



Sovereign Union of First Nations and Peoples in Australia
Asserting Australia's First Nations Sovereignty into Governance

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Media release

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ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS for GATHERING of NATIONS,
Canberra 23 – 24 November 2013

Michael Anderson, Convenor of the Sovereign Union, said today from Goodooga:

A key agenda item has been nominated by people of the Banjalang, far north coast of NSW. It is a proposal to return our peoples' bodies back to their own Country. It was submitted that there are too many of our people buried off Country and that it is time for us to bring them home and have their remains laid to rest in their Homeland once and for all. It is encouraging to know that this request came from of a young lady acting on behalf of her uncle, who suggested that it is now time for such an action to take place.

This proposal has found a great deal of support, as it is truly a responsibility that we must now accept. It is no wonder that our peoples' memories cry out for help. We need not look at this as something that belongs to later. This something we can and must do now. We have people crying for help and it is our duty to make things happen. That will bring about a settlement of unfinished business.

This should not just be an issue for an action plan domestically. This is an issue that must go beyond our borders. That is to say, if the Americans pursue a policy of leaving no man or woman behind on the battlefield, then it has always been a tradition of ours since time immemorial that we don't leave our people on strange soil. We do have an obligation to bring them home so they can be at rest in their homeland.

An international example of the ravages of war that have affected our people can be traced to such theatres of action such as the Boer War, where the British forces requested the skills of Aboriginal trackers to counter the guerrilla tactics of the Boers. When the war was over in 1902 these same trackers were not permitted to return to Australia, because of the white Australia policy, enforced by the *Immigration Restriction Act* 1901. Such travesties of justice must be corrected and we, as a collective, have an obligation to this and as Peoples we can make this happen. [<http://nationalunitygovernment.org/content/50-aboriginal-trackers-left-behind-after-boer-war>].

Our view of reconciliation is telling the truth. Australia can no longer hide its shame and adopt John Howard's *The Black Armband* view. Like it or not, Australia had a violent history and so in healing this continent, I call upon our Aboriginal youth to lead in a way that will be unique in the world. My challenge to the youth of every individual Aboriginal Nation is that they engage with their elders to locate the massacre sites of their People and, like at Myall Creek, establish memorial parks at these locations in memory of the slain.

Additionally we need to go one step further. There is an 1837 royal decree from England that requests coronial reports from the colonies on the death of Aboriginal people. Like everything else the colonial authorities in Australia ignored this royal decree and continue to do so to this day. It is my proposal that as another agenda item for Sunday 24 November, we call upon the churches and supporters to help us establish Peoples' Grand Juries under the ancient English law of the King's Bench Orders. Each Aboriginal Nation in Australia may take this action and our youth and other supporters can bring to trial, posthumously, the perpetrators of these gross inhumane acts of mass murder against our Peoples. That is, the perpetrators are tried under their law. It is within our right to have these people put on trial, as we know there is no end date for murder, there is no statute of limitation.

Our souls are tormented because our people are not at rest and it is our duty, not only to reclaim that which is ours, but we must work to heal and settle our Old Peoples' spirits and have them laid to rest forever.

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