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Australia heritage at the crossroads- looking back and forwards without breaking my neck.

Ladies and gentlemen I begin by paying my respects to the Ngunnawal People on whose land we meet and honour their elders past present and emerging.

I wish to thank the National Trust and its President Mr Gary Kent especially for the honour of inviting me to give this lecture. I also acknowledge a number of old friends and colleagues for attending, now you might find out why I did what I did!

I was not sure when Gary first contacted me whether I was being invited because I had become a sort of 'heritage artefact' myself, nevertheless here goes.

The majority of my 80 plus years have in some ways involved various forms of work and activism in the overall conservation area. I have joined or been employed by dozens of organisations over the last 60-odd years in many different aspects of environmental conservation. Being invited to give this lecture has allowed me to reflect what has happened, especially since the early 1960s when I first became seriously involved.

It was not what I thought I might do as a young person, indeed my life's trajectory has largely been beyond my comprehension as a young person. Early experience as a jackeroo in north-west NSW and a shearer in New Zealand, seemed to point in another direction.

In 1963 I started work as a research scientist in western NSW working for the Department of Agriculture at Trangie Agricultural Research Station. Among other tasks I was asked to look at an emerging issue then worrying the NSW government. It concerned the dire financial straits of some of the closer settlement farming

entities, particularly on the Bogan River, where large properties which had been cut up into smaller blocks. Farmers on these blocks were beginning to fail in large numbers, and an economist and I were tasked with trying to find out why

Now at University the only time I had studied "ecology" was in an optional course in my final year where we used the then new international text written by Eugene Odum, called "Ecology". Odum and his brother defined 'ecology' as "the study of structure and function of ecosystems". In reading Odum and visiting many of these farms under duress I began to very clearly see the links between our environment, our work and our cultural heritage. Many of these poor farms were all much too small to make a good living out of wheat and sheep, their only viable crops at the time. They exerted far too much pressure on their landscape, in order to survive, leaving the ruins of previous great farming station establishments as well as their landscapes. It was the collapse of a great public policy which meant well but did not work, and was abolished 5 years later.

My visits to some of the farming properties on the Bogan shocked me so much I went back and re-read that book cover to cover. Two years later the Australian Conservation Foundation was established. I became an early member, because by then I was truly alarmed at the impact of poor management on the landscape. Indeed I became quite troubled by the underlying direction of much of my work, which was aimed at increasing carrying capacity of livestock with absolutely no examination of the environmental impacts of doing so.

But ever since that time I have been interested in not only practical conservation work, but more deeply in a philosophical question. It is "why do some people feel conservation of places, landscapes, spiritual sites and many aspects of cultural heritage are worth keeping"? And worth fighting for.

The human urge to conserve the past and other aspects of the environment is for some very deep seated.

Many Indigenous groups I am aware of, and specifically the culture of the Indigenous people of Australia place high, indeed existential, beliefs in both place and story of the past. It is not a religion it is part of their being.

While many whitefellas, including myself, chant the accepted mantras of respect for Indigenous people, in my view very few fully accept the deep significance of country, place and beliefs about the living and cultural realm of their heritage. Such depth of feeling for plants, animals, ancestors and trails seemed to have existed in most cultures but faded out in many so-called developed cultures. Indeed to believe in the centrality of heritage and the landscape had largely disappeared as an intellectual concept up until the mid-20th century, in the west.

But within western societies there seems to be what I call a "temporal dimension" to the urge to conserve or be stewards of our cultural and natural heritage. In other words it comes and goes, and it is what I want to explore tonight.

One of the early, in western societies, stirring of a conservation consciousness was in 1833 in France when the Government of France created 'Les Monuments Historiques de la France'. And amazingly they appointed a novelist, Prosper Merimee, best known for writing the novella 'Carmen', as a basis for Bizet's opera, as its first Director. He was however multitalented and undertook the restoration of Notre Dame, where certainly until the recent fire, a self-installed sculpture of him could be found on the roof. While the French left it to strange characters working for the government to identify and restore cultural heritage, the English were stirred to action by equally strange characters like William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings or SPAB as it became

and is still known. This body in some ways morphed into the founding National Trust and it also led in England and later other parts of the UK to what I call local environmental movements.

One of our great, in my view, inheritances from English culture, was the notion of citizen groups becoming sufficiently angry to coalesce and take action to protect the environment. Along with our Westminster parliament these are 'ingrained' institutions we should regularly celebrate.

And here we are! Celebrating World Heritage Day.

While I grew into adulthood I watched the rapid development of Sydney post World War II. Our lucky country as my old boss Donald Horne ironically, repeat ironically, called it grew rich, fat and indifferent in the 60s. This indifference eventually led to citizen groups like the National Trust growing strong.

By the mid-60s the Australian Conservation Foundation had formed bringing some 'high end' and eminently conservative citizens into the arena in Australia. People have forgotten that its founders include a High Court judge, a later conservative Prime Minister and of course the consort to the British Throne, all put together by a canny CSIRO scientist.

Globally there were stirrings in the 60s about the state of the environment.

In the early 70s the Club of Rome issued its first report on the global state of the environment. Peter Ellyard and I organised a tour by its founders including a spectacularly unsuccessful meeting with Federal parliamentarians. Only one turned up as well as some staff in Old Parliament House, he was of course the late and great Dr Moss Cass, who Peter later worked for.

I should add that while there were, and occasionally still are jeering critiques of the Club of Rome and its work, a review ten years or so

back by a respected CSIRO scientist found that overwhelmingly and alarmingly most of its prognostications had occurred.

I was an ABC science unit journalist/producer during this period and certainly kept a close eye on these initiatives as we were beginning to broadcast more and more programs about conservation and the environment. Indeed one of the series I did for the ABC at that time was a bunch of documentaries on the state of the environment in different regions of Australia that besides scientific work included a lot of material on the cultural heritage of each region.

As a digression I should add, to my shame during the same period I broadcast an interview I did with the American scientist Dr David Keeling in 1970. His work at the Mauna Loa observatory showed that global carbon dioxide levels were rising at levels forecast by the Swedish scientist Arrhenius in the 19th century and showed evidence of the greenhouse effect. It alarmed me then, I did little about it and it has been a core worry ever since the early 1970s, but no one much took notice. And I certainly was not able to convince people this was an issue 50 years back when it would have been much easier in every respect, except politically, to take real action.

In June 1971 the first Green Ban, a unique Australian phenomena, brought together the most unlikely of constituents to form a vocal and street-based protest about the loss of cultural and natural heritage. Unionists joined forces with the 'ladies of Hunters' Hill initially to 'Save Kelly's Bush". This movement under the extraordinary Jack Mundey took off and created active alliances around Australia of very innovative forms.

And so one of the early acts of the Whitlam Government in 1973 was the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate, popularly known as the Hope Inquiry after its Chairman, Justice Robert (Bob) Hope. But what a group of people they were, from the distinguished architectural teacher Judy Brine, to Miles

Dunphy, and Judith Wright among them. Luckily they also included a lesser known, then, man of genius, who was a property developer, of genius, David Yencken. I will come back to him.

The genesis of the idea of the "national estate" was a phrase first used by the Welsh architect Clough Williams-Ellis in the 1940s but given prominence by President John F Kennedy in his Inaugural Speech in 1961. He said at the time "We must develop new instruments of foresight and protection and nurture in order to recover the relationship between man and nature and make sure that the national estate we pass on to our multiplying descendants is green and flourishing".

The outcome of that Inquiry was published in 1974 and the Whitlam government set about implementing its recommendations, but great were the distractions of the next period, including the dismissal, that apart from getting it tabled little was implemented. My very minor role in the process was to get it printed as a senior executive in the, sometimes, infamous Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) of Tom Uren!

Enter the truly wily and sadly not well-known David Yencken. One of the greatest people I ever had the pleasure to work with. David had run a large property development business in Melbourne, you heard that right, which did some extraordinary work in Victoria. He and Robin Boyd also developed and designed the Black Dolphin Motel at Merimbula. He had persuaded Local Government Minister Rupert "call me Dick" Hamer, to pass an amazing piece of legislation that brought real quality to urban subdivision and worked with some of the greatest architects in Australia of the time to ensure that design quality was foremost in their work.

David got to work on the new Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and persuaded him to implement the findings of the Hope Inquiry and appoint the first Council of the Australian Heritage Commission. And

what a group of people they were including John Mulvaney, Vincent Serventy, Reg Walker (Secretary of the National Trust), Geoff Blainey and the wonderful Barbara Hardy from South Australia.

I was wending my way to Cape York at the time to drop out and live in a tent with my wife and two young babies on land owned by Ansett pilot turned artist Percy Tresize who I had got know some years before. To my amazement the Commissioners of the Australian Heritage Commission appointed me as the first CEO which was signed off by the PM (also to my amazement!), and we got down to business.

By this time, mid 1970s, there was a strong public feeling, at least among progressive thinkers, that there was a great need for widespread action on the environment. The Australian Heritage Commission Act was unique in the world at the time, because it required the Commonwealth Government to protect places on the Register of the National Estate, and those places included not only buildings and sites, but the natural environment and landscapes and most importantly indigenous sites.

No other legislation in Australia or elsewhere was as comprehensive. American colleagues who I got to know, were astonished at our remit. This was especially so as the core design of the legislation had come from a US Statute, but substantially widened. Getting on with the task of establishing the Register of the National Estate required close collaboration with all of the branches of the National Trust, all state governments, especially their national park services and the emerging Aboriginal site protection services then just coming into being.

For a tiny little outfit, we had 12 staff to start with, this was quite a tall order, as we wanted to take the community along with us and engage in much public input and community education under the rubric of "The things we want to keep". Incidentally this latter rubric

was the definition of the then Tasmanian Premier when asked what was the definition of "the national estate".

With some of the States we had close collaboration, like NSW and Tasmania, with others, like Queensland, not so much. Indeed Joh Bjelke Petersen set out to inhibit our work as much as possible!

One of the earliest initiatives which Yencken insisted we pursue was encouraging the strengthening, where they existed, of community-based conservation organisations and their establishment where they did not exist. David was absolutely correct in his thinking here as he articulated it to me. He argued that while legislation and indeed organisations like ours could come and go, a well-educated and politically active community was always going to be crucial to keep the endeavour to protect the environment in a capitalist democracy like ours. And presciently this proved absolutely true.

It is interesting to look back over some of the wins and losses we had during the early years of the Commission. We used the Act when it came to Commonwealth actions, the court of public opinion when it came to non-Commonwealth sites, which was most of them, plus a small funding program as well as enhancement of skill levels (like the establishment of the International Council on Monuments and Sites) and school education programs nationally.

There is no doubt in my mind that we did make some mistakes in retrospect especially including places on the Register of the National Estate before we could verify their status. This ranged from Indigenous sites to historic houses and even some landscapes. Difficulties in getting some indigenous owners to specify precisely where the sites were, as required by our Act, hampered their listings too. You can find excuses for this but these actions were what was used, in part, against the Commission in bringing it down.

There was a time when the conservative side of politics could not only cope but relished engagement with environmental

conservation. Indeed I often felt, as I got to know him slightly, that Malcolm Fraser obeyed the old feudal law of the conservative landholder ***abergement***, which set out the duties of lords to their peasants, and their land.

We had many Ministers during my tenure. Among them was Bob Ellicott then Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for the Capital Territory. He was also the Minister responsible for the National Capital Development Commission among other responsibilities. It was a time when you could comfortably give dissenting advice to Ministers. He could accept that countervailing arguments led to good or better arguments and in the case of a dispute over the development of Lanyon, took our side over the views of the NCDC in regard to protecting the historic fabric of that site.

I hear from many sources over the last twenty years that giving advice to Minister not to do something is an approach that is fatal for one's career prospects. Happily it was not so in my time.

A later Minister responsible for the Commission was quite prescient, as efforts to abolish the Commission progressed.

In May 1997 Senator Robert Hill then Minister for the Environment said: "Perhaps future generations of Australians will lack the virtue of our good taste? I am mindful of the warning Thomas Paine gave us when he said that, "When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary." Senator Hill was an interesting conservative Minister especially to be quoting Tom Paine.

Seven years later: The AHC was ultimately abolished under the Howard Liberal-National coalition government and the Australian Heritage Council formed in its place on 19 February 2004.

Apparently the Australian Heritage Commission had commissioned a history of the organisation some years before but this was shelved and has never been published, when there was strong disagreement

about aspects of its drafting. As a witty aside one of the senior staff at the time had suggested a title for the work "Heritage without Hope", so bringing to a close the work initiated by the wonderful Justice Bob Hope.

The major difference between the Commission and the Australian Heritage Council was contained in the functions, which required the Commission:

a. "on its own motion or on the request of the Minister, to give advice to the Minister, on matters relating to the national estate, including advice relating to:

    i. action to identify, conserve, improve and present the national estate; and

    ii. expenditure by the Commonwealth for the identification, conservation, improvement and presentation of the national estate; and

    iii. the grant of financial or other assistance by the Commonwealth for the identification, conservation, improvement or presentation of the national estate;"

This was the key difference with the new Council. The Australian Heritage Council Act effectively put the Minister in charge of everything that the Council could do and did not allow independent action.

So we see a 'cycle' of commitment of the Federal government lasting from 1976 to 2004. In my view that cycle reflects the waxing and waning of the broad Australian electorate for environmental conservation. It was not that there were less activist individuals and organisations, just that by the early 2000s both heritage conservation and environmental conservation generally were slipping down the agenda.

As my friend and sometime colleague Dr Jane Lennon AM put it in a submission to the Review of the EPBC Act later: "...Australia's environment laws have failed because they were too weak, had inadequate review and complex approval processes and were not overseen by an effective compliance regime. Our environment is suffering death by a thousand cuts -cumulative impacts on our land, waters and heritage."

From the early 2000s all matters of environmental assessment, education and compliance fell within the purview of the Federal agency responsible for the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act as it was amended from time to time.

In the ACT there was at least a Heritage Council though in late 2022 that all appeared to come crashing down. The ACT Minister said in December that an Interim body would be appointed early in 2023.

Are we there yet?

In 1999 the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* became the main "vehicle" for the Federal Government to engage with issues in the environment. Its later amendments included the replacement of the Australian Heritage Commission with the Australian Heritage Council as mentioned earlier.

It seemed to me that this piece of legislation could keep the Federal government "in the game as it were". But successive reviews and audits showed how ineffective it was. To quote again Dr Jane Lennon in her submission to the most recent review, the Samuels Review as it is known: "As a heritage practitioner I welcomed the EPBC Act as it was designed to encompass all aspects of Australia's environment and, for the first time, it considered heritage as an integral component of the environment. Indigenous people have always maintained the totality of environment – the indivisibility of earth-land-sea-sky and the sentient landscape. "

The poor outcomes though that Jane and many others itemised make me weep.

However some of the core proposals from Samuels are also deeply concerning. They seem focussed on process, which is ironic given that is one of his key criticisms of the administration of the existing Act. They are also clearly aimed at restricting the roles the Commonwealth might take in my view.

So we come to the present. Is this a new dawn or same old?

In December last year the new Federal Minister, Tanya Plibersek, released a document she called a "Nature Positive Plan" in which she said: "The equation facing Australia is simple. If our laws don't change, our trajectory of environmental decline will not change either."

She might be right but I am reminded of a former NSW Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, and Queens Council, who once chided me when I expressed the view that good laws would control behaviour by saying that "laws only defined the space where 'outlaws' could work!".

Minister Plibersek heartily endorses many of the recommendations of the Samuel Review of the EPBC Act. This too I believe has many flaws which I have not the time to go into tonight.

In reworking or perhaps discarding and starting again, the Federal legislation for our cultural and natural heritage I would strongly urge the Federal government to implement laws that bring these concepts together again. More importantly I would recommend re-instating processes to encourage the community at all levels of government to work with developers, private and public to strive for better environmental management outcomes. It seems to me that we have drifted into a purely 'statutory control' process rather than an exhortatory or encouraging process.

This is not nostalgia on my part for the Heritage Commission. To me one of my lifelong learnings has been the idea I gained from working with a famous Aboriginal artist on Cape York while restoring some of the rock art there. He explained it was the strength of the nexus between our cultural and natural heritage that makes our lives richer and gives us meaning in the long history of things. Goobalathaldin, also known as Dick Roughsey, said to me, while I was removing green ants from down the back of my shirt (we were working on protecting paintings of pigeons in a cave in central Cape York), "Bourkey, you white fellas don't get it, we paint these Wompoo pigeons not just to record them but so they come back every year!". In other words if we do not 'practice' our culture, it dies.

Are there other ways of supporting our National Estate?

Eight years ago the then Federal government released a glossy National Heritage Strategy which among other things trumpeted the effectiveness of the National Lottery model for funding used in the UK as a significant source of funds for the protection of cultural and natural heritage. Then silence.

From the late 1990s for about a decade I managed on behalf of a friend a substantial philanthropic fund which had as its principal aim the protection of Australian biodiversity. We used commercial leveraging strategies of 'our' funds to substantially grow the rate of investment into large scale conservation projects throughout Australia. It was a period where there was quite a lot of willing private sector investors interested in assisting. This leveraging managed to double our investment to almost $30 million which went to a range of biodiversity projects.

This is still possible but it has become somewhat harder in recent years. This is because as the land managers' estates mature they need more and more funds for management, which is not nearly as sexy as land acquisition. I have often said, as Dr David Lindenmayer

reminded me recently, that it is easier for art galleries to persuade donors to give to purchase paintings than it is to run the air-conditioning system of the gallery though both are just as essential. The same applies in heritage conservation. Certainly many of the National Trusts around Australia began to struggle with maintenance of large and growing property portfolios in the 1990s.

This is where one of the concepts, investing in "natural assets", that Minister Plibersek is promoting will struggle I believe.

Summing up.

The ups and downs of conservation consciousness that I have witnessed in my life clearly in part reflect social trends. From post WW 11 indifference, to wealth and development; then the late 60s to early 90s saw strong community interest in conservation, developers even 'copying' earlier Federation styles as selling points and apartments in historic buildings attracting a premium. The Register of convicts at Port Arthur went from shame to prized. Agriculture has had a massive effect on our landscapes, while mining less so in total though significant in some areas. Much legislation at Federal and State levels was passed and much of it ignored or squeezed in economic downturns.

Now I sense a sort of 'heritage' abuse with serious questions over both greenwashing and a form of 'heritage washing' (such as 'we will protect this small Indigenous site or historic building or patch of habitat and surround it with a mine/homes/or other form of development') so it alienates it, or worse still some of the so-called offsets concepts. Some of the offset 'schemes' that have been touted are truly outrageous in their outcomes.

Looking forward

Now I should offer some prognosis of what might work better. I hope this is not the dreamings of a wussy old man but... It seems to me

that while legislation like the *EPBC Act* has its place that it sets up a system based on 'competition of views'. By that I mean, a proponent, already with the Act in mind, prepares a proposal which it assumes will or with the right arguments, achieve the outcomes it wants. And the Minister, with advice from her Department (sometimes?) takes a view on those documents.

But the thing that is not happening at present, and was one of the chief aims of the Australian Heritage Commission, was to encourage owners, proponents of change and the general public to 'take stock' of their environment and to try to work out how retaining the best, the essential, the rare and even quixotic remnants of the natural and cultural world can be achieved. Certainly where we had to, we used our slight and limited coercive powers, but our aim was always to try to encourage proponents of change to see if there was another way if that change was destructive.

I still believe that an agency which **operates** like the Australian Heritage Commission has a place in the bureaucratic landscape. Encouragement to take positive steps can work. Of course if Prime Minister Albanese could expand his recent sentiments about our cultural heritage and assets along with Minister Plibersek and her views on the role of the Feds in protecting our natural assets we could see some real progress. A fund of as little as $10 million per annum could easily buy the Federal government into the sort of leveraged investment that combined with State, local government and voluntary organisations that we know has profound local effects. A National Estate Start Fund could make a huge difference as I am sure it could be leveraged many fold.

Quiet background engagement works well too. I will give a few examples which I do not think have had a public airing before. In the AHC we had excellent working relationships with Australia's largest government landholder, the Department of Defence. This was not public but it was important. With DoD we set up discussion on

management of Indigenous sites and management of the natural environment over vast areas like Shoalwater Bay in Queensland. At almost half a million hectares this site on the Queensland coast is of huge national significance. Similarly at a tiny scale we were involved in restoration and management of numerous army historical sites including Duntroon and Victoria Barracks. We worked with their military environmental officers, yes they had them, right around Australia.

This was done through collaboration, not confrontation. I would like to hope it is still possible. In some respects the Federal government is still one of if not the largest 'developers' in the country.

Early collaboration can work and I was reminded of this with the terrible events of Juukan Gorge in 2020 which clearly could have been avoided. Two examples which you will probably not have heard of, and that is a good thing, I will explain.

In 1979 John Mulvaney, one of my Commissioners at the Heritage Commission and I approached the management of Mount Isa Mines then the owner of the Macarthur River mine near Borroloola in the Gulf. We went to visit the site with senior lawmen from the Yanyuwa people to discuss a very important site on the Register of the National Estate. After a lot of haggling and behind the scenes discussions, over a long period, they agreed that mining would be designed around and with a large curtilage protecting this site.

In a different way the then head of the National Trust in the Northern Territory in 1981, Peter Forrest, approached me on behalf of the Warramungu traditional owners concerning conservation work on the notorious Phillip Creek "mission" site north of Tennant Creek. They wanted work done on this site to preserve and act as a memorial of this dark episode in Northern Territory history to reflect the sad dispossession on these people in the 1940s. Again we quietly went about this task of documenting and preserving the site. Finally

in 2017 Native Title was granted over the whole station. Early identification of this site played a large part in the successful outcome. Careful identification, some low-key stabilisation works and close engagement with the several clans was important to the process.

The work we did was not aimed at headlines but outcomes. No press releases were involved.

Recently I spent some time in Adelaide city a place I knew well as a student 60 years ago. It is a mixture of the successes of the conservation movement and its failures. Some wonderfully preserved precincts, individual buildings of great beauty (both humble and grand) some landscapes that make me want to live there again. But also some of the most stupid excesses where 20 plus storey buildings have been allowed on either side of a 3 storey building with some historic significance, so that the sense of place is totally smashed; of facades in some places a metre or so thick retained while a new building which is oh so obvious is inserted into the structure and towers above it for 20 stories, the conflict of old and new rages on.

But the key success of that beautiful city has been the retention, not without difficulty I should say, of the superb Colonel Light designed 19thC parklands that surround the city core. Just like Lake Burley Griffin here in Canberra they require, and get from concerned citizens, continual watchful struggle as developers private and public always have a good use for "just a few hundred square metres here" or a strip just a "hundred metres there" for some good purpose.

But the true "keepers" of our environment are concerned citizens. As we learn more from our Indigenous brothers and sisters, our 'songlines' keep speaking to us.

I have lived a very lucky life. From agriculture to the arts, public sector to private employment. And the best part is that most of it has

been fun. For that it was in part due to the subject matter of what I was working on and in major part due to both the colleagues I worked with and some of the extraordinary people I have worked for. Some of them quite famous public figures others simply hardworking and decent colleagues. I wish to acknowledge two especially who have helped me in this Oration, Dr Jane Lennon AM and Mr Richard Morrison.

I am still excited by the ongoing role of community driven groups from the tiny, like Lake Burley Griffin Guardians, to the older established like the National Trusts, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian Garden History Society long may they thrive. In the 1970s the Australian Heritage Commission provided National Estate funds to State Conservation Councils acting as a resource for numerous small environmental organisations and that was crucial at the time.

My strongest hope is for the ongoing struggle of NIMBYS! They are often derided but in truth citizen action and indeed citizen grievance are major motivating forces in protecting the environment. Government agencies can easily fall into the rhythms of the government of the day and legislation to protect can be so cumbersome and often ignored that it is the role of the small and large forces of citizen action that is the only hope of, for the most part, slowing, not inhibiting, the steady loss of the things we want to keep.

I know Citizen Groups face an exhausting prospect of endless government so-called consultations against a background of clearly conflicting government positions. Recently I have observed and participated in a local example where the government is relentlessly increasing density, while we know full well the effects of tree loss and heat islands, which sets the background to pointless government inquiries into "nature in the city". But we continue to make submissions and sit in assembly consultations where local members

look at their phones while trying to think of questions to ask. But it must be done!

It is the 'staunch' to use a wonderful old English word who battle on to achieve good environmental outcomes. And a bonus from all or most of the environmental groups I have belonged to is that they seemed to attract good, committed and fun people.

We should take strength from the life story of the recently departed national icon Yunupingu who just kept turning up with a smile, and a message!

If the aim of a group of rational people is to protect their environment, then all praise to "Not in my backyard'. This is the only planet we have for the foreseeable future, Elon Musk notwithstanding.

Max Bourke AM

17/4/23.