

Voices of our Community

GANDANGARA ANNUAL NAIDOC LECTURE 2019



GANDANGARA
Local Aboriginal Land Council

Voice Treaty Truth: Let Us Walk Together And Create New Tracks

Series 1



GANDANGARA LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL 'VOICES OF OUR COMMUNITY'



MELISSA WILLIAMS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The annual Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Lecture is a platform for our local communities to engage in meaningful dialogue about issues that concern them and to ensure their voices are heard. Aboriginal society is very diverse with different protocols, lore and law structures. To hear is to learn. To learn is to understand. It is only by understanding, and the unity of purpose it engenders, that we can bring everyone closer in heart and mind. We can then truly share Country and walk together and create new tracks.

This is the first book series and it is a document of intent. It is our intention to be given a recognisable voice that is not only heard but listened to and honoured by our government and our fellow Australians. It is our intention to be morally and legally recognised by our government with a formal agreement (a Treaty/Treaties) that should have been given to us on the very first day Europeans arrived on our

land. It is our intention to make the Truth about what has been done to us, what we have suffered and been forced to endure, to become sincerely accepted and universally known. It is our intention to have our culture and history, our place as this continent's First Peoples, to be embraced and celebrated as a unique feature of this continent's story. It is our intention to reclaim what we should never have lost or been denied – respect.

These intentions are not dreams or hopes but reasonable, peaceable, deliberate and defined actions that can and will change perceptions of us as individuals and as communities throughout Australia and the rest of the world. We hope this will change behaviour towards us. In turn, this will improve Australia. We are determined to see these intentions realised. You can see it in the eyes of our Uncles, Aunties, Brothers, Sisters, Cousins, Friends whose voices have been recorded in this book series part 1.

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WARNING: THIS BOOK MAY CONTAIN NAMES AND IMAGES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WHO ARE NOW DECEASED.

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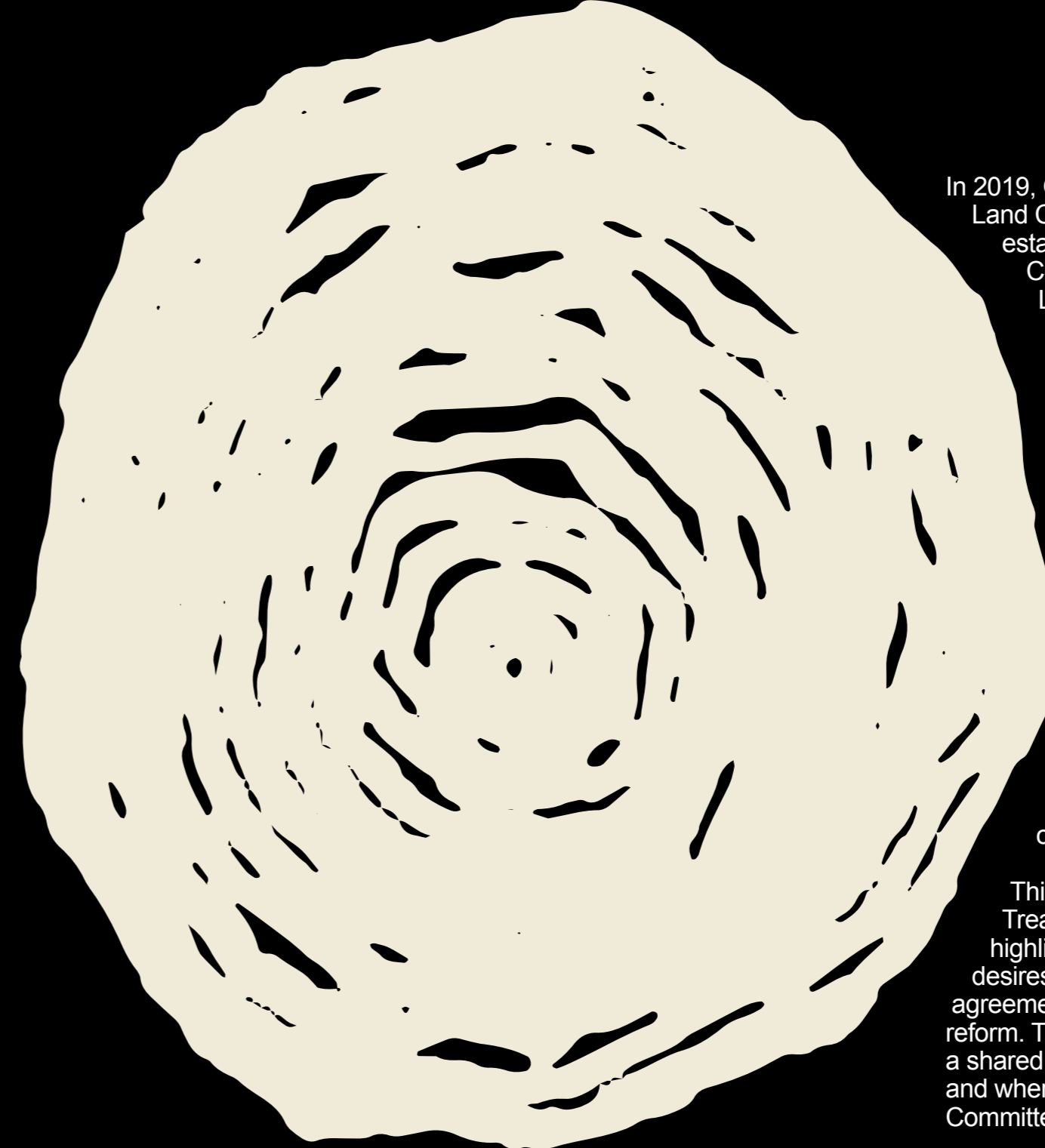
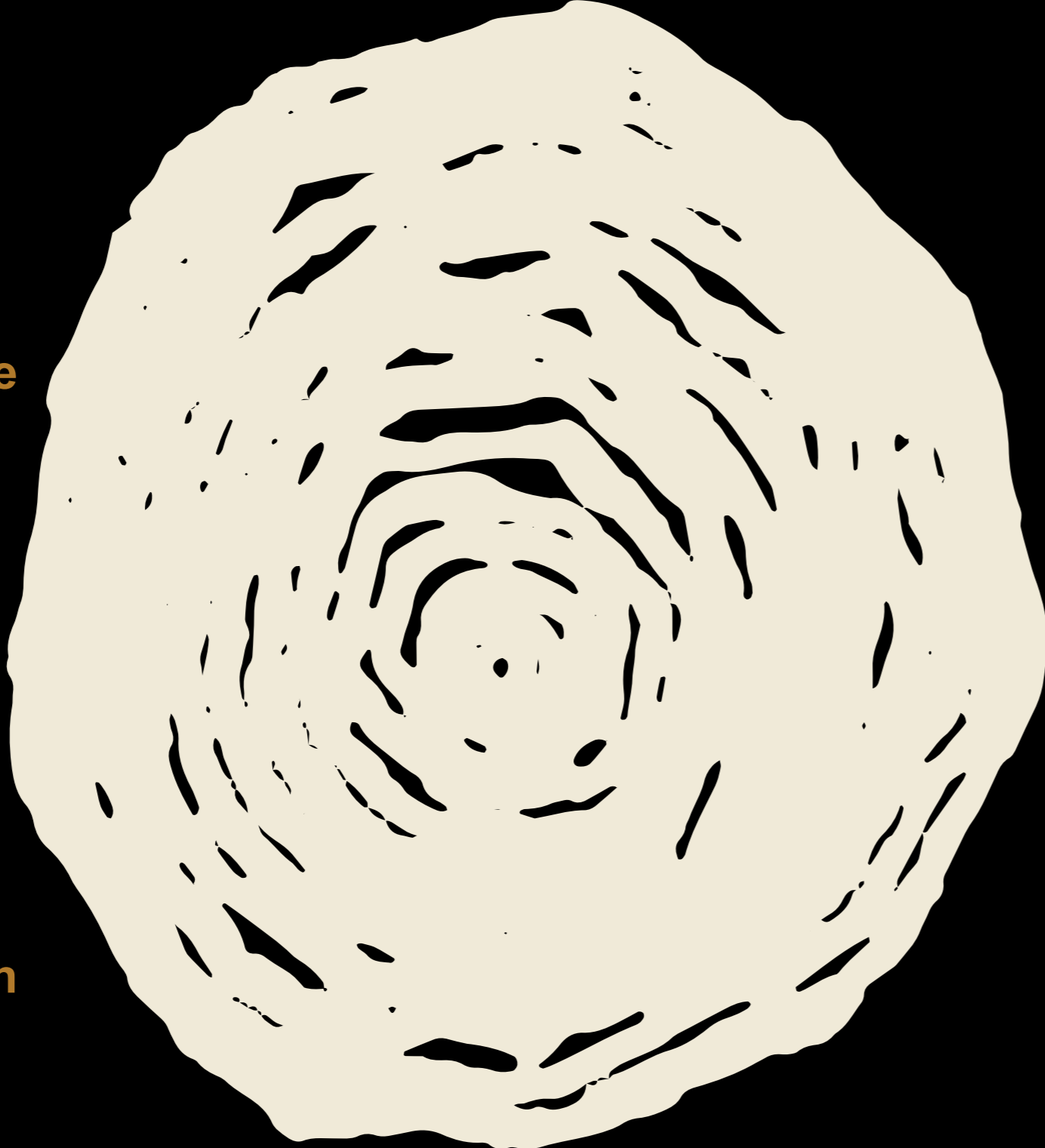
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We acknowledge the Cabrogal People of the Darug Nation as the First People of the area we span, & pay our respects to the Traditional Owners & Custodians of the land, to Elders, past & present. We continue to value the generations of knowledge First Peoples embed within our organisation and community.



In 2019, Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council celebrates 35 years since establishment as a Local Aboriginal Land Council constituted under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW).

This event marks our long-lasting commitment and declaration to take action:

- to recognise, protect and preserve the oldest surviving culture in the world
- to advance the cultural, socio-economic outcomes of our First Peoples through voices of our community, truth-telling and treaty.

This Annual Lecture coincides with the 51st Anniversary of the Referendum, the 26th Anniversary of the Mabo ruling and the recent issuing of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

This year's NAIDOC theme of 'Voice, Treaty, Truth', compliments this trio highlighting the diversity of First Peoples desires for recognition and a legitimate agreement be it multiple treaties and legislative reform. This can only be achieved through a shared understanding of our past history and where we stand today National NAIDOC Committee (2019).



FOREWORD BY CHAIRPERSON

TONY SCHOLES

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Aboriginal people, our nations and tribes, all over Australia, have a long and proud history. We have many languages and stories, myths, legends and heroes. We have many shades of cultures and protocols and attachment to country. All Australians can benefit from knowing and learning these things, but right now they don't, because they are buried under ignorance and indifference.

This needs to change. Australia needs to put a high value on these wonderful features of our country by first recognising they exist. And that won't happen until the people to whom these things belong are recognised, just the same way that all the other people

who share our country are recognised. They are heard. They are treated fairly. They are spoken to truthfully. We are not.

The fact we don't have a voice will not stop us from speaking up. The fact we do not have a treaty will not stop us from demanding one. The fact the truth of what has been done to us is not revealed will not stop us from telling it.

This book makes that loud and clear.



Top left to right: Board of Directors: Malcolm Maccoll, Tony Scholes (Chairperson), Wendy Morgan, Gail Smith, Troy Davis, Melissa Williams (CEO), Jo Kerr (Deputy Chairperson), Mary Allen, Cecelia Campbell and missing in photo is Artiene Tatian (Absent), Diane Van Aken (Absent)