

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Richard Frankland and I am an Indigenous Australian. I also celebrate other cultures that run through my veins. However, I identify as Indigenous because this is how I grew up, this is what I feel calls me. This country Australia has not always been kind to me and as I grew from a child to a boy, from a boy to a man I experienced many levels of discrimination. Sometimes the incidents roll into each other in my memory. Sometimes they remain as isolated moments of painful memories, other times I am reminded of them by a tone of voice, a negative media representation, a law or even a look.

When I walk down the street and I see Koorie symbols, icons, a smiling face, these negative memories fade. When I see the word reconciliation and I see people of other races, creeds, colours and heritage taking ownership of the issues that Indigenous people face daily, the negative memories fade. When I hear these people stand up to be counted, when I hear them on radio, or a news item on television, or a concert, or see the symbol of reconciliation victoria, I am heartened, I have hope, not only does the negative memory fade, but a new hope begins. I see through these actions a hope of a new Australian Identity, a new cultural landscape where we all plant seeds together, which we all own and which we are all responsible for. I see a good strong future. I see the back of racism, I see courage and I see our country.

We cannot let Reconciliation Victoria disappear, we do not need to see the back of it, we need it, not just Indigenous Australians, but all Australians. We need a vehicle to carry our voice into every lounge room in Australia, we need a vehicle that carries out voice into the streets, we need to be reminded of not only where we have come from, but where we can go together.

I implore the Government to take action now, to find the resources to support this wonderful organisation, we cannot become morally bankrupt with the issue of discrimination. We must stand up and be counted. We must stand visibly behind the continuance of Rec Vic.

Richard J Frankland (MA)