWM's total new space would be dedicated to this pre-1914 gallery.[165] After factoring in the space that would be dedicated to the four other military events, many of those who had praised Nelson's announcement felt that the pre-1914 gallery was not the broader, deeper depiction of frontier violence that had been promised.

The politicians, journalists and others who disagreed with the proposed incorporation of frontier violence into the AWM deployed several arguments to support their position during the debates in 2022. One of the more prominent arguments was the claim that the 1980 *Australian War Memorial Act* legally prevents the AWM from exploring the history of wars other than those that were fought overseas by uniformed Australian military personnel.[166]

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[160] Tom McIlroy, "Labor Pushed War Memorial on Frontier War Recognition," *Australian Financial Review,* 12 October 2022, accessed 27 March 2023, https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/labor-pushed-war-memorial-on-frontier-war-recognition-20221012-p5bp8f.

[161] Patricia Karvelas, "The Australian War Memorial's promise of a 'deeper depiction' of the frontier wars signals and important new chapter," *ABC News,* 2 October 2022, accessed 18 March 2023, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-02/australian-war-memorial-frontier-wars-national-history-chapter/101490802.

[162] Stewart, "War Memorial Caught in the Crossfire."

[163] Cth, *Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Budget Estimates 2022-2023,* Senate, 2022, 35.

[164] Cth, *Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Budget Estimates 2022-2023,* Senate, 2022, 30-31 and 35.

[165] David Stephens, "Walking backwards for Christmas: Estimates Committee Transcript show the War Memorial's Frontier Wars retreat," Honest History*,* 28 November 2022, accessed 27 March 2023, https://honesthistory.net.au/wp/stephens-david-walking-backwards-for-christmas-estimates-committee-transcript-shows-the-war-memorials-frontier-wars-retreat/.

[166] Carolyn Holbrook, Frank Bongiorno, and Michelle Arrow, "the Australian War Memorial must deal properly with the frontier wars," *The Conversation,* 24 April 2023, accessed 24 April 2023, https://theconversation.com/the-australian-war-memorial-must-deal-properly-with-the-frontier-wars-

For instance, in an article for *Quadrant*, conservative journalist Peter O'Brien condemned Nelson's initial proposal as being contrary to the AWM charter and to the *Act*.[167] Later in the year, Queensland senator for the National Party, Matt Canavan, argued during a Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Senate Estimates meeting that:

> As defined in Australian War Memorial Act, the Memorial's official role is to develop a memorial for Australians who have died on or as a result of active service, the definition does not include the internal conflict between Indigenous populations and colonial powers of the day.[168]

Prior to 2022, the AWM Council itself often invoked the Act to argue against any significant engagement with frontier violence. In the final episode of *The Australian Wars*, Matt Anderson had himself alluded to this restriction when he acknowledged the history of widespread frontier violence but rejected any move to incorporate frontier wars within the AWM. Frontier violence could be recognised, he stated at the time, but only to the extent to which it affected those soldiers who 'went away' because he argued that the AWM existed to memorialise Australia's overseas wars.[169]

However, the idea that the AWM is hamstrung by the *Australian War Memorial Act* has been strongly disputed and is not universally held. Shortly after he was appointed as the new chair of the AWM Council, Kim Beazley explicitly rejected the idea that the Act prevented coverage of frontier wars. In an interview with the ABC, he noted that 'there was a legal interpretation at one point in time that said that [the Act limited engagement with frontier wars], and then more recently we've had legal representations that, within the broader mandate, you can do it'.[170] Likewise, in an article for *The Conversation* in April 2023, historians Carolyn Holbrook, Frank Bongiorno, and Michelle Arrow claim that 'In truth, the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980* contains a very broad definition of the institution's role as a national memorial to Australians who have died as a result of any war and warlike operations.'[171] They argue that the AWM's *raison d'etre* has changed, expanded and evolved significantly since its original inception by Charles Bean. In 1952, for instance, the AWM's charter was altered so it could move beyond the World Wars and memorialise all the wars Australia had been, or would be, involved in.[172] Therefore, they argue, the charter could be easily changed to incorporate a history of the frontier wars if it is found to be necessary.

Yet, references to the Act were only one shell in a magazine of claims fired at Nelson's words. In his *Quadrant* article, O'Brien expressed his resistance to the memorialisation of frontier violence at the AWM by launching a barrage of assertions. He blended references to the Act with appeals to the 'legal definition' of war and followed these statements by questioning the

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[167] O'Brien, "The Shameful Capitulation of AWM's Brendan Nelson."

[168] Cth, *Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Budget Estimates 2022-2023,* Senate, 2022, 31 (Matthew Canavan, Senator).

[169] Perkins, *The Australian Wars.*

[170] Beazley, interview by Cathy Van Extel.

[171] Holbrook, Bongiorno, and Arrow, "the Australian War Memorial must deal properly with the frontier wars."

[172] Holbrook, Bongiorno, and Arrow, "the Australian War Memorial must deal properly with the frontier wars."

historical work which demonstrated frontier violence. O'Brien stated that 'objective historians such as Keith Windschuttle and Michael Connor have raised serious questions over many of the entries on [the University of Newcastle's Massacre] Map,' which he assumed the AWM would utilise as part of a frontier war gallery. He finished by claiming that the idea of the frontier wars are 'a political ploy designed to overturn the fundamental basis of this nation – to delegitimize it.'[173] Opposition Veterans' Affairs spokesman Barnaby Joyce used similar language when he asserted that the AWM should only commemorate those Australian servicemen and women who fought external enemies.[174] Like O'Brien, Joyce referenced the supposed limitations of the Act and he argued that any move to include frontier wars 'could put the Australian War Memorial at the centre of partisan political debate.'[175] For Joyce, and by extension the Liberal-National Party which he represents, the AWM should be a symbol of national unity, which would be shattered by representations of frontier violence.

O'Brien's and Joyce's references to the AWM's role as a symbol of the nation and of national unity may speak to deeper concerns about what representations of frontier violence in the AWM might say about Australia's national narrative. Memorialising the frontier wars in the same space as the galleries that recall the World Wars, as Te Papa did, would create narrative continuity between those events. Yet, unlike in Aotearoa New Zealand where histories of the New Zealand Wars have long existed within a larger national narrative, in Australia histories of frontier violence have the potential to destabilise comfortable assumptions about Australian national identity. This is especially the case for some national identities grounded in the Anzac legend because of the overlap in time between World War I and the frontier wars. In the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia, frontier violence continued beyond the end of World War I and some of those who served gallantly overseas were also those who massacred Aboriginal peoples at home.

Political scientist Matt McDonald argues that the Anzac soldier from a pioneering or bushman background still holds cultural sway within popular national imagination despite the general shift towards a more diverse vision of the Anzacs.[176] Anzac veteran William George Murray more closely resembles this Anzac bushman character than did the majority of the soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), but he also reveals a web of internal contradictions, assumptions, and anxieties within the story of Australian warfare.[177] Murray was born in rural Victoria and he recorded his occupation as 'farmer' when he volunteered for military service after the outbreak of war. He served with distinction in the Australian Light Horse and was wounded twice at Gallipoli. As a distinguished Anzac from the bush, Murray appears to be an ideal candidate to represent the Anzac legend. After the war, however, Murray became a constable in the Northern Territory police force. In 1928, he led the punitive expeditions

[173] O'Brien, "The Shameful Capitulation of AWM's Brendan Nelson."
[174] Barnaby Joyce, "Shadow Cabinet opposes placing the Australian War Memorial amidst partisan debate," Press Release, 13 October 2022, https://barnabyjoyce.com.au/shadow-cabinet-opposes-placing-the-australian-war-memorial-amidst-partisan-debate.
[175] Joyce, "Shadow Cabinet opposes placing the …"
[176] Matt McDonald, "Remembering Gallipoli: Anzac, the Great War and Australian Memory Politics," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63, no. 3 (2017): 411.
[177] Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 297.

which resulted in the well-documented massacre of Warlpiri, Anmatyerre, and Kaytetye peoples near Coniston.[178]

Murray's history is representative of the significant challenges facing narratives of the past which project an image of national virtue and unity. Scholars of nationalism note that national narratives utilise apparently heroic individuals to act as representatives of the nation's character and virtue.[179] But Murray can only be understood as an exemplar of the Anzacs as long as the deeper context of his involvement in the frontier wars is unacknowledged or consciously disregarded; a settler who sought the elimination of the nation's Indigenous peoples cannot easily be narrativised as a seeker of national unity in the modern era.[180] Indeed, awareness of Murray and his history as both a distinguished AIF soldier and a police constable responsible for a well-documented massacre may actually undermine the legend of the Anzacs more broadly. How can one idealise the virtues of the Anzacs when a man who embodied those values also committed what would today be considered an atrocity? This very question has been fuelling debates over statues, memorials, and commemorations to nation-building historical figures more generally.[181]

Bearing this in mind, attempts to incorporate a deep and comprehensive history of the frontier wars into the AWM could be viewed as a threat to a version of Australian identity built around a heroic interpretation of the Anzac legend. One common concern for commentators during the 2022 debates over representations of frontier wars in the AWM was that acknowledgement of this aspect of Australia's history in that particular commemorative space would 'shame' the nation. Peta Credlin, former chief of staff to Prime Minister Tony Abbott, articulated this both in an article for *the Daily Telegraph* and on *Sky News* when she stated that depictions of frontier violence in the AWM would transform 'the institution of unity and pride into one of division and shame.'[182] Concerns such as these may

[178] Michael Bradley, *Coniston* (Perth: UWA Publishing, 2019), 36-38.

[179] Boyd Cothran, Joan Judge, and Adrian Shubert, eds., *Warrior Women and National Heroes* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 7-9; Daina Eglitis, Michelle Kelso, "Ghost Heroes: Forgetting and remembering in national narratives of the past," *Acta Sociologica* 62, no. 3 (2019): 272.

[180] For further discussion of nationalist cultural practices that excise moral or legal acts of wrongdoing from the histories of national 'heroes', see Eglitis and Kelso, "Ghost Heroes," 270-283.

[181] There are a number of notable examples which demonstrate the intense debates that arise when the dark deeds of Australian soldiers are highlighted within a commemorative context. For instance, in 2015, SBS sports journalist was sacked amid a wave of criticism from politicians and pundits after he posted a series of tweets on Anzac Day referencing documented instances racism and violence committed by Australian soldiers. A more modern example may be the ongoing debates around whether to display the *Pistol Grip* (2014) artwork in the AWM after the painting's focus—former Australian soldier Ben Roberts-Smith—was found to have probably committed war crimes in a civil defamation case. See Philip Dwyer, "Anzacs behaving badly: Scott McIntyre and contested history," *The Conversation,* 29 April 2015, accessed 20 January 2024, https://theconversation.com/anzacs-behaving-badly-scott-mcintyre-and-contested-history-40955; Kit Messham-Muir, "What should the Australian War Memorial do with its heroic portraits of Ben Roberts-Smith," *The Conversation,* 5 June 2023, accessed 5 May 2023, https://theconversation.com/what-should-the-australian-war-memorial-do-with-its-heroic-portraits-of-ben-roberts-smith-206934.

[182] Peta Credlin, "Don't turn our scared War Memorial into a place of shame," *The Daily Telegraph,* 15 October 2022, accessed 25 April 2023, https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/peta-credlin-frontier-wars-memorial-will-only-further-divide-australians/news-story/be5a5a8c69c69e90fc2e2c456dd43663; Peta Credlin, "War Memorial should not spread 'distorted, politically correct' version of history," *Credlin,* aired 10 October 2022, on Sky News Australia.

feel especially threatening for those who, like Credlin, O'Brien, and Joyce, hold more conservative political views. As political scientist Mathew McManus argues, anxieties about the state of national identity and fears about re-interpretations of the nation's heroic past are hallmarks of modern conservative ideology.[183]

Yet, it would be incorrect to interpret opposition to the depiction of frontier violence in the AWM as stemming only from a conservative commitment to a heroic history of Australia. In a larger sense, the debate is not just about what version of the past should be told, but about how contesting identities and competing interpretations of national history might best be managed. In multicultural Australia, as the 2022 Reconciliation Australia Barometer may indicate, most Australians accept the view that Indigenous memories, identities and cultures should find expression within national institutions like the AWM.[184] For some Aboriginal people, such as Stan Grant, Aboriginal identity cannot be properly represented in those national spaces without adequate recognition of, and engagement with, Australia's history of frontier violence. At the same time, though, there are others whose national identity depends on their sense that Australia is, and always has been, a 'moral community', and who therefore resist the memorialisation of frontier violence alongside other national stories. In *Truth-Telling: History, Sovereignty, and the Uluru Statement* (2021), Henry Reynolds reflects on the difficulty of resolving this stalemate between different identities built around different histories. Displaying both cynicism and hope, he argues:

> We will have to persist with two separate stories of war. The inescapable implication is that the nation itself is deeply divided, its soul bifurcated and located in different places. But if the two histories are to be told in different ways and in distinctive institutions, they must be given equal resources to not only continue the truth-telling, called for in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, but to enable the truth to be proclaimed and illustrated in a compelling way.[185]

Conclusion

Debates and discussions about the place of frontier violence in Australia's narratives of national history, and subsequently in its sense of national identity, are ongoing. Change at the local and regional level indicates growing popular awareness of the need to recognise this aspect of the nation's history, as does the broader national 'Aboriginal turn' articulated by Attwood.[186] It is apparent that national institutions are beginning to explore alternative narratives, including those which reveal instances of colonial violence and injustice. To varying degrees the heritage lists overseen by the DEECCW, the National Museum of Australia, and the Australian War Memorial have all taken deliberate steps away from older national

[183] Mathew McManus, *The Rise of Post-Modern Conservatism: Neoliberalism, Post-Modern Culture, and Reactionary Politics* (Vancouver: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), 16-18.
[184] Polity Research and Consulting, *Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2022*, 166.
[185] Henry Reynolds, *Truth-Telling: History, Sovereignty, and the Uluru Statement* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2021), 207.
[186] Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History,* 18.

narratives that lionise colonial achievements to highlight poly-vocal stories which include Indigenous histories.

However, the rate of change at the national level remains slow and has tended to follow public awareness rather than lead it. The examples of frontier violence that are represented in the National Heritage List and in the NMA still tend to be events which are well documented in colonial records and are at least partly familiar in community memory. The NMA's discussion of frontier wars remains tentative, particularly when compared with Te Papa's relatively open depictions of Māori resistance to European invasion. Meanwhile, the AWM, while honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women, currently still cleaves Indigenous experiences of the World Wars from the history and memory of frontier violence. In this, the AWM has not kept up with historical research and so has become a contested and politically charged site of memory, especially as it remains highly sensitive to perceived public sentiment. Throughout these debates, the role of institutions as facilitators of national memory has been at stake, but the structures of settler colonial nationalism have remained comparatively unchallenged.

Acknowledging Australia's frontier wars within its national narratives requires engaging with deeper questions about the country's history and identity as a settler nation. As Nettelbeck writes, Australia continues to struggle with a 'tension … between an imperative to remember and a drive to forget the truth that the nation's foundations were grounded in violence.'[187] Australia is not alone in its fraught debates about traumatic histories contained within its national narratives. Neither is it the only country confronted with difficult questions about how to accept responsibility for past injustices. As scholars of Germany's process of *vergangenheitsbewältigung* have pointed out, coming to terms with the past requires ongoing work, which is not always comfortable for those who tightly attach their personal identity to a heroic or benign narrative of the nation.[188] Comfortable or not, though, this kind of work is increasingly necessary in Australia because debates over the history of the frontier wars and its implications for national identity will not simply disappear. To co-opt Moran's words, Australia 'must engage with histories of Indigenous dispossession in order to explain the nature and quality of its national existence.'[189]

How Australia engages with the deeper questions of identity raised by its history of Indigenous dispossession will inevitably influence, and be influenced by, the historical narratives represented in the country's platforms of national memory. After all, such sites have always acted as a nexus between popular understandings of history and ongoing processes of national identity-building.[190] Yet, as earlier chapters have demonstrated, public engagement with Australia's settler colonial past is just as prominent at the state and regional level, and memorialisation efforts enacted by local communities appear to be less constrained by anxieties over national self-image.[191] If national processes of remembering continue to

[187] Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence," 41.
[188] Stefan Berger and Bill Niven, "Writing the history of national memory," in *Writing the History of Memory,* eds. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 144.
[189] Moran, "As Australia decolonises," 1016.
[190] Kharat, "Identity, Dominance and Contestation," 424.
[191] Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence," 48.

advance largely in the wake of existing public awareness, it may well be regional truth-telling efforts (such as South Australia's recent memorial initiatives) that ultimately lead to deeper reflections on Australia's colonial history.

Conclusion: Shifting Identities?

This thesis began by referencing the removal of the statue to Edward Colston by a group of anti-racism protesters in 2020. The ripples caused by this protest directed at a controversial commemorative site went beyond the literal ripples created as the statue splashed into the waters of Bristol Harbour. Although the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, stated that he felt no 'sense of loss' in the days after the attack on Colston's memorial, the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson described the toppling as a 'criminal act' and the Home Secretary Priti Patel argued that 'it's not for mobs to tear down statues.'[1] Six months later, four people—dubbed the 'Colston Four' by the media—were charged by police with causing criminal damage due to their involvement in the protests.[2]

The trial of the Colston Four garnered significant media interest in the UK, and the defendants advanced several arguments to support their plea of not guilty. They pointed to the inappropriateness of the Colston statue and drew on the right to protest to justify their actions. In their closing speeches at the Bristol crown court, the *Guardian* reported that the defence 'argued that the statue … was so indecent and potentially abusive that it constituted a crime.' One barrister, Liam Walker QC, urged the jury 'to be on the right side of history' and reflected that their decision would 'reverberate around the world.'[3] On 5 January 2022, the Colston Four were cleared of criminal damages. One member of the four noted outside the court that, by removing Colston's memorial, 'we didn't change history, we rectified it.'[4]

Yet, following the verdict, the Attorney General of the United Kingdom, Suella Braverman, announced that she was considering referring the case of the Colston Four to the Court of Appeals in order to seek clarification about the judgement. In response to the news, the *Guardian* reported that senior lawyers had 'accused the attorney general … of politically-driven meddling' motivated by an 'outcry from Conservative MPs' over the outcome of the court case.[5] The case was ultimately referred to, and accepted by, the Court of Appeals which examined

[1] "Edward Colston: Bristol slave trader statue 'was an affront,'" *BBC,* 8 June 2020, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-52962356.
[2] Jessica Murray, "Four charged over damage to Colston statue in Bristol," *The Guardian,* 10 December 2020, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/09/four-charged-over-damage-to-colston-statue-in-bristol.
[3] Damien Gayle, "Jury in Colston Statue Trial urged to be 'on the right side of history'," *The Guardian,* 5 January 2022, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jan/04/jury-in-colston-statue-trial-urged-to-be-on-the-right-side-of-history.
[4] "Edward Colston Statue: Four cleared of criminal damage," *BBC,* 6 January 2022, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-59727161.
[5] Horoon Siddique, "Suella Braverman accused of political driven meddling over Colston Four," *The Guardian,* 8 January 2022, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jan/07/suella-braverman-accused-of-politically-driven-meddling-over-colston-four.

> the extent to which the European Convention of Human Rights sanctions the use of violence against property during protest, thereby rendering lawful causing damage to property which would otherwise be a crime.[6]

In a written judgement, the Lord Chief Justice found that Human Rights were not a protection in cases of criminal damages where conduct was 'violent or not peaceful,' and he argued:

> The debate about the fate of the statue had to be resolved through appropriate legal channels, irrespective of evidence that those channels were thought to have been slow or inefficient, and not by what might be described as a form of criminal self-help.[7]

The following year, the United Kingdom's Department for Culture, Media, and Sport published a guidance report 'for custodians on how to deal with commemorative heritage assets that have become contested.'[8] It detailed the steps and procedures to be followed by 'owners and guardians' of commemorative sites when such sites are challenged because of the messages, narratives, or ideologies they are perceived to represent. Citing the importance of 'history,' the report noted:

> Government policy is clear: it opposes the removal of commemorative heritage assets. Custodians must in the first instance seek to retain and, if necessary, explain any commemorative heritage assets which have become contested before considering any application for removal.[9]

Taken together, the judgement by the Court of Appeals and the guidance report by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport essentially formalises officially sanctioned counter-monumentalism as the appropriate method by which contested commemorative spaces must be addressed in the United Kingdom. While this national policy may allow for a revision of some historical accounts, it does not accommodate the point made by Stephan Gapps about the limitations of counter-memorials in certain settings.[10] Neither does it allow for acts of community protest conducted without governmental approval that Rueben Rose-Redwood argues can be especially powerful for historically marginalised groups.[11]

Australia's own statue wars are entangled in the same global debates over contested memorials as those that shape government policies in the United Kingdom. In Australia there has not yet been a government-driven attempt to restrict acts of anti-monumentalism,

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[6] *In the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) on a Reference Arising from a Prosecution in the Crown Court at Bristol* (2022), Case No. 202201151 B3 (UK), https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AG-Ref-Colston-Four-judgment-280922.pdf.

[7] *In the Court of Appeal on a Reference Arising from a Prosecution in the Crown Court at Bristol.*

[8] Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (UK), *Guidance for custodians on how to deal with commemorative heritage assets that have become contested* (London: DCMS, 5 October 2023), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-custodians-on-how-to-deal-with-commemorative-heritage-assets-that-have-become-contested.

[9] DCMS, *Guidance for custodians on how to deal with commemorative heritage assets that have become contested.*

[10] Stephan Gapps, "Keep them, counter them, or tear them down? Statues, monuments and the smoothing over of historical injustices," *History Australia* 18, no. 4 (2021): 831.

[11] Rose-Redwood, "'Reclaim, rename, reoccupy', Decolonising place and the reclaiming of PKOLS," *ACME International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 15 (2016): 193-194.

although some local councils have attempted to deter private citizens from removing statues without approval. For instance, the statue to Captain Cook in Melbourne that was toppled on 25 January 2024 will be restored to its plinth to send 'a very clear message to vandals.'[12] At the same time, statues of colonial figures are being removed from Australia's public spaces. This is often a complex, controversial, and drawn-out process. A notable example would be Hobart City Council's decision to take down a statue to former Tasmanian premier William Crowther in 2022.[13] Aboriginal groups had long called for the statue's removal, and it had often been the target of politically motivated vandalism, but following the council's decision some residents attempted to preserve the statue by appealing to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.[14] The tribunal allowed the removal to proceed in 2024, although, somewhat ironically, Crowther's figure had already been toppled by anonymous activists a few hours earlier.[15] Clearly, even as statue removals are proceeding, both officially and unofficially, the statue wars remain live in Australia just as they do in other countries.

The removal of contested statues has not been a significant focus of this thesis, but the case of the Colston statue and the events that followed, as well as the current statue wars in Australia, demonstrate the ongoing nature of the debates that surround commemorative spaces more broadly. Discussions about commemorative spaces—including over the appropriateness of their place in our public squares, the consequences of the messages they represent, and the performances of memory they help to enact—do not simply come to an end after the toppling of an established memorial or the successful erection of a new one. Such moments are but single events in a broader discussion which reflects, contributes to, and is shaped by larger discourses on the role of history and memory in our societies. This broader discussion is itself continually being questioned, negotiated, and reacted to and, while worth having, does not always lead to greater public reconciliation with controversial histories.

The memorial initiatives explored in this thesis are part of these broader discussions over contested commemorative spaces. One of the reoccurring themes of this thesis has been the ongoing nature of memorial processes and their interconnection with evolving social processes related to the recognition of past injustices, both of which have been occurring locally, nationally, and globally. Across South Australia, within regional communities as well as local and state governments, there has clearly been a turn towards recognition of

[12] Alex Crowe and Lachlan Abbott, "Captain Cook set for St Kilda return after council vote down proposed relocation," *The Age,* 8 February 2024, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/captain-cook-set-for-st-kilda-return-after-council-vote-down-proposed-relocation-20240207-p5f39e.html.

[13] Cait Kelly and Australian Associated Press, "William Crowther: Statue of Tasmanian Premier who beheaded body of Aboriginal man to be taken down," *The Guardian (Australia),* 24 August 2023, accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/aug/24/william-crowther-statue-franklin-square-hobart-taken-down-beheaded-aboriginal-man.

[14] Kerrin Thomas, Aleisha Orr, "Bid to keep statue of skull-stealing premier fails hours after it was cut down," *SBS News,* accessed 12 February 2024, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/bid-to-keep-statue-of-skull-stealing-premier-fails-hours-after-it-was-cut-down/68g0cuaqn.

[15] Isabella Podwinski, "Controversial colonial-era William Crowther statue toppled in Hobart's Franklin Square as appeal decision due," *ABC,* accessed 12 February 2024, *https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-15/william-crowther-statue-chopped-down-in-hobart/103848662.*

Indigenous experiences of frontier violence, as well as a growing willingness to memorialise that history.[16] Similar trends can be seen in other states, and South Australian memorial initiatives have at times drawn inspiration from, or been encouraged by, commemorative processes elsewhere.[17] Kyam Maher's letter to the District Council of Elliston mentioned in chapter two, for instance, explicitly called attention to the 'many memorials and plaques across Australia that recognise the uneven conflicts of colonisation' so as to advocate for the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial.[18] Similarly, Adelaide City Council documents demonstrate that aspects of the Kaurna Naming Project were influenced by similar Indigenous naming and dual naming processes at the time, including in Aotearoa New Zealand and New South Wales. Chapter four also identifies a growing recognition of Australia's history of colonial violence in national conversations as well, albeit a recognition which has been more constrained within national spaces of memory than has been the case at the local level.

South Australia is thus not alone in its growing memorialisation of frontier violence, but the trend towards recognition is significant for the state because of the orthodox assumption that South Australia had more benevolent colonial beginnings, and therefore a more humanitarian history, than the other Australian colonies. Historians have long known that South Australia's stated original intention to protect Aboriginal rights did not prevent Aboriginal people from being killed, oppressed, and dispossessed according to a settler colonial 'logic of elimination.'[19] Yet, the establishment of commemorative sites to frontier violence in the state in recent years suggests that members of the public are, to some extent, also slowly becoming aware of this historical reality.

Indeed, as chapter one and chapter two demonstrate, memorial practices in South Australia have been moving away from historical narratives focused on the foundations of the colony and the 'heroic' experiences of European 'pioneers' for at least three decades. In their place, memorials are increasingly engaging with more complex themes involving histories of cross-cultural contact, Indigenous dispossession, and colonial violence. Building on the language and ideals of reconciliation, many recent memorial initiatives at the local level have demonstrated significant cooperation between Aboriginal peoples and settler descendant groups in what might be seen as community-led processes of truth telling. The current state government's plan to create statues to Aboriginal heroes discussed in chapter three

[16] See also: "The South Australian Frontier and its Legacies," supported by the Australian Research Council, University of Adelaide, State Library of South Australia, History Trust of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, Reconciliation South Australia, South Australian Museum, and the Department for Education (SA), accessed 12 June 2024, https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/4755c59ae93447a9b0acf9b2b0b265f6/.
[17] Amanda Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence: Reconciling with the Australian frontier," in *Aftermaths: Colonialism, Violence and Memory in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific*, eds. Angela Wanhalla, Lyndall Ryan, and Camille Nurka (Otago: University of Otago Press, 2023), 39; Lyndal Ryan et al., "Introduction," Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788-1930, University of Newcastle, accessed 12 June 2024, https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/introduction.php.
[18] Kyam Maher to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, Elliston, 14 September 2017, in South Australia, District Council of Elliston, *Agenda for the Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 17 October 2017* (Elliston, District Council of Elliston, 17 October 2017), 24.
[19] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-388; Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Out of the Silence: The History and Memory of South Australia's Frontier Wars* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2012), 2-7.

demonstrates that this trend is ongoing in the present day, and it is to be hoped that it will continue in the future. While there is still a long way to go, the existence of these processes is a positive sign as Australia's memorial landscape continues to evolve in the twenty-first century.

And yet, a reoccurring question raised by the case studies examined in this thesis has been the extent to which commemorative recognition of frontier violence might contribute to a broader process of reconciliation and, ultimately, decolonisation. After all, Nettelbeck, drawing on Gabrielle Appleby and Megan Davis as well as a wider scholarship, notes that acknowledgement of past injustices largely has value to the extent that it facilitates a reconstitution of 'the contemporary relationship between Indigenous people and "the rest of the nation".'[20] Unfortunately, while South Australia's recent memorial initiatives certainly demonstrate greater public awareness of frontier violence than in the past, the state's rejection of the federal Voice to Parliament in the 2023 referendum suggests that this has not yet translated into popular support for structural reform. With this in mind, and considering the ongoing nature of memorialisation and reconciliation, it is difficult to determine to what extent commemorative recognition—as it currently stands—might challenge established settler colonial structures.

It would be easy to be demoralised and to dismiss commemorative recognition as being performative rather than transformative, but, personally, I think this would be a mistake. In the conclusion to her 2011 book *Beyond White Guilt*, Sarah Maddison rather presciently observes that the dismantling of Australia's structures of settler colonialism—including changing the constitution—would first require an enormous amount of 'adaptive work'.[21] As part of this 'adaptive work', Maddison argues that non-Indigenous Australians need to craft a new identity built on an understanding of history which 'get[s] beyond white guilt', openly acknowledges past injustices, and ultimately recognises 'that on this territory Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can peacefully coexist, recognising each other as distinct and self-governing peoples.'[22]

The interactions between identity—whether national, communal, familial, spatial, *etc*.—and various commemorative initiatives has been another reoccurring theme in this thesis. As numerous scholars have argued, identity, memory, and memorialisation are tightly interwoven, and Kangaroo Island's evolving engagement with its pre-1836 history clearly demonstrates that acts of commemoration continually shift alongside the shifting priorities of communal identity.[23] Crucially, the memorials and commemorative processes explored in this thesis have often seen communities negotiate and navigate difficult questions and anxieties regarding Australia's history of frontier violence and established settler identities. It may be that commemorative recognition itself does not challenge structures of settler

[20] Nettelbeck, "Regional Memorials and Frontier Violence," 39; Gabrielle Appleby and Megan Davis, "The Uluru Statement and the Promise of Truth," *Australian Historical Studies* 49, no. 4 (2018), 501-509.
[21] Sarah Maddison, *Beyond White Guilt: The real challenge for black-white relations in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2011), 168.
[22] Maddison, *Beyond White Guilt,* 175 and 180.
[23] Mary Fulbrook, "History-writing and 'collective memory'," in *Writing the History of Memory,* eds. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 66.

colonialism, but it is possible that it may help lay the foundations for a wider process which builds the kind of new non-Indigenous identity called for by Maddison.

Of course, not all non-Indigenous Australians are comfortable with re-evaluating their established identities. This might be especially true for those who, for one reason or another, are committed to benign or heroic narratives of European settlement and who therefore do not wish to openly acknowledge that settlement necessarily required Indigenous dispossession. To an extent, this can be seen in the words of those who have resisted efforts to memorialise frontier violence by raising concerns about having a sense of guilt or shame or guilt forced upon them. In Elliston, for instance, anxieties about what the massacre of Waterloo Bay might say about the local community's history, and therefore might mean for local communal, familial, or personal identities, likely prevented the construction of a memorial in 1970 and undoubtedly fuelled community debates in 2017. Similar concerns could be seen during the Kaurna Naming Project, particularly when the proposed dual naming of the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari seemed to threaten some residents' sense of established place identity. As argued in chapter four, concerns about the effects of memorialisation on Australian identities have been most pronounced at the national level, because of the potential implications that an open recognition of frontier violence might have for some of Australia's national narratives. Learning to manage these concerns of identity and finding ways to accommodate diverse viewpoints will likely remain an aspect of both memorialisation and reconciliation processes well into the future.

Yet, reconciliation does not require that all parties come to share a common identity built around an agreed-on grand narrative of history. As Andrew Schaap states, reconciliation 'is not … a final shared understanding or convergence of world views, but … a disclosure of a world in common from diverse and possibly irreconcilable perspectives'.[24] Maddison somewhat echoes this sentiment when she notes that, while discussing reconciliation and the past, 'we will need to appreciate that there will always be reasonable disagreements over how we resolve conflicts and the solution we might pursue.'[25] During many of the memorial initiatives discussed in this thesis, there have been disagreements over specific interpretations of the past as well as over methods of memorialisation. Nonetheless, when the goal of reconciliation is consciously at the centre of commemorative processes—such as during the creation of the Reconciliation Seat on Kangaroo Island, the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial in Elliston, and the Kaurna Naming Project in Adelaide—communities have established commemoratives sites that meaningfully acknowledge Aboriginal histories, cultures and identities. In the words of Elder Lewis O'Brien, partly in reference to the Kaurna Naming Project:

[24] Andrew Schaap "Guilty Subjects and Political Responsibility: Arendt, Jaspers and the Resonance of the 'German Question' in Politics of Reconciliation," *Political Studies* 49, no. 4 (2001): 762.
[25] Maddison, *Beyond White Guilt*, 173.

> Acts of reconciliatory partnership and solidarity don't come free of disagreement and debate. These are hard work to sustain. However, good leadership and strong collaborative commitment ultimately leads to outcomes of shared spaces.[26]

Finally, it is important to recognise that there are examples of individuals, families, or local communities that have begun to reexamine and reframe their identities after engaging with difficult histories of the frontier in good faith. Ned Luscombe's letter to the District Council of Elliston, in which he indicated his personal support for the construction of the Waterloo Bay Massacre Memorial, is one especially sharp example of this process. In his letter, Luscombe blended his support for the town's reconciliation efforts with his own personal journey of coming to terms with the past. He stated his belief that a 'massacre' of Aboriginal people had taken place in the 1840s because, as he claimed, the Kyancutta Museum possessed the 'remains belong[ing] to aborigines who had been killed in retribution for the killing of John Hamp.' According to Luscombe, these remains had been collected by his grandfather, Robert Bedford, who had been an Oxford scholar and had initially set up the Kyancutta Museum in the 1920s. Luscombe noted that he was personally discussing with Wirangu Elders about how best to return the remains held by the Kyancutta Museum to 'further the cause of reconciliation.'[27]

In his letter, Luscombe expressed understanding and sympathy for those 'whose forbears participated in those fateful days in 1848' and the difficulty they might feel in coming to terms with the Eyre Peninsula's history of frontier violence. He himself was conflicted about his grandfather's legacy, who he writes was 'a man of tremendous drive, intellect, and energy … and yet on the other hand a racist [who felt entitled] to plunder Aboriginal graves in the name of science and learning.' And yet, although Luscombe noted that he had 'difficulty reconciling the actions of my grandfather,' in his concluding remarks he argued that 'through acknowledgement of past mistakes and respect for other cultures comes reconciliation and hopefully a better future.'[28] In this way, Luscombe appeared to be reconstituting his emotional connection to the past in a way that enabled him to acknowledge his grandfather's achievements and wrongs as equal and reconcilable aspects of the past.

Whether or not Luscombe's personal journey of recognising and coming to terms with the legacies of colonial violence is one that can be replicated across South Australian society more broadly is another question. Yet, this is a question that will be increasingly important, especially as the South Australian State Government begins to explore treaties with Aboriginal groups via 'tailored negotiations with separate Aboriginal nations, to recognise the cultural authority of Australia's first people, and consider the consequences of settlement,' as Peggy Brock points out.[29] To the extent that they can, memorials will undoubtedly play a part in

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[26] Lewis O'Brien and Lester-Irabinna Rigney, "Conversations: sharing space: an Indigenous approach," in *Sharing Spaces: Indigenous and non-Indigenous Responses to Story, Country, and Rights,* eds., Gus Worby and Lester-Irabinna Rigney (Perth: API Network, 2006), 26-27.

[27] Newton Luscombe to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, Elliston, 3 September 2017, in *Elliston Reconciliation Monument Wording Materials*, ed. District Council of Elliston, 20.

[28] Newton Luscombe to Kym Callaghan and the District Council of Elliston, 21.

[29] Peggy Brock, "Epilogue," in *Colonialism and its Aftermath: A history of Aboriginal South Australia,* eds. Peggy Brock and Tom Gara (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2017), 375.

facilitating this journey of historical recognition, particularly at the local level where the finer details of colonial violence are more easily identified. And indeed, it is likely that movements calling for recognition of frontier violence will grow rather than diminish, because, as Elliston resident Julie Allchurch stated, 'this subject will not go away.'[30]

[30] Julie Allchurch, letter to the editor, *Port Lincoln Times,* 25 July 2017, accessed 2 February 2022, https://www.portlinclontimes.com.au/story/4858082/letters-to-the-editor/?cs=1374.

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