

A MESSAGE

about

A National Act of Recognition

The Recognition Story

THE BEGINNING

In 1768 Lieutenant James Cook and the crew of the HM Bark Endeavour sailed from England and into the Pacific Ocean. James Cook was under instructions from his government to treat Indigenous peoples they met with respect. Any arrangements or relationships entered into were to be conducted through proper negotiation

THE PROBLEM

In April 1770 they arrived at Australian shores. The ship's log book tells us over time two key events took place
Firstly...on 28 April the Endeavour sailed into Botany Bay. Two warriors opposed their landing. The log book says James Cook opened fire after 15 minutes of first encounter in first hour of first day. It was a forced entry

Secondly...on 22 August at Possession Island, just off Cape York, James Cook took possession of Australian land in a way that may have been based on the doctrine "...a land belonging to no one". That was never true

These two historic events tell us the people living here were **not recognized** or respected for who they were...a people living in their own land, a people dwelling in their own home. These events lie at the heart of deprivation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and ongoing division in relationships between first and later Australians, down to this very day. The forced entry that April day foreshadowed, and represents, every later forced entry. Taking possession that August day foreshadowed, and represents, every later dispossession

THE RESOLUTION

Briefly, under the Recognition vision every Australian man, woman and child will be invited to "walk together" to Botany Bay, in a return to the site of first encounter between the English and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 1770. We will revisit the place, and revisit the moment. This gathering will be a step in which our people publicly make right that which we now recognize began in a way that was wrong. All people of goodwill are going to have the opportunity to stand side by side with each other where **together we will...**

- **Name the forced entry, publicly disown it and, by that means, overturn it**
- **Name the false notion of "a land belonging to no one", publicly disown it and, by that means, overturn it**
- **At site of first encounter, hold a National Act of Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

By this we will establish the recognition denied from the beginning. We will restore the respect and human dignity due to earlier inhabitants anywhere. For the first time ever the Australian people will have opportunity to assemble together to directly address the first causes of deprivation, and the great divide between first and later Australians. By this means the men, women and children of Australia will lay a new foundation for the destiny of our nation...and all our people. This will benefit us, benefit all our children...and our children's children

We will, for the first time, begin to address "the root and not the fruit" of what was imposed on all of us in 1770

This is in part about education...education by discovery. Every Australian will have opportunity to discover what really happened between us from our first moments together, and what those earliest events are able to teach us. We will enter this process by starting at the start, rather than somewhere else such as halfway along

We have reason to believe this is one of God's invitations to every Australian man, woman and child, given through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and offered out of His love for us all. Some of the Cheyenne people in the USA have already embraced a similar vision involving a return to the place of first encounter

Come to Botany Bay...to talk...to dream...and then to act. And in acting, find our way forward together