

# EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

**“You sit in the window seat.” Responding to the strong intonation I struggled across two seats from the aisle and dumped down. “You like to look out the window.” Other essential conversation with my wife had exhausted while on the flight from Sydney, then transiting through Melbourne airport. This next leg would overfly home to gain a direct uninterrupted trip to Townsville, to witness my granddaughter’s graduation from Medicine. I had mused on how her optimised Christian education had buoyed her in the ‘struggles’ to this culmination.**

Soon my relaxed gaze soaked in the western side landscape, enjoying the transitions from urban to rural, plains to hills and mountains, mid-afternoon light colour transitions, feelings of escape from tasks, freedom and then unexpectedly, patriotism. The Australian flag, proudly displayed on my desk when working internationally, flapped momentarily in my mind. But, it was replaced by a ‘borrowed’ thought. What would I hear if the “stones were to cry out” (Luke 19:40).

An emerging fragmented mental narrative skipped over the complexities of original land formation and subsequent geomorphism creating awesome lookouts and outlooks. It lingered on the indigenous ‘Dreaming’ messaging of a beginning and this land’s first culture, rock imaged to include hand stencilled ochre motifs, and ‘stick figures’, animal profiles—turtle, kangaroo, and serpent, and even a sailing ship. What storying of Country would these rock pictures prompt in the minds of elders who might then ‘speak out’ this record?

As the sun’s rays crossed into the cabin I felt comfortably warmed, but clearly it was too hot for others, the beams too bright for screens, so earlier blinds had cut off the unwanted vision and exposing light. Most of the passengers were intentionally unaware of our transition over Country. It was so like the prevailing disinterest in First People’s history—an ancient culture connecting food, law, land management and spirituality.

The recent death of David Gulpilil (29th of November 2021) came to my musing. How readily our culture embraced his creativity in dance, music, art, and words within film (*Walkabout*, *Storm Boy*, *Crocodile Dundee*, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*), TV and other artistic events. White culture ‘gifted’ him alcoholism, resultant clashes with the law and lung cancer which terminated his life.

Looking out the window, the lowered sun now

cast long shadows so that little of the landscape was visible. A hazy misting seemed to obscure any ‘rock messaging’, a grey veil over a colourless surface. The country lacked definition and ‘seeing’ it became interpretatively difficult. In my mind I was muddling over the untaught massacre of first inhabitants, the purpose of ‘native’ missions, associated claimed misery and misfortune, stolen generations, involvement of my family members and further how our nation has accepted and oriented to success so many immigrants and refugees, yet disproportionately incarcerated its indigenous population. The confusing complexity of concepts like structural discrimination, critical race theory, identity fraud (Grieve-Williams, 2021, p. 16, Ingram, 2021, p. 16) and an increasing vehemence in racial politicking enraged my mind prejudicing ‘reconciliation’. Can schools help here? Ultimately will we ‘land’ safely?

This journal issue provides two articles which can helpfully clarify confused thinking on the national curriculum requirements for Indigenous Studies in schools. Bobongie-Harris (p. 4) offers guidelines for the implementation of curriculum and Reid et al. (p. 16) share collaborative autoethnographic reflections on a decade of inclusive cultural change in their school. Both exemplify insider research including issues discussed by Henley (p. 8) to aid researchers.

As educators, let’s seize the opportunity to engage with expansive views, listen if ‘rocks cry out’, and feel the warmth of the Son. Avoid drawing down the blinds to focus only on the comfortable dimness of personal interests and limited awareness. Value vision.

Always choose the window seat. **TEACH**

## References

- Grieve-Williams, V. (2021, July 10-11). This is exploitation and identity fraud. *Inquirer. The Weekend Australian*, p. 16.  
Ingram, S. (2021, July 10-11). The creative story behind ‘box tickers’. *Inquirer. The Weekend Australian*, p. 16.



“*The confusing complexity of concepts like structural discrimination, critical race theory, identity fraud and an increasing vehemence in racial politicking enraged my mind*”

[Photography: Glenys Perry]