

Future/Forward 2018 Day One

Session: Let's listen

Peter White: Hello. OK. So, as we've been introduced earlier, Peter White, I will put a disclaimer on that. I am not a freelance anymore. I've gone back to the dark side so to speak and even though it's streaming so I need to behave myself but I am here on rec leave. So I'm now the Head of Indigenous Strategy and Cultural Engagement for Sydney Living Museums for those of you who don't know or aren't up with the new branding, it's the Old Historic Houses Trust of NSW which have 12 very significant colonial properties and museums such as the site of first Government House. You could say a bit of an oxymoron of what's a fellow who likes to talk about First Nations rights working in colonial spaces. What better place to be. I would like to thank Esther and NAVA and the team for not giving us the opportunity but doing the right thing. That little thing there, first. Of course we would be first, we have always been here. Richard I would like to thank who came on an invitation to be part of this conversation, I guess, if you want to call it, about let's explore some of the First Nations issues in contemporary arts in regards to Future Forward or what I'm thinking about as future backwards because we've got some unfinished business we need to sort out. But, before I get too far into it, just like to pay my respects to Aunty Matilda. I actually left Ngunnawal Ngambri lands at the beginning of this year. I have been living here for seven years before going back to Gadigal lands. I always have a fondness, I actually started out my uni career down here in the cultural heritage field and I've always loved being down on this country and it is very important, I think Aunty shared some very strong learnings there for us all are to consider over the next two days but more importantly that focus of we are on Aboriginal land here. Even though we're in this building, that is part of a colonial structure, it is still Aboriginal land. And, with that context, I think before I get into it I'd like to just revisit what we're actually here for. Penelope and Esther gave a good coverage of that early on but Future Forward, advance rights, sustain incomes, develop practice in Australia Day to day, NAVA's new Strategic Plan and Code of Practice for professional Australian visual arts, craft and design sector, what needs to go into the updated Code, how do we make the Code enforceable? How will we create policy change, redress inequality and take action together? And the notion of this day is negotiating the institutional aspects of professional practice. So that's where those people who didn't have - so that's for people who didn't have time to read the website and are thinking why am I here? We had a quick snap chat of the Strategic Plan. I won't go into that. I'm assuming everyone here sort of agrees on that. Yeah? Show of hands. Yep. So I guess the big question is where does First Nations fit within all of that? So this opportunity today of an hour and a half of the beginning session, it's cool to listen but I actually want to use one of the words from my language winanga-li, to listen, to know, to remember. It is more a way of thinking. It is the deep listening you actually hear about with Aboriginal people. It's not just hearing things, it's listening, it's understanding, being aware of the surroundings that you exist in. The environment that you sit in, both the now, both the present, both the future. And using that for the learnings. So I'm going to give some of my reflections. I put down Richard's reflections. I don't know whether you want to call it something else. We'll wait and see. I would also like to acknowledge my First Nations brothers and sisters in the audience. I think it's important we have the opportunity to hear from them. I'm not here to speak on behalf of all First Nations people of this country. I'm sure Richard's not although he makes a good job of it sometimes in some areas.

Richard Bell: What I do is un-Aboriginal, to have an opinion and espouse it loudly is very un-Aboriginal.

Peter White: But sometimes you say it what people are thinking.

Richard Bell: Gee I hope so.

(Laughter)

Peter White: Then I think it is important to open up the floor. That's sort of setting the parameters. So who am I? I'm a Gamilaroi Murri from western NSW. I like to use the sense of north-west NSW cause my mob is from Manilla. When I say I'm a Gamilaroi Murri from Manilla they say what is he going on about? Isn't that in South East Asia? It is a little town outside of Tamworth. This is the junction of the Namoi and Manilla river. This has been one of the key areas for my mob for millennia. I grew up here even though I was born and bred in Tamworth. Swam in the river, continually fished in the river with my father. My boys who were born in Sydney have grown up in Sydney and Canberra, go back there and do the same thing. We have this connection with this river. That sort of makes up who I am and my understanding of where I sit both within my mob, my country, but also the learnings that what happened from there impacts on how I do business and also I think it is a good reflection of where a lot of First Nations people are. Because in 1901, this is reported in the evening news in Sydney, Aboriginal board, this is the Aboriginal Protection Board which I use it regularly, I call it colonial paradigm. It was stated a communication was received from the Manilla Progress Association suggesting the removal of the Aborigines camp from that place, the place that they've always been. The police reported in favour of the suggestion but said the Aborigines at the place were orderly in their habits, which is nice to know, it was decided to inquire what use the reserve at Bora was put to and whether the half castes at Manilla would go if the inducements such as erection of huts were held out to them. When I first came across this, it didn't only resonate it hit me that, shit, this is what we've been living with for so long, not only my mob but a lot of people. And three words continue to jump out at me and if you use them in the context of the Australian arts sector, the cultural sector that we all love and work - progress, removal and inducements. That's a space that we continue to be in today. I picked this up in the notes, about negotiating the institutional aspects of professional practice. Institutions are structures and mechanisms of social order, incorporation, governing the behaviour of a set of individuals. Once more the question of how does that relate to First Nations? Because I personally think we can't sit here and work out what our aspirations are, how we have courage and move forward without addressing the unfinished business and that's where First Nations people sit in society today and it's not about how we enhance an Australian culture, it's about the need to actually change and develop a whole new cultural consciousness for this country. (Applause) Addressing the issues that surround our shared history since 1788. We hear a lot in the public with Uluru Statement of the Heart, Makarata, truth telling, courage, we can't move forward from a society and the art sector can't move forward in their own little pockets without addressing these issues. So what does it take to change? And this is a lovely cartoon I came across from Mickelson. I didn't licence it, I have just taken it off the rent that is owed. (Laughter) So that maybe is one way to change but I said to Richard, "Fuck, we forgot the buckets to put up the back to collect the rent."

Richard Bell: I've got a hat!

Peter White: So I came across this bit of work and thought what a great way to establish the baseline that we need to know what the problem is, to take the blinkers off and fully understand what this Australian society is all about. This is a little bit of work a fair few years ago but still really relevant today and will probably continue to be. Bell's theorem, Aboriginal art. It's a white thing. Can everyone read that? Don't need to read it out? What really jumped out at me is what Richard was getting at of we exist in this colonial paradigm of either paternalism or racism. Blast from the past. So we've got a bit of time so I'd like to just go through these with everyone. As I said, just set the baseline - I don't know - have we got the courage for everyone to put their hands up if they say yes or no? OK. Do you believe - and I mean really believe - Aboriginal people once owned all of Australia? Yes?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Still own all of Australia?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Still have rights to land that have not been properly negotiated?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Had a recognisable form of land tenure.

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Were civilised?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Are civilised?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Deserve to own all of Australia at any time?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Deserve to own all of Australia now?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Deserve to own any of Australia at any time?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Deserve to own any of Australia now?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Deserve to own any of the good parts of Australia? (Laughter) No-one believes that. Can manage their own affairs?

Audience: Yes.

Peter White: Should be thankful for everything you have done for us?

Audience: No (laughter).

Peter White: And should be thankful for some things you have done for us.

Audience: No.

Peter White: And then Richard states ask yourself what you believe and what you think the average punter believes and don't bullshit. And I think just with that, I think we all know where Australia's actually standing. For me, the big question is this: Are you a good person? Very simple. Very easy way to move forward. Don't just palm it off. We've got to actually enact what that means. I guess instead of trying to reinvent the wheel, because there's been lots of fantastic work over the years, how many people know of the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous people? How many articles are there? 46. So we know of it but don't know it all that well. I will read this out. The declaration on the right of Indigenous peoples, the declaration affirms the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, security and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples worldwide and enshrines Indigenous people's rights to be different. The declaration was adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations in September 2007. This was the culmination of more than 20 years of negotiation between Indigenous peoples and governments of the world. The Australian Government announced its support for the declaration in 2009. The declaration is particularly significant because Indigenous peoples, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First People of this land, were involved in its drafting. So you'd be a bit of a fool to just ignore that. That's a strong body of work and sets the parameters about, well, maybe this is some of the things that we need to actually listen to. I'll just quickly go through a few of them then move on a bit because I believe that these instruments can form the base of moving forward, not just knowing about them but enacting on them and empowering them and owning them in all of the way we do business. Article 1. We have the right to the full enjoyment of the collective or individuals of all human right and fundamental freedoms as recognised in the chart of the United Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Human Rights. I think this is a - of course it's article 1 but it is a great starting point particularly for black fellas in this country because very simply it's just stating "treat us like humans." We are human. You can't get in a four-wheel drive and go and run over a young boy and treat him worse than a dog. And this is the system we're living in. This is the system we work in. This is what it needs to go back to, acknowledging that we are in fact human. Indigenous peoples and individuals are equal to other individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination in the exercise of their rights and in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity. When I read that, particularly standing in an organisation like this and many other cultural institutions I have made my career in, it just goes to show how far away we are, whether it's institutional discrimination, indifference, which leads to discrimination, or just an overall sense of apathy towards us. Article 15, Indigenous peoples have the right to their dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. States shall take effective measures in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society. I'll throw that one open to the audience. Has anyone seen an effective

measure of that happening that we can build on? We might revisit that towards the end. That's a very simple statement, I think, that we can actually achieve. Once more, the key word there is "effective". I think there's lots of measures get thrown about, particularly by Government, particularly by well-meaning organisations or individuals but are they really effective and are they coming from a connection or being led by First Nations people? Article 18. Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision making in matters which would affect their rights through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions. Another pop quiz, seeing as I don't want to be picking on the National Gallery of Australia.

Richard Bell: Why not?

Peter White: I suppose that's a good point. I don't know. I've been in the museum gallery world for a long time but does anyone know the Indigenous or First Nations board member or trustee who sat on the National Gallery of Australia's board? I see lots of Aboriginal art, First Nations art all around but I don't know, I'm not being pedantic here, I don't know. I haven't had the time to go through all the annual reports before I came down. I have been a bit busy. That's a simple point there of this is an institution, a very august institution that's actually leading the way, many people say, but where is the representation in the decision making? Another thing I'd like to add is it's 2018, what are our expectations in this year?

Richard Bell: It's like that Bob Marley song, you know "everything's gonna be all white now."

(Laughter)

Peter White: We're getting towards the end. As I said, there's 46 of these recommendations from the Human Rights Commission. I suggest everyone here go and have a look and maybe even develop a little personal charter of how you can address a lot of these or whether you actually agree with them. That's a good starting point. As I said, we need to establish a base line here of where we can grow upon. States shall consult - no, I've read that one out. Indigenous people have right the to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions - we were talking about institutions earlier, what that means - to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress. I think that might be a really good point to put in the Code of Practice and develop some effective measures around that. And article 34. Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, judicial systems or customs in accordance with international human rights standards. Once more, very pertinent to the questions around developing a Code of Practice. So what role can you play? Understand the problem, own the problem. Is there a problem?

Richard Bell: There's no black problem. There is a white problem though.

Peter White: That's everyone, whether you work in organisations, whether you're a practising artist, whether your part of Government. I think these are the fundamental starting points. There's a number of initiatives happening around - that had been happening around the country. 1973, a certain Prime Minister established the Aboriginal Arts Board I think in that media release saying full control and decision-making for Aboriginal arts would be handed

over to Aboriginal people. We're still not really there. I guess it's only 1973 so we've still got a bit of a way to go. Things around the National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority have been asked about, have been talked about, have been planned, have had business plans around asserting our rights, advocacy for those rights, developing that voice. They're works still in progress. In this particularly we have the Indigenous Art Code doing great work but is it being allowed to be as effective as what it should be? What's that question? Why isn't it? Is it? Why isn't it? Is it about support? Is there an issue around apathy towards that? We have a Parliamentary Inquiry into fake art. It's come up again. I go back to that question: It's 2018, what's our expectations in this day? Other campaigns like arts funds First Peoples first, if you're developing the right frameworks, these are the things that people need to be aware of to educate yourself, to understand what the problem is and to own it. Probably from trying to set the scene, I'll hand over to Richard who's got all the answers.

(Laughter)

Richard Bell: Fuck me! That's a lie, that's a lie, that's a goddamn lie. I don't have the answers. That's an image of the Australian pavilion in Venice and this was my proposal for that - I proposed to wrap the Australian pavilion in chains, big chains, like ship's anchor chains of all different sizes and all different states of repair and disrepair. There was a big fuss about the Venice selection procedure and the Australia Council got itself into a bit of a tangle by not talking to the oligarchs about their role in it and what actually happened was that the Venice biennale wrote to the Australia Council expressing their displeasure at the incidence of Australia allowing oligarchs, the rich folks, to be the commissioners of the Venice Biennale and with them, amazingly, having artists in their collections be selected for Venice. They wanted that to change and they expressed their design to have an independent - somebody from within the Australia Council be the commissioner of the Venice Biennale in the future. There was then this very short period of time, maybe about a month or so, where they changed the process, where they once again invited artists to put forward proposals for Venice and I decided to put in a proposal about 48 hours from the deadline. I was in Montreal actually when I did it with a friend, really good at writing applications and that sort of thing, so we put together this thing. It was initially called "I don't really need this" and that was me telling the Australia Council I'm submitting a proposal - where's that thing, the pointer thing? I made it very clear to them that - you see the concept. I thought I'll let these people know exactly what this is about in the sentence. It says, "This proposal is an offer from the Australia Council to participate in the newest and most ambitious installment of Embassy 2012 ongoing at the Venice Biennale 2019. Embassy blah, blah, blah" but it was an opportunity for them to participate in it, not to funking project manage me, not to tell me what to do, not to fuck up my program like they do every other artist. I made it very hard for them to actually give me the gig. This is this courage you're talking about, like you want a few lessons in how to be courageous, come and hang out with us up in Brisbane, there's a whole heap of us up there doing shit like that. Anyway, it goes on, I proposed to turn the Australian pavilion into a massive sculpture. Wrapping the Australian pavilion in chains, the irony is this is so delicious. In them not giving it to me, my intention was always to go and always to a Tent Embassy to discuss the issues that this sculpture proposals, so, like, as a comment on the treatment of Indigenous peoples. It's a critique of colonial history including its monuments as a disavow of the nationalism upon which settler education is based - what the fuck does it say - including global representation vis-a-vis the Venice Biennale, as a comment on restrictions of freedom placed upon Aboriginal communities, for example, the intervention, the basics card. This is available online. The whole process was so messed up. So secretive. We had to sign a non-disclosure agreement which I was always going to break. (Laughter) I told everybody. Anybody listening, said, "Richard, you doing anything for the

Venice thing?" Fuckin' oath, mate. Look at this. I showed it to everybody who came within proximity of me. (Laughter) five days after they awarded it to - can you hear me? I got my sexy voice on or what? Where was I? What was I talking about?

Peter White: Your sexy voice.

Audience: Five days later.

Richard Bell: Five days later, I published my proposal in an art exhibition. I dared the Australia Council to sue me for showing an artwork and I got the curator of the next Venice Biennale, he came through, took a photo of the work that I exhibited, put it on his Instagram. (laughter) fingers crossed I might get into the Venice Biennale but anyway, I'm still going to Venice, I'm fundraising at the moment. I've got a Go Fund Me page at the moment - a bit of advertisement here - and I've got an exhibition coming up. If any rich folks in here want to come up, all the paintings are for sale. Also, I'll be doing some sort of incentive where people who give a certain amount of money can stay with us because I'm getting a couple of palazzos and if I can't get the palazzos we can get villas on the water, make sure we get a water taxi. We can party all fuckin' night. I've got this program, big program going and there's a party as well. We've got Hannah Bronte with the show where we can take nine people, we can do those things, \$5 a week, no problem. We'll take anything. \$1, \$2, \$3 for this program. I'm building a team to have this happen where I've got a team in Venice, one who's looking at the accommodation for us and also the party venue and the other is looking for venues to stage Embassy and also the person I have on the ground to do that is also an architect and he's going to build a replica of the Australian pavilion and I'm gonna wrap that mother fucker in chains! I'm going to put on a barge and send it up and down past the Biennale. (Laughter) (Applause) (Sings) I need a dollar, dollar, dollar is what I need. That's courage. I think. I hope this inspires you. When a door closes, you know, kick that mother fucker off the hinges and go through that door and keep following your dreams, your aspirations. Don't let people kill them off. I don't know what happened in the room but this is the best idea I've ever had, I've never had another idea this strong, I guess. For me waiting to get picked for Venice, I'm statistically dead. I should have been dead at 57 or some shit. I'm way past that so I'm not waiting, I'm taking my idea and I'm going to put it there. I just saw Fred Leone yesterday walking my dog - beautiful dog too - saw Fred and he's a very strong cultural man and pretty good rapper too and I spoke with him about bringing some dancers over to Venice and Fred's really smart and connected so he said he could raise money for him to bring those. We're going to have a really deadly time. You're all invited. Come over there. Fuck it, I'm gonna leave it at that!

(Applause)

Peter White: So (laughter) when I was talking to Richard a couple of weeks ago saying I've got this gig on and he gave me the spiel that you just heard and it's like -

Richard Bell: This is much more dramatic, this one.

Peter White: It just hit home. This is one of the ways - we talk about self-determination, non-reliance on Government. We all know that the policy dearth that we are actually sitting in but also particularly in the First Nations history, people in the visual arts side of things, people probably look at all the investment that happens in so-called Indigenous visual arts programs of the Commonwealth and the States and the Government funding guidelines and if you actually - and I guess I've been in those spaces as well - if you actually sit and pick through

them, they're about just funding the now, to be seen. There's no growth, there's no development. I think we're experiencing what's been happening in the last four years in terms of funding shortages or even just trying to understand how much is in the bucket, how the decisions get made.

Richard Bell: Don't Australian Ballet and Australian Opera get something like 80% of the budget? We should get together and make a magnificent offer to the Government like that we would support absolutely the policy to give the Australian Opera and the Australian Ballet 30% of the Australian arts budget. There's a few other things we could do. The musicians, whenever a song's played on the radio, they get some money out of that, like when our paintings are hung on these walls, we get nothing. That's got to change. You fellas here, you've got to change this shit up because - and while I'm at it, while I'm giving free advice...(laughter) I'm looking at this thing and NAVA is driving this thing but it's a national body and you left out the chapter on the grassroots. You're driving this thing without having grass-roots support. Good luck with that. I think you should be looking at having some national and regional discussions in places not named Sydney and Melbourne. Something like that. The rest of the conversation, I'm sending you a bill. My art dealer will anyway.

(Laughter)

Peter White: Ok, so we've got, by my reckoning, 45 minutes which gives us a lot of time to have a chat, discuss things. These are the benefits of bringing everyone together and sharing viewpoints and that. But first, because it is First Peoples, First Nations, is there -

Richard Bell: Have you finished reading that?

Peter White: Would any of the First Nations reps here like to add anything to what's been said already, their views of where we're going, where we've come from, what we need?

Gabriel Nodea: I'm also in my position back home for Melbourne University Centre for Material Conservation (inaudible) they took over the land all the way to 1967 and giving us the right to use it and introducing money and alcohol and all the way to now, one decade of each. Look at all the policy and Government changes our people have been going through and the harsh time. Look at the positive side of what they're doing for us all the way to now and then push it forward. Talking about the negative. Thanks.

Peter White: I think that's why we're here now, to build on those positives as well. Because that's the way we're really going to move forward.

Richard Bell: In the 1950s there was the UN declaration on the right to self-determination for not only Indigenous peoples but for the African nations, like what happened there, like self-determination took a long time to take hold in Australia. It didn't change in Australia. What we had, the policy was assimilation before the policy of determination. And we've had tremendous struggles all over this country dealing with the effects of colonialism, of having our lands taken. Having not only our lands taken but our culture. Many of our stories as well. There has been tremendous loss all over the country in that regard and not just loss of life and we have to find our way forward, like the Waman is one of the leading organisations where Aboriginal people have gotten together and are moving forward in this modern world and they're talking about post-modernism, we're still in modernism. This is the reality that we have. I support the Code you have but encourage you to look at grass roots, the Waman is one

of those groups. Proper now that I'm a member of, it is one of those groups. There's lots of great organisations out there that had been around for decades, some of them. I think it would be wise to reach out to those. All free advice.

Damien Shen: I'm Damian from Adelaide. I'm Ngarrindjeri and Chinese My mum was born on the Rukkan mission, the church pictured on the \$50 note. That's where my family came from. I have been practising as an artist for about four and a half years now. Came in quite late and in that time had some great experiences as well as probably in the last - since November I'm the Treasurer on the board of Tandanya, which is the Aboriginal gallery in SA and also work as an assessor on the Arts SA grants assessment group. In a short period I have been able to observe a lot of things relating to the arts. I guess one of the big things I find - and you've already mentioned it, especially from a Government perspective, is funding support for artists within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector. There's just not enough money in the grant rounds to support great projects that are coming through then when you look at the projects there's so much other stuff that can be worked on as well which is the development of artists with regards to how they apply themselves and development of applications because we see all kinds of stuff coming through. As an artist for myself, I think there's one issue that I think we all face especially as we get older and as we develop and have families and children and all that sort of stuff, is time. I find that within, I guess, my area of experience there's not a lot of capacity or people with the type of capacity that we require to run organisations all the time. We're accessing people from interstate or getting people in but most people are pretty well have their capacity taken up by many things so the last seven months has been hugely distracting for my practice but I probably, for that period of experience, wouldn't have had it any other way because Tandanya is coming up to 30 years as an institution which is important for SA and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, emerging artists coming through the State. We face all these issues and I don't know what the answer is to be honest with you. I have a lot of sleepless nights trying to work out how we're working through everything. Also as an artist, for a lot of emerging artists, especially metro artists - I'm classed as an urban artist - it's very difficult to - unless you're geared in a certain way too, get lot of connections on the east which is probably where most of the action happens, and I thought it's really important for me to be here because I have been pretty dormant for about six months dealing with administrative stuff, to get back out there and meet people and a young artist wrote to me on Instagram and said, "I'd love to meet. Someone introduced you." So things like this are so important about networking and I said to him just before the morning tea, it's like you never know the opportunities that come out of just having a coffee with someone, an artist or curator who could give you an opportunity to show in an ARI. The first time I showed interstate was like Black Dot in Melbourne which open up doors for me. At any given point we really have to look to those other sites for that assistance but also understand that everyone is under an incredible amount of pressure just to keep the doors open as administrators as well so it's just - we live in just such a difficult time and that's why I really like Esther's positivity and this optimism.

Richard Bell: Kick the door down.

Damien Shen: Yeah, and I love spending time with the guys I've met over the years like Richard and Vernon and guys who are like mentors to me now and, yeah, I see NAVA as really important.

Richard Bell: Go to a rich neighbourhood and burn their cars.

(Laughter)

Damien Shen: It is really important to understand too. My mum is from the era of a very political activism. My mum has, I think, some photo in this collection. She was like a street photographer back in the late '80s, '90s. It was a very different fight to some degree, the way I talk nowadays and my sister does, but that's my observation in a relatively short four years or so and I think we just have to keep fighting and -

Richard Bell: Kick some doors down.

Damien Shen: Kick doors down. The times where we get really tired, sometimes it's - just get your energy back, think about your personal safety and your energy and be around the people who care about you, get your energy back and come back out for round 20 or whatever it's going to be but it's never going to end and we, as artists, have got to keep making and as people with capacity got to keep administrating and assisting those who are coming through too.

Richard Bell: We've got an unregulated industry. This industry, the creative industries - I did a little bit of research and I discovered that the mining industry contributes something like 7.2% of GDP. The creative industries, our industry, does 7.1. The mining industry has 1.2 million jobs in the boom. Boom or no boom, we have 1.3 or 1.5 million workers. We're paying tax. The mining industry isn't. Why is the Government is giving all this money to the mining industry? There's nothing coming back from them. From us, we're giving. We need people advocating to them who can speak in this neo-Liberal language that they talk, you know, this economic financial mumbo jumbo that they go on about. We need people in there and they need to be - God damn it, they need to be door knocking. Come on. This country's obsessed with sport. You look back 200 years ago, who was the greatest footballer? Who was the greatest cricketer? No-one knows. Nobody gives a fuck. They don't care about the sport and that sort of thing. People do care about the arts. We need to get out there. We need to have a 1 minute 30 second version, a 30-second version, a 2.5-minute version of why art is so great, why we need it in our lives. (Applause) I'm available!

(Laughter)

Peter White: Thanks, Richard. Just before I move it on and open it up, I'm mindful that I'm just thinking back to this year's NAIDOC theme, Because of Her We Can. We've got some First Nations sisters in the room. Would any of you like to share your views, thoughts, observations, reflections?

Richard Bell: Come on.

Peter White: Thank you.

Speaker: I just wanted to say, Richard, I bless you with the unexpected windfall to make your project happen. I want to be there. And I just come back from Darwin in a curator's forum and I think it's really important in terms of NAVA, the protocols and the Code of Practice, that major institutions get behind setting up cultural councils or elders to oversee cultural integrity of the programs they're delivering.

Richard Bell: To put Aboriginal people on the boards, Sally?

Sally Smart: Yes.

Richard Bell: Deputy Director of the board here?

Esther Anatolitis: We are proud to have two Indigenous board members on our board, Peter White and Amala Groom, very proud.

Richard Bell: Ok. (Laughter) Is that all?

(Laughter)

Esther Anatolitis: But we also have Richard Bell on tap.

Richard Bell: But I'm easy. And cheap.

Speaker: Thank you. Good luck with your project too, Richard.

Richard Bell: Thanks.

Peter White: Anyone else? No?

Rohin Kickett: My name is Rohin Kickett from Perth and this is a very important seminar for us. In WA, we have a lot of different Aboriginal art centres right across the State. In Perth, we don't actually have one for our people and it proves we don't have the same opportunities that the other art centres get because the art centres have those relationships with the galleries and they have their shows and they put on these fantastic shows.

Richard Bell: Fight for it.

Rohin Kickett: The funding isn't there because we're not regional and we don't have the support. We see a lot of funding going into helping artists do projects but there's no actual funding for teaching and for that - for teaching the next generation of artists coming through and that's how you build that foundation for the future. You look at the younger generation and help them to come through but at the moment it's just basically a way of them showing, oh, we care, we're funding this project, we're funding that project, but it is really only funding for the now and there's nothing for the future and that's one of the biggest problems that I see in WA.

Richard Bell: You're going to have to do it yourself, mate. In Brisbane, we didn't get that funding either. That funding always went to the rural areas. We set up a group in the '80s called Camp Fire Group and in the early naughties we set up a group called ProppaNow. We have never had Government funding. We have been paid to go to the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair but we refused to make an application for funding. We said, no, we're a business, we'll send you an invoice. That's essentially the only Government money that we've had. We did it hard but we actually came out of that much stronger, busier. We set it up to promote ourselves as individuals and now we were so successful and working, we hardly have time to meet and to have shows anymore. I'd encourage you to talk to other brothers and sisters over there. Talk to Francine Kickett. I have spoken to her about this before and there's other people there in Perth that you should be talking with, like just - even just having those discussions. That can start things off. We have a degree course in contemporary Aboriginal art at Griffith University and we pushed for it back in the '80s, which became a reality I think in about '95 or '96, maybe '94. When was it?

Speaker: '94.

Richard Bell: '94. There you go. So we laid the groundwork and that's what you're going to have to do, brother. Papa Richie.

Peter White: 25 minutes to go. I might open it up. Oh sorry.

Bianca Beetson: I just wanted to - this is something that's been really a bugbear for me for quite a while and this is more for the curators and the institutions. I'm really tired of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists being put in the Reconciliation Action Plan and the NAIDOC budget. It's the two busiest weeks for of the year for us all but it's ridiculous, they need to be programming our work because it's god damn worthwhile and world class other than them saying, "We've only got money to show Aboriginal stuff during these weeks," or trot out our little black fellas as little trophies and we make them look like they're doing good things. We need to be first and foremost in everything they do. We need to be always first at the table, always thought about rather than just these two weeks of the we're when they showcase us like these little - dust off their little trophies.

(Applause)

Richard Bell: I can say that I made a career out of darkies corner, I've been an artist included at the last moment. There have been so many shows like that. They realise they needed some diversity. I'd get the worst space in the whole gallery. It's great because you get the worst space and do something that's really good in there and you take it away from all the other fuckers.

Peter White: We might open it up to any other questions, comments about what's been said, going back to that, I think it's all over the branding, artistic courage. Sometimes that's all it takes, a bit of courage. I always say from what I was talking about at the beginning of this presentation to how do we need to - understanding what the problem is and the need to change things in a simplistic, it is a change-management process. The key element of that change management - because not many people enjoy change. Everyone's afraid of it or scared, you know, it's a bit uncomfortable. That's when change is actually happening and we need to build in resilience. There's lots of theories and that that go round that and part of that is having spaces like this to actually have those conversations in and bring it out and actually either agree or disagree. After one has an opinion but we can't move forward - I think one of the other underlying elements from what I said - put up about the newspaper article to what Bianca just said, it always goes back to, for me, this amazing movie I think in the '80s, uncle Bob knows it and Auntie Justine Saunders, called the Fringe Dwellers, that's what we still are in a lot of cases, we're kept on the fringes, darkies corner is a bit better description.

Richard Bell: If you want to see how empire works, have a look at the history of Aboriginal organisations. Like you will see every tactic that the Government uses and to be forewarned is to be forearmed so I think it is really important you look at the history of contact between Aboriginal people and Governments and the way that they deal with them because they will deal with you the way that they deal with us. You're recalcitrant little children. That's how you'll be treated. So you need to start developing strategies to counter those sorts of tactics. Present a united front and demanding national visual arts conferences. Let get serious. Let's talk about the issues at the heart of this thing. We're going back to the black fella thing, I'll be honest with you, Aboriginal art is about five times, maybe 10 times bigger than the rest of

Australian art, ok. And in terms of sales, in terms of numbers of sales and in terms of value of sales. So, it's time for the tail to stop wagging the dog. Be the fuckin' dog. Be the big dog. We need to be seen and respected for why - why do you think Aboriginal artists are so much bigger? You've got to start thinking, start questioning what is it about Aboriginal art that the rest of the world finds so interesting? You'll find those answers within yourselves. Where's that soapbox?

(Applause)

Peter White: I think there was a hand up over here. Yep.

Speaker: Hello. Thank you. This is very interesting. I'm interested in what Richard said that art is an unregulated industry. I have question to anybody, to you two, what do you think a regulated industry would look like and do we want one?

Richard Bell: It would look very different to what we have now. For instance, I see down here I'd find my way here. Any other business, the person who invited me here would be at the airport picking me up or if they couldn't do that they'd send an underling to pick me up or, worst-case scenario, someone with a note 14 or iPad or tablet saying, "Richie, come here." This is basic manners. Do we have to teach you people manners and how to interact with each other? Come on. You've got to grow up. You've got to start acting like adults. That's what a regulated industry would look like because we would behave as adults. We would not be trying to cut people down and saying, "The exposure will be great." And expect that to be the payment. That's what a regulated industry would look like. We wouldn't need to do ramping where you get three collectors collecting an artwork of A, B and C artists. One of the collectors sells their work to one of these other guys for 30 grand and the next guy sells his to another one of them for 30 grand and the guy who bought the first one sells his thing for 30 grand and all of a sudden the work that was worth \$5,000 is worth \$30,000 on the market. That's how ramping works. You can't do that in any other industry. Those Colombian brothers who own 80% of the Warhols, that's illegal. You can't own more than 10% of an industry, like the copper industry or the blah, blah, blah, you know. This is what regulation looks like. I would much rather have some kind of regulation than to have the free-fall that we have now. I'm available for talks after but it will cost you drinks.

Kelli McCluskey: Hi, my name is Kelli McCluskey, I'm based in Perth. I had a question about tomorrow actually and that all of us are going to be - just you mentioning about Government and our collective responsibility and we're all going to be inside the beast at Parliament House tomorrow and have the to be hobnobbing with politicians.

Richard Bell: They're going to be hobnobbing with us.

Kelli McCluskey: Is there a collective mantra or what should we be saying? How can we form a collective voice that's going to serve a good purpose?

Peter White: I'll hand that over to Esther.

Esther Anatolitis: Thank you and thanks to everyone so far. We're going to have our last session at the end of the day and talk about exactly that, that we can draw all the conversation in to that. Good question and we will talk about exactly that at the end of the day.

Richard Bell: Next.

Peter White: Another hand.

Kaspar Schmidt Mumm: Hello. I came to Australia when I was 10 years old from Europe but I guess when I write a grant I usually tick the multilingual culturally diverse box but I am really interested in how - I spend a lot of time in Canada because my mum's Canadian. They've a really strong policy for first nations and I remember being in Labrador and parts of Quebec and all of the signs in the street, like in Labrador, being translated into English, French, Inu and Inui which are two of the native languages and I'm interested in what kind of movement would have to happen in the arts or in Australia for something like that to happen here because I have no idea how they did it in Canada. I would love to research that but, yeah, on a grass-roots level, how we can give non-Indigenous Australians language and teach them the language rights that this country should have.

Richard Bell: I think you'll find that that instance of the language would result from treaties. We have no treaties here whatsoever so it would be very difficult to do it outside. But then, it could be quite simple. The local council could deem it necessary that there be research done into the local Aboriginal community. They may see their way to finding language. There's an old Aboriginal saying, "Ask and you shall receive".

Peter White: Just to answer from my perspective, I think part of the solution of that is what I was talking about earlier about defining what a new cultural consciousness is. I think what we've just seen in terms of marriage equality in this country went to about seven years of everyone knowing it was going to happen, it just needed to have that time for the politicians to get on board and what was driving that is public pressure and that comes from a particular form of consciousness. That goes back to basic human rights. A simple thing of love is love. Black fellas are human. That's what I was getting at. So things like language - there's a big language reclamation being supported by Government through funding - we need to empower that and enact that. The same as what I say about reconciliation, you know, that's a flawed concept to me because reconcile, to go back to when something was good, well, it's never been good. So we have actually got to invest in the conciliation which in one part is what the Uluru statements of the heart is, in another part that's what treaties are. Treaties are agreements between two parties, or mainly sovereign States, on how to work together but you can drive that through a change of consciousness so I think that's the starting point for me. We had one here, one up the back and then one back. We've got 10 minutes.

Alex Marsden: Hi. I'm Alex Marsden. A couple of things. First up, next year is international year of Indigenous languages and that's a great opportunity to do some stuff and I know I have just been talking with the Australia's national commissioner for UNESCO and they're real a crying out for ideas about what to do. I'm throwing in ideas and I suggest everyone does as well. The second thing is we've been working on a road map for change, a 10-year road map for change. Peter's one of the people on our advisory group for that, Terri Janke's been looking at that and it is how to increase not only Indigenous employment, pathways in museums and galleries around the country, also better ways of participation and representation and that's been a huge undertaking for us and picking up Peter's theme of change management, that's what it's all about, co-working together on change management for the next 10 years. There's a special website on that, we've had a range of workshops and discussions and consultation surveys around the country. Please get on board with that as well. Thanks.

Peter White: We might just go next door but the hand up the back. You got the mic?

Harry: I just wanted to - hi, my name is Harry and I live in this area. I have lived here about 15 years and moved from Sydney. I just wanted to say thank you, really, to the Indigenous owners who have, I guess, given back to me in the sense that I've been able to have the words of Welcome to Country in my mind as something that as a non-Indigenous Australian gives me a route back into Australia so when I've travelled recently and I've gone to somewhere sacred, they're sort of the words now that come to me, those ideas of Welcome to Country that I don't have in my own language of my little, you know, German family origin, it's the Welcome to Country that gives me meaning and gives me an idea about who I am as an Australian so I guess I just wanted to say thank you to that because those words, I guess, give me some sort of insight into being here and you being generous with your country with us.

Peter White: Thanks.

Patricia: Thank you for giving me the microphone. My name is Patricia, I am Italian and I am going to say something which might be a little bit controversial but I'm used to it because I am Italian. I am intrigued by your idea of regulation, the need for regulation in the art market. So my question to you is: Are you really sure you want greater regulation? Because, to my understanding, art has got this huge potential to undermine accepted social norms by the very idea that it is unregulated so, to my view - and I could be wrong - if you ask for greater regulation, that regulation can only happen through the institutions, right, through the hierarchy of institutions, which then becomes even more politicised than it is and then you risk encountering even more the kind of problem that you've encountered when you wanted to do that kind of work in the Venice Biennale. To my view, that problem you had is because of the regulation of the institutions so do we really want regulation or perhaps should we look at art asserting itself as an industry in its own right?

Richard Bell: Regulation, in the way that I imagine - I would want to regulate against ramping and things like that. I'd want galleries that charge 50% now because they go to art fairs, they charge every artist in their stable 50% instead of 40%. Not every artist gets to show in the art fairs. To me, I would want that to be illegal and that sort of thing. And if the regulation - I'd be working against it anyway. (Laughter) which ever Government's in, I don't care if it's Labor or Liberal, they're all assholes so I'm going to go for 'em. I don't discriminate. Any Government will do.

Patricia: Thank you.

Peter White: In terms of regulation, there's also the other element of pre-existing regulation that was touched on in the Code of Practice with Workplace Health and Safety. It's an issue that's sort of coming up in the museum and gallery field, the public museum and galleries first and foremost but I think it's applicable right throughout. We're continually hearing over the last five or more years the need for culturally safe spaces, for not only First Nations staff that work within these organisations but people that engage with them, particularly in the museum field that hold very sensitive materials, actually hold our old people's remains still in them, sacred objects, and in terms of why bring up the issue around regulation, workplace health and safety, the new change - well, the not so new changes now that, you know, your workplace has to be safe from not only physical harm but psychological harm and Aboriginal wellbeing in that space I feel can be constituted as psychological harm just by the very nature of the colonial base that organisations sit in, also how you engage with artists, whether you

contract them in to do shows, curators, and that's a space - there's all these elements out there that are regulated but they're not applied because, oh, well, who really cares about Aboriginal sensitivities in these spaces. But if you talk to some of the curators, some of the people that have worked in these spaces and what they've had to deal with by just being able to walk through the door, that's psychological harm that's been in place. There's legislation there. It hasn't had a case taken up against it yet. I'm assuming it will. So there are also, when you talk about regulations, there's existing legislation in place, Acts, regulations that are applicable that aren't just in the remit. There was a hand up. 3 minutes. Sorry, that's a bit dark over there.

Ben Tupas: G'day, my name is Ben Tupas, I'm from Toowoomba, representing regional Queensland. I suppose combining, Richard, the business of kicking those doors down and Esther's optimism, what is your one take-away for being able to do that when some of the gatekeepers and decision makers are behind the door and we have to interact with them in our communities.

Richard Bell: Well I'd be setting them free.

(Laughter)

Peter White: We're just about to hit 12:30. Quick one. Then we can - that's the great thing about having long breaks, we can continue this in the breaks as well.

Alex: Great. Hi, my name is Alex, I'm an arts worker from Tasmania. You're talking about courage in funding before and your work, Richard, as well, just putting the chains around the Australian pavilion and how kind of artistically courageous that act is and I just wanted to make a comment about the Federal Government has shown that there is money around to spend on works that show our shared history. There's \$50 million that is potentially going towards the reinvigoration of a statue of Captain Cook and some kind of weird cross-cultural hut centre that it's both to build. I just wanted to make a comment about the spaces in which artistic courage can be shown. Your work's really great but I guess reality is that that work is shown in a contemporary art setting for contemporary art audiences like this space is filled with like-minded people and there will probably be back-patting in the next two days. My question is broad -

Richard Bell: I can tread on your toes if you like.

Alex Hullah: Two things for you. One simple one. It is fair to say the Federal Government lacks courage in how it supports the arts in this country. The second thing is what are we going to do as a group to try and break down the circle jerks basically?

Richard Bell: These people are our representatives, our parliamentary representatives. 40,000 years ago I worked in the public service. One of the things I learned was that there was this thing, this procedure called - that they call the Ministerial. That's where when a member of the public writes a letter of complaint to the Minister of the Crown, the Minister of the - a letter of complaint to the Minister of the Crown, the Minister of the Crown is required, by law, to answer you within 14 days. If every one of us here picked a Minister and started to write letters of complaint about various issues, they have to respond to you. They have to send you a letter, not an email, they have to send you a letter and a letter costs you a dollar, don't it? Huh? Let's make these fuckers spend their postal budget and I tell you, if one branch gets 100 letters from somebody about one issue, that issue is what they're talking about and then

they ring up the guys next door, "What the hell is going on?" OK. This is how we can do it, by a simple act of writing a letter, spending a dollar. Each of us spending a dollar. A dollar a week. That's 52 letters a year. It will scare the shit out of these people. Just say by that the way we want you to replace your arts funding, better still, let's quadruple arts funding and shit like that, OK. That's the last free advice I'm giving!

(Laughter)

Peter White: Thank you.

Esther Anatolitis: Thank you, Richard Bell, thank you Peter White. (Applause) We have got so much to talk about together. That last question is really pertinent because obviously our two days are about exactly that but in our last session tomorrow we're going to look at some very, very practical ways that we engage with the political process. It could be - we're going to look at the Australia Council's electoral profiles where you can go to the Australia Council website and look at all the data we have been putting in from our reports and research and you can choose by electorate some very specific information. Seriously, it is one of the most political things the Australia Council has ever done, to put all of that information in our hands that when we talk to our MPs and write to them and invite them to our openings and keep talking to them we've got all the stuff we need to get them talking about what their re-election relies upon. Now, it is lunchtime. We're going to come back at 1:30 where we will talk about ARIs and the fact that over the last 20 years or more of the Code there's plenty in there for ARI but no ARI chapter so the whole next session is about artist-run initiatives. Please come back ready to go at 1:30. There's plenty of lunch. Enjoy it. Fill your pockets and please continue to have these conversations with each other and if you haven't met any of the various First Nations artists and people working in the Aboriginal arts centres and so on across the country then make a special point of having a look at their name tag, going up and saying high and continuing the conversation. Thank you very much to you two.

(Applause)