Redfern Mural Gathering (13/11/2015)

Uncle Ray Davison – Welcome to Country

RD: It's lovely to be here today. Each time I get the opportunity to do a Welcome to Country, I like to express to people that are unaware of what Country actually means, I'll explain what it means a little bit. But I also like to make the non-Aboriginal people feel more at home with our culture, because it's part of your heritage and tradition now as well. Especially people around this area here. The significance of the meaning of today is really important for the local area so just before I do the actual Welcome to Country I'll speak for another moment. To have that mural opposite the station there for the amount of years that we've had it now, it projects the community. And one of the main drawings or paintings on that wall is the early, our first premiership winning team from this area, the Redfern All Blacks, way back in the 1970s. And it's really culturally significant, and really important because people – especially Aboriginal people – associate with that. So the amount of years it's been there, it's part of the community so I hope today, you know, we get things worked out here and we get the restoration underway, because it is a wonderful thing. And just hitting on being born in this area here, this building alone, on the area that it stands, is really, really, you all know the black history of Redfern. This is where the history of Redfern was first created. This is where it's been projected through the 70s and 80s and the 90s and up till today and it's got a really, really, really, rich history of black history. And for me to be on my tribal land, on my clan land, and to be able to invite people along to the event that we're here to celebrate, once again it's a great privilege. So my name is Ray Davison. I'm here this morning on behalf of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. The Metro Lands Council and its members being the custodians of clan groups of the Eora Nation, give me permission to come along to the Welcome to Country, as well as being a traditional person. I'm Gadigal man. This is my clan land area. My people, the Gadigal people, are one of twenty-nine clans that make up the Eora Nation. And our tribal boundaries, as we regard as significantly rich in heritage to us and we regard as sacred, are the three rivers of Sydney; the Hawksbury River, the Nepean River, the Georges River, and actually the waters of the ocean beyond. Within those boundaries are twenty-nine clans of the Eora Nation, and it gives me pleasure on any given occasion, once again, to welcome people to Aboriginal land. Now, just for the non-Aboriginal people, I like to say to people in this regard, we all have one mother, and that's Mother Earth. And she knows us all individually and loves us all equally. So it doesn't matter where you were born, you're part of the earth, and part of the land, just the same as I am. So if you're born, if you're non-Aboriginal, and you're born within the Sydney Basin here, you're part of the Eora as well now. So when I do Welcome to Country, it's not just an Aboriginal thing, it's an Australian thing, and I give Welcome to Country. Because Welcome to Country has been around for thousands of years. Welcome to Country, we celebrate in it when we have big celebrations like this, big corroborees, and we celebrate by song and dance. Now it's no less significant today that I'm performing a Welcome to Country in the way that I'm performing it's no less significant in its importance. And today as well, once again, it's not just an Aboriginal thing, but it's an Australian thing. So it gives me, always a great pleasure, especially when I'm standing on clan land each time I do it, you know. And this area here, not just my traditional land, this is the area where I actually grew up, where I was born and grew up, and it's my urban area where I have roots, not just my traditional roots of thousands of years, but my roots of being born here and raised here. So it's wonderful, and once again, every time I have the opportunity to welcome people to Aboriginal land, I like to express the importance of it. Welcome to Country, once again, has been around for thousands of years and it really is important within our Aboriginal culture, because we've always been aware of it. And it's lovely today, in regard to the importance that's been given back to it by the state government, and federal government and private enterprises. It's really lovely, so hopefully it's going to be a thing that's growing in the future. It is now my pleasure in accordance with Aboriginal custom and protocol to take this opportunity to pay respects to the elders and descendants, both past and present, of the Eora people, and extend that respect to colleagues and non-Aboriginal people here today, and welcome you to the land of the Eora, on behalf of the Gadigal clan. Once again, welcome to the Eora, welcome to Aboriginal land may the spirits of my ancestors walk beside you and protect you while you're on Gadigal land, as I know they walk beside to protect me. So look, I hope you have really good outcomes today, because it is a really important thing for, you know, not just the Aboriginal community, but the community of Redfern or the inner-city. And once again, it's been a great pleasure, on behalf of Metro Lands Council to be here this morning to welcome you to Aboriginal land. So thank you all very much.

Nathan Moran

NM: What a hard task, following Uncle Ray. Something I do, unfortunately, pretty regularly. So apologies for the letdown. Today, it's my great pleasure, as the CEO of Metro Lands Council, to welcome you all here today, and hopefully provide a bit of a backdrop and an overview of today, and more importantly about the project, and respectfully pay homage to all those who have made this happen. So firstly, I'd like to pay my respects too to the Gadigal elders who have welcomed you here today, on the Eora Nation. I'm [name – unsure of correct spelling] I'm from the North, I'm a foreigner. North of the Hunter. I'm actually part of Unc's wife's family. We're all connected in some way. They say about six separations in the world, and we've got one in this country. That probably brings me to what we're talking about here today. This place, Redfern. You know, this mural we're talking about. The '40,000 Years' mural. And really how important – and you've heard from Uncle Ray – it is to our community, and in fact how I've discovered, how it is to all in the community of Redfern and surrounds. The mural for many years, as a young fellow for me personally, growing up. My mother was a bureaucrat who dragged us to the city on many occasions. Part of land rights, part of Aboriginal affairs. We lived all around Redfern, and we lived around the surrounding suburbs of Alexandria, and Rozelle. But what was common was that you always knew when you got to Redfern. You walk up the rail line and you walk straight out, and you've seen that mural, and you look straight over the back of it and you've seen that backdrop and you knew where you were. My great tragedy was coming here in the 90s. Finishing school on the coast, and coming back down here to go to University. Living in 23 Louis Street, with my uncle. And unfortunately, getting off the train at Redfern, walking up, and having a look at the mural, and going 'what happened to it? it's falling apart. I can barely see the faces of the Redfern All Blacks team.' It's very much the centrepiece of our community and walking along, noticing the decay of that in the 90s was sad enough. But then as recently as joining the Lands Council in the last 14-15 months, to see that the art's nearly unrecognisable, and I've watched that deteriorate in the time that I've been back in the city over the last ten years. Ironically as a coach of Redfern All Blacks, as a secretary, also as a member of Metro LAC, and just a resident of the area. And walking past it, trying to explain to young people, particularly the younger All Blacks, and the younger Aboriginal community, about what that mural is. Then of course, where I work today, in the last 14 months, and the very symbol that the Land Council adopted to represent the Redfern community in 1983 and 84 was that mural. So when I started at the Land Council, I think it was the obvious thing to think, 'wow, we should do something about that.' Being Land Councils, and charged with every responsibility known to mankind – with less resources than I'd say most schools' petty cash tins in their canteen – to do it was a very great challenge. And I think that's the greatest beauty of what's come about here, is after commencing at the Land Council, I had a wonderful opportunity to meet community people from the Redfern Station Group, to REDwatch, to Sydney University, and a number of others also involved who I've failed to mention, who have come in and said, 'Look, would you be interested in talking about restoring, or doing something about that mural,' quite simply at the start. 'Absolutely' was the response. Everyone in our community, the irony when they come into reception and you point them down, and say, 'Have a look at our emblem for our Land Council, what it is.' And taking a deep breath and saying, 'Well we wish to dream about that – and I certainly shared that with Desley and Lynn just this morning – you can dream about some things, and hope about some things, but you really wonder if they'll come to pass. It's such a great honour to be here today. Also, I point out the City of Sydney Council who pretty much were there as individuals, but when they heard about the movement becoming more of a realistic collective of the community, they too have joined on. And I think that was sort of the ticking of the box to say that everyone in this community is committed to doing something about that mural. But then the great challenge. As anyone would appreciate in our culture, people who develop things, design things, and do things, they own that, that's theirs. It's their intellectual property. It's their right to preside over that. And so I'm taking that deep breath, and the end point was to say, 'Where is the artist? How do we find Carol, simply.' Where is she? No one could tell us immediately, other than, 'I think we can find her.' Well I pay homage to all those trackers from the non-Aboriginal community who put out the word that, 'Carol, you're needed. You're not just needed you're actually, we can't go ahead really without you if we're going to do this correctly.' And I really do say that Carol's returning to the community, to be invited to the Land Council, and host a meeting and she same in and asked, 'What are we doing, and what are we wanting to do?' she said, 'You're going to redo it? Who's going to do it?' and we said, 'You.' And it was a really good thing to see, realise, and achieve, was Carol sitting there in the bottom of the Land Council office just chuffed, going, 'Wow. Didn't see this one coming.' Let alone the group that was there. It was the United Redfern Community. It wasn't just the Aboriginal community, it was everyone saying, 'No, we want this to happen. And the best way to do it is to get you back Carol, to re-brush it, retouch it, as it should be, and bring it back to life.' Now that, I suppose was a real journey for us. And now the practical reality is today

we're consulting about what we've been doing for the last 12 months in the background. We've also had negotiations with Urban Growth, about trying to bring them into the picture, given Redfern's transformation. As a lovely African-American social researcher told me, 'Gentrification mate,' in 1994. It was coming to our community. But in saying that I think redoing this mural is everything we need to do to show the history, the backdrop to what Redfern was and should always be known as, the centrepiece, the capital for Aboriginal Australia. You heard Uncle Ray talk about it. I'm sure if you opened up and got the rest of his family they could tell you that every nation, every First Nation I should probably point out for those who are probably not familiar with the way we speak, be it, you know Yolngu people from the far north, from the top end of the Northern Territory, to the Yamatji in the far north-west of WA, to the [Paluwar – unsure of correct spelling] in Tasmania, they're all here, to the Bama in the Far North. Of course all us Kooris, Gooris and Murris. But everything that was Redfern, it's translated into the rights agenda. It's all symbolised through that mural. And if you notice, the mural depicts every part of this great continent. It's not just about here. You know, and I'd say with Unc here, the cultural sensitivity around the use of the freshwater mob's main symbol of creation, the serpent, rather than the eel, for us East-Coasties. You know that's something that sits there, that many don't realise the cultural context that lays within that. Yes, the majority of Australians are aware of the serpent. But we on the coast actually pay homage to the eel, and he's the creator of our watercourses. But that's not what it's about. That mural is about representing all Aboriginal people, the time, the movement, from the 1960s, 70s. And I'm sure Unc can attest that our artwork does at work that was done by one of his family, that Redfern the community always started with the Gadigal, they just got dislocated for a little while. And then certainly from the 1930s, and the 1920s even, the movement came back here to this very place. And I just cant speak high enough about how proud we are as a community to have that mural be re-brushed. Running into Tracey Moffatt, one of the artists who assisted Carol on that mural, recently. It all seems to be the facts are that the stars are aligning for us, and we can't wait to have it happen. We've got the children and the grandchildren of the people that are depicted in that artwork contacting the Land Council and speaking with great glee about seeing it returned, and hoping to see it get back to what it was, if not better. So I can't say any more about how supported this project is, other than to say more about today. Today you're going to be getting the first, I suppose, general community consultation on what's going on. You're going to hear from some real key, we use the word stakeholders, I say resources for this project. Matt Poll, Jason Wing, and Djon Mundine, will be talking later today. But more importantly, you'll hear from Desley. You'll hear from Carol herself, so please be patient. That'll be later on this afternoon. We'll have Cara, another artist, who's been communicating with us about some additives we could probably use, particularly on a bit of the wall that's been painted over recently. But certainly, throughout today we'll give you the opportunity to hear about what we're planning to do, hoping to do, but more importantly, give you a chance to give your input to feed back to us about what we can work with in getting that mural back to life. Bringing Redfern back its centrepiece, I'd say. You can have all of the facades and beautiful buildings being put up, but like I said from the start, when you get off at Redfern Station, what smacks you, and what strikes you about Redfern is that mural, and I think we're all worse off for not seeing it in its full light. And I'll say, the irony that Unc touched on, that it all must have meant to be, when we talked about stars lining up. When we talked with Desley and Lynn, I didn't promote the fact that I had a good gut feeling that RAB were going to win the A-Grade. For the first time since that artwork had depicted that first team, it was the last team in the 70s to win it. So I think that was the final icing on the cake for me. For them to go out to the knock-out, bring the knock-out back in this year, let's hope that artwork can be brushed up and done, and dare I say it, 30,000 blackfellas, Kooris, Gooris and Murris, can come back and return. And for some of those younger ones, actually enjoy something that their parents and grandparents might have told them about, or they've only seen as the Land Council logo. So thank you all, and I look forward to catching up with you throughout the day.

Dave Beaumont

DB: Thank you to Uncle Ray for that beautiful welcome. I think you're all blackfellas now, by the sounds of that. And to Nathan. We're seeing some real leadership, and also in Land Council business, and I know going on behalf of City of Sydney, we proudly, as Nathan does, promote that the City of Sydney is one of the first councils to have a principles of cooperation. And I know Nathan celebrates that too. So I'm just going to reel it back a little bit, do a little bit of boring housekeeping. My friend Jaben here, I used to work in this community centre. I want to thank you Jaben for doing all your, did I call it DJ stuff or? I'm an old DJ from way back, so you'll pardon me. But Jaben said 'just remember there's rangers that come around here now', right? When I was working here ten years ago, The Block was still there, and there wasn't many city staff that came down to these parts. Just the staff that worked in here. But now we get rangers, and we get all these different people coming in so, that's one. Bathrooms, toilets, just straight out there to the left. If you know where the lift is, you just keep going left. I think we've got a break coming up for lunch at 12:30. I want to thank Aunty Merle and Gardeners Lodge for supplying that. Just some filming from Sydney College of the Arts. Before I actually go on that little bit, I'll just come back to, as Nathan was suggesting, the stake holders in this driving. I'm going to say, going right back to Charles Perkins in the Freedom Ride. We're fifty years old you know. And there are a lot of key dates in this week actually, in this week. But on that note, I've invited people to say, and that's to myself too, we're in a time now where we've got to do some freedom driving. Those people back then highlighted the issues back then. NAIDOC, for those who are unaware, is also highlighting the statement and treatment of First Australians. And although I want this to be very positive, sadly we see the trajectory still going skywards around that 'closing the gap'. So if I can bring any sort of language into this conversation today, it's around what Nathan was talking about. The next generation, we saw a beautiful example of reconciliation in the creation of this amazing artwork, and now we see an opportunity to revitalise that, restore it. And that will work on so many levels, and for so many reasons, in this heart of Redfern. My heart beats for Redfern. I want to ask Uncle Ray, he might have known my Mum, because I never knew her. And I think I know you might know my story with that. I was born in 69 here, so you can do that math around Acts and legislation. So when elders in this community talk about Redfern being the heart, and we see princes, and we see rock stars, we see people of all calibre come to this beautiful Redfern to see the advocacies, and see the people working together now. I think let this be the platform, to work together to get this thing sorted. The Dreamtime is 40,000-50,000 years. I've got a piece of paper here in this very room. I did a geneographical project, my heritage. Now, that's my certificate. DNA certificate. It's a mitochondrial strain called N42A, and it is 40-50,000 years of my heritage. And if your heritage came through your mother's lineage, that's how they could track it. So you're damn straight, am I glad that I have gone through my personal journey, but what a beautiful story about the 40,000 years. So I want to thank the Redfern Mural… you now know my age so… I want to thank the Redfern Mural Gathering, which is a collaboration between the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Lands Council, the Redfern Station Community Group, and artists and researchers from Sydney College of the Arts. It's been facilitated by members of the Space, Place, and Country, and we're going to talk about that too. What that Country means. So thanks to Uncle Ray for bit there, in the void in my life personally, coming back to the heart of Redfern. I've never had any Aboriginal person come up to me and say, 'No, we're not going to share our culture with you.' And now we're seeing elders in the community wanting to share that, and it's a beautiful thing. So just a bit of a quick layout before I introduce Matt, our first speaker, we have, through the University, invited the likes of different speakers who are working, living, breathing this stuff, who can help inform, provide some guidance, and then at the back-end of the day will have the opportunity to get the community's input and feedback in various forms. I also just wanted to say quickly that the University will be doing some filming, so that will be one opportunity if you want to share some stories, we'll have a little studio set up inside there. We'll also be able to take down your comments, whether they're anonymous or not. And there might be some voice recordings, and then, as I said, we'll have the panel up here. So without further ado I want to invite Matt up to talk.

Matt Poll

MP: We always sort of hear about the first generation of self-determination, with the Aboriginal Legal Service, Medical Service, the amazing after-school-programs and the different sort of things that the community built for themselves here. The second phase of that is actually this incredible self-determination movement that swept through the arts, where you have places like Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Co-operative, Bangarra, Black Book, theatre companies, the Black Theatre company. The self-determination movement that swept through the arts was actually based in Sydney, and largely in Redfern here, was an incredible explosion of creativity that reached all across the world in some ways. I just wanted to start with this quote by John actually, which I think really talks about the freedom that a lot of people felt from the 70s onwards, to actually explore their own heritage, and how that actually branched out into so many different areas of community building really, community building from the ground up, and how important that is for people in terms of their self-identity and their identification with their culture. So, working at Sydney Uni, there's a huge history of engagements, some of it not ethical, some of it is, starting from the first women doctors who set up the Rachel Forster Hospital in the 1920s. Over the years, much more incredible collaborations have happened, such as The Settlement. And there's so many amazing little stories that you can actually unpack, from just exploring one institution like The Settlement. This is a NAIDOC exhibition from around 1985-1986, and if you look at this section here – I can show a better detail of it maybe afterwards – but that's a Tracey Moffatt exhibition. But her work in the thing is David Gulpilil, 'The Movie Star', which is actually currently held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and I sort of gave up after about four or five different collection searches of finding which institutions this image is held in. so when you think about this grass roots beginning, and artists that are getting their first opportunities to exhibit in their community spaces such as The Settlement, and the different sorts of organisations that existed at the time, we can actually trace these incredible trajectories all the way to Tracey Moffatt being appropriated by the rap star Eminem, in 1999, when he appropriated images from Tracey's 'Something More' in his music video. It has something like 20 million hits of Youtube these days. To trace these historical trajectories, how artists have actually started from community grass roots beginnings, and some of you will be much more familiar with Tracey's work than others. But not only is she hugely widely known in the Australian arts community, but internationally she's quite well recognized for her advocacy on behalf of black artists internationally, and not being pigeonholed as a specific culture, but generally as an artist in itself. But some of the other great projects that came, that collaborated with the University was Tin Sheds Gallery. A lot of people would be familiar with the poster collectives that came out of there over the years. Different groups would actually use the facilities there. People like Avril Quaill, Michael Riley, had their first opportunities to really, professionally produce works which are held in all the national institutions, and have had a huge impact in building community support for the arts industry over the years. It started with non-Indigenous and Indigenous artists looking at social issues. These are a bunch of posters done by a non-Aboriginal artist, but looking at Aboriginal social issues. And you actually have this amazing interaction happening between feminist movements, environmental movements, Aboriginal rights movements, all through the 70s up until the 80s, where there is a huge sense of collaboration going on, sharing, and people actually bringing awareness to these wider social issues, which are affecting so much of the community. The Stolen Generation's campaigns that were promoted through artists actually depicting these stories in their works. The reason why my presentation is a bit of a musical event, is because the actual theme of the project 'Down City Streets', you know the ways that music and art and social and cultural things all come together, is actually one of the best ways to communicate across the generations I feel. Some younger people take things away, some older people take different things away, men, women, it's a very inclusive approach. And to think of how the different murals all around Redfern, have sort of been the backdrop for all of these incredible engagements, collaborations, conversations, and learning experiences. Mostly learning for the non-Indigenous community about the importance of self-determination, or Aboriginal people being in control of their own health, medical, education, arts services. Actually, whenever you're researching these things you can always pinpoint someone in Redfern, Trangie or Eora, or any of the different organisations like that which have had their ups and downs over the years, but have always been the backbone of so much of the great community and social development which has happened in Sydney. Just to continue with the rock star theme, the really great one where Joe Strummer from The Clash called up Gary Foley in his hotel room one day and said, 'Oh look, join us on stage tonight.' He ended up staying with them for the rest of the tour around the country, bringing Black rights awareness to what was essentially a sort of punk crowd. It's not that much of a match-up you would imagine, but through things like the poster collective, and other sorts of groups, you actually see this awareness and these really disparate groups coming together across common causes. It's all about bringing this message to new audiences, and sort of garnering support from different sorts

of organisations. And it goes on and on. Tim Johnson and Vivien Johnson, Tim was an artist, Vivien was an anthropologist. But they were hugely behind the boost of the Papunya Tula movement, and bringing that to Sydney. Tim Johnson used to do a lot of the rock posters for the bands, like Radio Birdman, and different sorts of things like that. And I think the basic thing that the Aboriginal community shared with the punk community was a hatred of the monarchy. So you can actually unpack it and draw all these different parallels where people actually have the same enemy, and the same common causes, even though their coming from the slums of England, to inner-city Redfern as well. So it's important to actually really sort of unpack these stories, and actually look at what is bringing these people together? What's their common message? What's their common goal? But of course, most important was, for visual arts I'd say, was Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Co-operative, which was in Chippendale, it was in two locations in Redfern before it was actually in Annandale and now it's current location over in Leichardt. So the founding members were literally just trying to build a studio space, and a space for them to have exhibitions of their own work. But very quickly, practically overnight, it actually turned into a statewide opportunity for Aboriginal artists. As I mentioned in the first slide, this explosion of creativity, especially people hoping to explore their linguistic heritage, or their familial associations through visual arts, and how to actually display and explore that, and going strong. I mean over the years, to actually have it housed in Redfern I think was where you saw some of the most successful engagements. I mean this is U2, visiting at Boomalli, at aroung 1989 I'm pretty sure, looking up through some of their tour history. There's actually Bono not even wearing his sunglasses, that's how old it is. But that's what I really liked, and that's why I wanted to show all these sort of things, because I know there must be hundreds of stories like this out there. I'm sure even from today's thing, people will actually bring different things to the table. Someone I was talking to yesterday mentioned that they thought that Michael Jackson at one stage visited somewhere here in Redfern, won't say where. But yeah, Narraweena, the children's centre. It's these sort of international things that I find show just how the reach, the urban inner-city Sydney, and especially the flavour that the Aboriginal community brought to it through their murals, through their music, through the cultural performances, all the different things that were going on. It's actually, I mean, the groundwork, and it's actually then appropriated by different sorts of things, used and sort of forgotten about too quickly, because we have never properly catalogued, or created an assemblage of the diverse elements that helped build this incredible history, which all seems to, all roads lead to Redfern, just like the train station. But in terms of international engagement too, First Nations to First Nations dialogue, places like Boomalli were hugely important. This is a really important Native American scholar Edgar Heap of Birds, visiting Boomalli. I'd say that looks like the Abercrombie street gallery. So what I find most fascinating is how Australian-Aboriginal art, has actually been a template that other First Nations communities all around the world have actually looked to in terms of preserving and presenting their culture outside of the English language. There's a huge, whether it's the South Pacific, or Canada, South America, even places in Africa. You don't see this explosion, or the diversity like what we have here. At one stage there was one hundred community art centres in remote parts of Australia. I don't think there's every been an art movement as big as Aboriginal art in Australia, in terms of thousands of people from such diverse areas across the country coming together with a common cause to actually represent their own local stories through visual art. And so it was just crucial that places like Boomalli actually capitalised on that. At the time, Boomalli the only Aboriginal owned and operated gallery in Sydney, one of about twenty. And when you think of some of these other commercial galleries that can sell $400,000 worth of art in a night, and take a 60% commission on that, there's huge room for Aboriginal owned and operated businesses, whether it's in the arts, whether it's in all aspects of commercial development. I think the co-operative model, which was taught to them by Trangie was pretty well the most successful, and sadly hasn't been taken up by too many other organisations, and that's something that needs to be explored a lot deeper to understand how it works in a modern context and how we move forward with these co-operative models of collaborations, especially in the 21st century, an era where we have better access to digital technologies to make these things happen, but you still on the ground don't see a lot of it actually happening so much. Just briefly, before I end up, I'd like to talk about the aesthetic that comes out of Redfern. This is a protest sign from the 1972 Tent Embassy, which is actually in the permanent collection of the British Museum these days. It's amazing how the trajectory of these objects. But what I really like, with one of the artists is this freestyle, handmade aesthetic that comes through. You know, in some ways it's Expressionism, but you can actually trace this trajectory of it coming out of the protest movement, and then moving into visual arts, where artists, you know, weren't art-school trained, they didn't spend an hour doing a background drawing and then slowly filling it in with layers of oil paint. They got their message out, and I think one of the first artists of that is Harry J. Wedge, who came through the Eora College here. And I wanted to show you some of his works today, because I spent two days trying to track down an image of a mural that Harry had painted in Redfern, which has actually been painted over these days, and I'd lost the image that I'd had of that mural as well. It just shows you

how fleeting these artworks can be and how important it is to actually document them, record them, archive them, keep them in different, sort of, accessible places for the community, so that we can actually learn this amazing history and keep track, and not keep reinventing the wheel, which is something that I think we in the arts community are pretty famous for doing. But it's following on from the punk aesthetic as well, you know Captain Cook, the Queen, challenging the British authority, asserting an Indigenous authority. I think there's just so many layers of this story that we haven't properly told, and sadly we're losing too many of the artists and people that were at the forefront of these great movements and we're not actually recording. Which is why I think things like the preservation of the mural is actually just so crucial. And preserving the stories, and actually preserving the histories of the people associated with it is something, in some ways, just as important as preserving the physical structure itself. This is Harry Wedge doing some backdrops for the Big Day Out in 1996. The rock star Perry Farrell personally selected him to do all the background designs for the Big Day Out. Some of these toured with the Lollapalooza tour in different places. It's amazing to think, you know, hundreds of thousands of people have been visually exposed to this aesthetic without knowing anything about the culture behind it. I think that was part of the reason the music director of the Eminem videos, sort of, picked it up. Because it represented an aesthetic, and he didn't so much know the actual, where the work was actually coming from. This is Brenda Croft who was pretty crucial in working at Boomalli at that stage, collaborating if organisations like Performance Space, and really pushing Boomalli artists onto that international stage. I mean, when you look at the CVs of some of the artists who were practicing between 85 an 95 for example, they're in Washington, they're in Utrecht, they're touring. They've got bigger CVs than some of the big name artists that we know today. And it's just sad to see some of these artists who have international exhibition careers, who are still struggling to get recognition in their local galleries. Just lastly, another great artist who was keeping this tradition alive was Adam Hill. This is one of his mural on the outside of the community centre here, but it was also a backdrop for a Coldplay video, where they walk down the main street of Newtown. He does great installation, and I like his street aesthetic of using things like milk crates, and different things like that. It's interesting, I really like the social messages of his rap music and stuff in the 90s and different things, but when you look at it these days and, you know, it's Cristal champagne and diamonds and things, there's actually something that's been really lost. You know, there was a real social agenda behind so much of the really great sort of art/music collaborations that came out of, especially since the 1990s, and I don't think it translates. I think it's happened when they try to translate hip-hop workshops with American youth, and they don't easily translate to Australian youth, because there's no social context to actually translate that. I'm not implying that we just merge everything, but there's culturally appropriate ways of building our own local history and taking that to the world stage. And just to finish up, I mean, probably because of my art background, but I just love the visual aesthetics of these things. The handmade signs, the readymade aspect, the makeshift aspect of when you've got a message to put together, you know, bang, the community do it, and they can actually take it to the world stage. So yeah, that's a bit of a broad cross-section today, but I think I just wanted to start off to sort of trigger any associations, or memories, or any of the other important stuff, because as we move forward with these community arts projects in Redfern, there's going to be some great opportunities to capture hundreds, if not thousands of little stories that people have, and it's important to actually put them in the bigger context of this historical trajectory, so we don't forget all of the great things that have actually happened before. I think that's enough from me.

Matt Poll: Q&A

DB: What an amazing insight, and to be honest, I think there's a little bit of a punk in us all isn't there? I was told that at school anyway. Gee wiz! Yeah, I mean from the West Indies coming down here too I hear, Whoopi Goldberg.

Audience1: Roberta Flack, Bob Marley, Janet Jackson.

DB: There we go, and here I was thinking I'll just say rock stars and stuff, and there's a big theme in there.

Audience1: Can I just say, he came up to an early organisation, a Born Free Club for them, for the homeless, and my Uncle, he sees Michael Jackson in his big limousine, with all his entourage, you know that was the place where you had a cup of tea, and someone was in charge or whatever and he saw it all. And this is typical of where we're at, we're all one mob. We won't put you up on a pedestal. 'Course you know what he said to him? To typify all that, he said, 'Oh okay. Brother, you got 40c?'

[laughter]

Audience2: And we'd be remiss if we didn't talk about rap. The founder of rap is Ice Cube and N.W.A. He got off the train, he caught the train. I was a volunteer for the new show at Koori Radio, when it was at Cleveland St, we moved uptown from Vine St. And he actually asked for directions, and we thought, 'Oh yeah, you getting security' and as Unc pointed out, he come down here and he knows everyone. I gotta point out that that fella is only about five-foot-one and he went straight down the main way and said hello to everyone in 1994. And you couldn't get a celebrity to do those sorts of things. But when he got to Koori Radio he said, 'Mate, I feel at home here. It's just something about your community'. Doesn't matter if you're from the West Coast (as they say L.A.) or New York, or the Bronx, every community has a vibe to it, and he just picked it up straight away. This is the heart and culture of Australia. I put Ice Cube on record on Koori Radio, and he said, 'This is the hear and soul of Australia'. We had Public Enemy, we had all of them, going back to the 70s the 80s the 90s.

MP: I think back to people like Harry Belafonte and people like that. I think probably someone is doing a massive research project and putting it all in chronology.

DB: It sounds like we could go on for ages with all the rock stars that come down here, but I was talking to Lisa Williams the other day and she said she saw Whoopi Goldberg you know, and the car pulled up the top or something, and then she saw police coming from one direction, and blackfellas coming from the other. And because she's from the Bronx, you know, she goes, it was some comment about, 'Am I about to see some guns or something?' you know the window went 'tzzzz, tzzzz'. But look, moving back to Matt's amazing insights and presentation, I just want to put it out to you guys, is there anything you want to you know, contribute to, or ask Matt now, around what we're trying to achieve here?

Audience/Angela: Hi, my name is Angela. I've been doing community art in this area for about twenty years. Mainly around the housing commission areas. So it's a mosaic with the community, and hundreds of people in the community. Now, I'm self-taught. I have trained guys from the art programs in prison. And I want to see more when people who are coming out of prison, and I want to see contracts respected, because artists are being abused constantly. Aboriginal artists are being, I'm from New Zealand, but I see this difficulty with contracts being disrespected by people in high positions. And it's very frustrating to see an artist disillusioned because of that, including myself. And I have work around the housing commission areas that is very well respected and looked after, because everyone, we all made it together. And I'm just constantly disheartened that there are people winning national awards riding on artist's backs. And so I'm hoping that things like people getting out of jail can be respected. There are some amazing artists. Why isn't there a space for them to sell their work in Redfern?

MP: Thank you for making that really important point. I mean if you look at people like Gordon Syron, came through the prison system. Kevin Gilbert, Jimmy Pike. I don't understand either, how those incredible prison programs, where people are actually rehabilitated by not only learning in the arts but also participating in the arts on their release.

Angela: I was thrown out of school at fourteen. [inaudible] So I mean I want to help. I want to work with people who are marginalised, like myself. Because I had to survive on the street. Being the incest-whistle-blower in my family that gets you [inaudible], so I relate to those people who are marginalised. So I remember when Joe Geia was painting this thing and he asked me to paint, but I was still an emotional mess, so I want to see these people respected, who everyone else is riding on the backs of.

MP: It's really important. Thank you for that feedback. I think it's something that the committee should definitely make sure that they're across and incorporate in any way that they can in any community engagement.

Angela: It's just a matter of talking to each other. I think that's why we're all here today.

Audience/ Jean Morgan: My name is Jean Morgan, and I'm born and bread in Redfern, down in Edward Street, so The Settlement, that was my second home. My grandmother, Doreen Mae Morgan, she was the one who organised The Settlement, so she was the first founder of that one. So Redfern to me, we're five generations now. My aunty is painted on the wall up there. She's a [inaudible], so they're five generations. [inaudible]. So my uncles all played for Redfern All Blacks. Five generations of Redfern All Blacks. So to me Redfern is the meeting place. It's a strong place. It's a place where healing is. It's a place where we laugh, we drink, we dance, we do it all here on this block here, and we welcome everybody.

[applause]

DB: That's unbelievable. Just coming back to your point there, just reminding people that have just come in. I do work at the City, in strategic community consultation, predominantly Aboriginal community development, and you may have heard of the Eora Journey. I won't bore you down with too many of the details, but of course, that is one of the key points in addressing, holistically, in what we have an opportunity to be able to redress, and address, and for me personally I thank my ancestors that I've never been to prison, and I have an absolute understanding, and no judgement, of that sad revolving door. And in my role, if I can draw attention, to keep people in our organisation, where we are now leading in this space, to have an understanding, we can't be selective, and we have to be holistic in our approach. That being said, this amazing building out the front here, Redfern Community Centre, that is owned by the City of Sydney, this space, and that building. That was the launch of the Eora Journey, I actually MC'ed it. That is being looked at, in every possibility, of being a culture and keeping place. Now that I want to make clear too, is not the City owning and driving it, it is us working in the very same vein as this, to help support that process to evolve. But we're not here to talk about that project, we're here to talk about the Redfern mural. But I would like to take this opportunity to say one of the reasons why I got the invitation to come and MC this is because everything we do here as a community also complementing everything else that's going on. I don't know if I can go down there, because we're old school, but if you want to come up I'll give you the mic. Just introduce yourself.

Audience/Danny Eastwood: Hello, my name is Danny Eastwood, and I work in the prisons actually, I teach art. I go to Windsor, I go to Parklea, Parklea Main, Parklea Drug and Alcohol, and I used to go to Long Bay, but I live at Mount Druitt now, and it's always having lock-downs there. Now I produce many a many a fine artist there, and they're always asking me, where can they produce their work, where can they show they're desperate for it? And I've been doing this for over ten years, and even worked at Emu Plains with the women. They couldn't get enough art. And of course I teach them from scratch mainly, and their natural culture just flows out of them. Once they learn, they just need a person like me to bring it out. I was brought up in Waterloo, and I lived here for thirteen years, I lived here before many of the flats were down there at Wellington Street, at the back of Redfern. I was brought up with kids who lived in the slums, bug-ridden houses, and they moved all over the place with Riverwood, Lindfield, out that way, all over different cultures. Getting back I actually did this mural on the wall outside here, and I wanted to touch the corner up 'Welcome to Eveleigh Street', but they said they're going to pull the wall down anyway, so why bother? But getting back to the prisoners, they produce at least one to two pieces of work a week, and in my class I have up to twelve students. And they're wonderful people to work with because they're all friends. And once they're in the correction centre, they protect each other, look after each other, and there's always laughter, and there's always music. But we would love to have an outlet where they can show their work off.

[applause]

DB: Well said, thank you very much. Alright, Matt, your release.

MP: Thank you very much for that. And look, I think it is, personally, a sad indictment that blackfellas are introduced to their culture by incarceration.

Jason Wing

JW: Thank you very much for this invitation. My name is Jason Wing and I'm a Biripi man, born and raised in Cabramatta. I too would like to pay respect to the Gadigal elders, to all Aboriginal people, to all non-Aboriginal people, and every other culture that makes up this amazing country we're in. So yes, I'd just like to quickly introduce myself, and a little bit about my background. I'll really just go through my work quite briefly because you can look that up in your own time. I'd really much rather conversations. I'm not sure if I can make the end session, so I might kind of do a little bit of both. I'm hoping to make it. Can everybody see? Can I get these lights off? Can you see at the back? Yeah, so again, I'm of Chinese and Aboriginal heritage, and Scottish and probably a million other things. Okay, so I started out as a street artist. I've been creating street artworks for over fifteen years now. I've worked with all minority groups, especially with an Aboriginal focus. So I really target Aboriginal kids, adults, also people with disabilities, I'm really passionate about. And yeah, I find it's the perfect way to engage the youth. It's really hard to compete with mobile phones these days, but I find when it comes to murals and spray paint it's the perfect medium for the youth. And this has been proven time and time again, and it's the ultimate form of empowerment. And not just for kids, big kids too, like you guys out there. Yeah, so that's really what I'm passionate about. And I would actually like to see all walls of Redfern painted. That would be my vision, and I think the wall outside the station, that's a great front-of-house mural and it's a great nucleus for all of Redfern. But it's not enough. It's great to start there, but really we should be covering every single wall here. And if you look at Melbourne as a case study. Melbourne once was the stencil-capital of the world. Now that generated billions of dollars of tourism revenue. So not a bad model, and it's quite easy to apply here with cooperation from City of Sydney Council, they were very cooperative, and the Redfern community. Okay, so when I talk about murals it doesn't have to be painted. They could be paste-ups, much like up on the Pemulwuy building. It's a very successful way, and it's a great introduction. I was part of Street Wear, which was a City of Sydney initiative, and a lot of that was paste-ups and it's temporary, which is great because it gives a lot of confidence to business owners and people who own private property. So because it's temporary, it's more of an incentive for people to agree to actually have these artworks. So that was a really great initiative and a great model, which should also be adopted here, and it's a great entry point for kids as well, to get involved in street art. It's a really simple process and we can see it's quite effective. And it's a gateway to murals and public art, so it's really important to start at these entry-level points. Okay, just one of my murals, that's all spray paint. Again, just a large scale mural. That was probably about five-by-five metres. A collaboration with minority groups, more with an Asia-Pacific focus. That's just me in teacher mode. Again, I've been schools, universities, nationally and internationally for about fifteen years now. Okay, so this is an example of a community workshop where the kids designed all the patterns, all the colours, the layout. So we developed all of this together. It's not quite finished yet, but you get the idea. So this is activating a lane in Goulbourn at the moment. And again, the kids have done 90% of this. I provide just a very minimal framework, so the kids get 90%. Okay, so these are all the spray painted stencils, and quite effective. Just to give you a spectrum of my work, I do public artworks as well, which started from street art. So this is actually the Prime Minister's office, in number 1 Bligh St. I have one large-scale mural that goes over three levels, and I also did twenty-seven offices on one floor, so it's a rotating story. It's a history of Sydney. It starts from the beginning, pre-invasion, to now. So yeah, it's the Prime Minister's office. I couldn't really show you any more photos, because I'm not actually allowed to have any myself. It's a bit top secret. So yeah, my work is in the corner there, it's a bit hard to see. This was a project in collaboration with the City of Sydney Council, and you know another example of, this was quite a modest budget, but the impact we received, mostly from the street art mural component on the walls and creative lanterns. And again, the whole point of this is to get human traffic, to really kind of elevate what is known as public art. You know, generally when we think public art we think bronze statues of colonial figures that murdered our people, generally. So I wanted to create an alternative, and just to let people know that street art is a proper art movement and you can see how effective it can be. So this is down in Chinatown if people haven't seen it, and should be up for another five or ten years or so. That's just a little bit of a detail, so the inner circle is like an abstract symbol. It's the campfires, waterholes, stars, etc. And, you know, this is a modern day person in Australia. Some more images. This is my interpretation of a Rainbow Serpent. This is seven metres high, and at night-time there are LED lights, which change, they go all the colours of the rainbow. And there's like fifty-two shades of each colour and it's quite a nice progression. So this is on the bay run in Drummoyne. Again, just another example of what's possible from the humble beginnings of street art. This is another work that could be a public artwork. It's a bronze bust of Captain Cook with a balaclava on his face. And I call that 'Australia Was Stolen By Armed Robbery'. This work was in response to the actual sculpture in Hyde Park, where literally etched in stone it says, 'Was discovered by Captain Cook,' so I wanted to create an alternative to Australia's

history with an Aboriginal perspective. This is kind of my anti-monument in a way. This was just a little bit of an intervention I did, but I put this in really just in terms of activating the space. I mean I think this is such a great communal space. I know that Damien Minton has started the Redfern Biennale, and I would really like to see that expand and grow, and actually kind of zone it and localise it here, have bands, street art competitions, things like that. So I put this in just to think about potential future opportunities, once every wall in Redfern is painted, and billions of dollars of revenue come in, and people fly all the way around the world to come here to see it. So this could be part of it. I painted this in China. I was just feeling a little bit homesick. This was at my studio, and it ended up being a performance work. And this work ended up being shown in the National Museum of China, which was quite a huge honour. I put this in because, I don't know about you guys, but I don't see enough Aboriginal flags around, so again, just plaster the whole place with flags. Not just Redfern, but everywhere. And it's a good place to start to teach people as well. It's quite simple, and quite easy to do. I've just got a couple of points up here, and then I might just quickly touch on the wall. So in conjunction with the council it's quite easy to locate walls, and then for developers it's quite easy to hold them to their creative cultural reparation, and it's something people can do by themselves, so you find who owns the property, if it's a real estate find who owns it. If it's privately owned you can just ask for permission and paint their wall, as long as it's nothing visually offensive. But I'm thinking of more of a structured plan, you know like actually a proper department in the council would be ideal and run by an Aboriginal person would be even better, to actually locate walls, to gather walls. It can be a voluntary basis, or a temporary basis, but I want these walls to be registered at zoned. If we take Redfern as a case study, and you know, actually rotate the works. And there's enough walls here that every artist in Australia could have a wall, probably a couple, it's just locating those walls, which is quite easy to do. So yeah, I mentioned Melbourne. There's no reason why that can't happen here. There's already, we already have international visitors come here for other reasons. So again, training people for these jobs. I mean ideally I'd also love, not myself, but I'd love a job in council to actually manage and maintain these murals, so that what happens to the mural opposite the station doesn't happen. I understand the complexities of maintenance and management plans twenty years is a little bit offensive, and I don't feel that it really represents Aboriginal culture at this stage. I've got a little bit of a clip to play, it goes for three minutes, but we might cut it short. So this is just in regards to, ideally I would like that mural documented in two dimensions, and three dimensions. Do we have sound? So as you can see here, this is 3-D mapping of a graffiti tunnel. Now these are all photographs taken by people and then stitched together, and again this could be a fulltime position. So that's what it was before. So have a look around, it's in fairly good detail the resolution is definitely good enough to have a look at what's going on. And then if you want to have a little bit more of an experience than just walking through your shelf, you can play back towards. See the tour menu. And we can select one of these tours, and the guide will talk you through the space. And the guide for this…

[video audio]

JW: Anyway, you get the idea. So what happened with Harry J Wedge, and Banksy in Melbourne, Sometimes the council or the contractors don't quite know the value of these artworks. So I would like to have a digital online archive of all public artwork, especially because of the temporal nature, and especially because some can be painted over accidently. But also if there aren't enough walls for everybody then you can rotate walls, and you know rotating the works is fine as long as there's an archive. So I mean, that was really upsetting to hear about Harry's mural, but this is one way to avoid that. So most councils spend millions of dollars on graffiti removal, so when there are murals on the wall that actually deters nuisance graffiti by up to 90%. So I would actually like to see a lot of that money for anti-graffiti re-diverted back into mural programs. And I did actually just want to, just before I finish, I want to talk about archiving the wall opposite the station, but I did also want to talk about actually redoing the wall and seeing how people felt about that. I guess I wonder how relevant those images are now. I mean I think twenty years ago, especially with, you know, health, I think those messages were really appropriate back then, however now I feel, over the twenty years, the meaning's changed quite a bit. I mean for me personally I feel, especially on the station side with all the needles and the syringes that it really just reinforces negative stereotypes about Aboriginal people, and I feel if that's the first point of entry, you know, what kind of message that sends and no disrespect to the artist who did that twenty years ago, it's really quite an important and relevant message, but I just want to question the relevance of it now. It also doesn't send a good message that it's really been neglected I mean it doesn't send a good message on anyone's behalf really. And there's that little brown bit on the end, I would also like to propose as a quick response to the artwork. Because I know for myself, if a tagger goes over your work you have to eliminate that tag within 24 hours, it has to be done, and I know with council's policies and

the system, it can take a while. But I feel there needs to be a quick response department to actually do that. And browning-out is not quite the answer either, because that gives a clean slate, so, I'm talking about something ready to go if things do get damaged, yes.

Desley Haas: Jason, you may not be aware, but… I'm really pleased that you say we need more walls in Redfern, because that's what we've been working towards. You may not be aware, but we've got a $10,000 grant to do a feasibility study on '40,000 Years', we've got a $4,500 grant to do the brown paint panel. The application was based on the results of two community meetings. And it wasn't just about one mural, it was about both murals. And the results of both meetings were for both those murals to be restored as they are. The other issue that come out the meeting was that we do a new mural, which is expressing exactly as you say, something more positive about the future, or whatever. The issue about the needles, the young Aboriginal people who have been involved with NUAA – NWS Users and AIDS Association – they brought up the issue of the needles themselves. The contract for that 'Say Now', the other mural, NUAA has signed the contract in January, so they will be handling whatever restoration is associated with that. The restoration of '40,000 Years', once we've finished, Carol and Peter Day finished the feasibility study, we will be looking for money to restore it. As of last night Troy Daly from Urban Growth asked us to meet with him to discuss more funding for the re-doing of that mural. So I'm really, really pleased to hear you say we need more walls in Redfern, because that's the point we started at, that we really wanted much more street art, much more gardens, much more celebration of Redfern, so I appreciate what you're saying.

JW: Yeah, that's great. That's great. It's good to get up-to-date information too, so thanks for that.

Audience/James Simon: Hi, my name's James Simon. I do a lot of murals around the place. About that mural up the top there, I grew up around Redfern, and they painted over that head. The one with the teeth? Because there's a lot of Christians around that area, and they're worried about the serpent, and that head with the teeth, and they thought that it brought bad luck on the area. So that's why I think they painted over it.

JW: Okay, look, murals will intervened with. I'm really interested in the response to that. We need a quick response to that. Now often what happens is that the artist gets paid, and they've put their heart and soul into it, but often there's not money to get the artist back to maintain. Now this seems to be a bit of a problem. While most artists will do it, but at their own cost and time.

DB: Okay, thanks. I'll just do one up here, and then Nathan.

Audience/Marlene Cummins: I'm Marlene Cummins. [inaudible] I've had a recent documentary, Black Panther Woman. I'm not prepared, all I'm saying is I'm Murri woman. Redfern's been my home for well over forty years. I come down here in 69. And all though I'm Murri, you know, I'm still Murri in my heart and my spirit. But unfortunately the, if you've seen the doco Black Panther Woman, that's the reason why I'm down here in Redfern, because I wanted to get away from smiling perpetrators, that are still up there in organisations. And like I say in my doco, there was no, while you're dealing with the issues back, while I was at the, you know, I've been at the political struggle all my life. I've worked with [inaudible], and I was at the first Aboriginal Embassy. So even in traditional times, Aboriginal people left their communities, whether it was for exile, or marriage or whatever. [inaudible]. And so by the same token, I've been brought up traditionally. I have to say all of this so you'll understand where I'm coming from, in regards to the mural, so please bare with me. By the same token, I've never wanted to cross tribal boundaries. You know, I've never taken a real full on platform in regards to political issues down here, because of that respect and protocol, because it's not my place to… I'm a Guguyelandji-Woppaburra woman. Unfortunately the nature of what I've been through, in regards to what Black Panther Woman is about is why in Redfern… Redfern's my home and always will be. I'm so scarred from what happened to me, you know, that's why I live here. I've been actually [inaudible] for many years about that mural. For my, this is just my feelings, I don't want to insult anybody from this country. I don't know, because of course my own love and personal relationship with Redfern. I do art, I recently did art of Pemulwuy in the exhibition that's currently down in the Eora Centre, and that was also my way of giving back to the community, because he fought an uncompromising battle for the truth. And if anything, I always believe in the legacy of, why aren't we taking the stance of Pemulwuy in regards to the politics of this country. You don't settle for less. You cannot compromise the truth. So that's why I had to be six-foot tall. I had to inject into it the strengths, the spirituality, the essence of what he is. So I've only just [inaudible] art [inaudible] when I got clean and sober [inaudible], oh I want to do this, I want to be a [inaudible], but art was always singing in me. As a child, my brothers are great artists. And I eventually left my job. I did all the other things, I did music and everything, and my first piece was a

shortlist for the parliamentary, and also another one this year, and so I'm getting into singing with you mob now, and that's why I'm here, and I don't care what anybody says, this is my feeling, I never do give two dots, because that's what I was brought up with…

DB: Sorry Aunty, can I…

MC: Don't interrupt me please, this is really important. One minute, one minute, one more minute. I know there's other speakers, but, you know, I've paid my dues to scoot my blues. I'm an elder. Now that mural to me, now when you said that needle one reinforces negative stereotypes, but you're always trying to keep up with the white man, what he thinks of us. You should be learning about perpetrating those negative stereotypes, we shouldn't be always worried about what they think. Because once again we're setting the model too, for the fact of these things are destroying our culture and I have respect for those artists. It's just my feelings. And the fact that that is just like art installations and paintings and whatever around the world, you know, they're maintaining and restoring it because it is part of the growth of where we are today, and people need to reflect on that, why things are getting better. But I sort of felt a bit… I just want to quickly say this, now that's a negative picture, I mean what do you mean? See the whole issue of negative scapegoating is the people who are doing it have got to address it. We don't have to please them all the time. They're always making decisions for us. We've got to make decisions for our own, and let them know where we're coming from. And you were just, not just to you, you clean up your negative stereotyping, because this is historical, this is what's happened and it needs to stay. And in certain situations in regards to the growth and evolvement of Redfern.

[applause]

JW: Thank you Aunty. I totally agree. And the mural is a great vehicle for that to actually say all of those things, and I think you yourself would be a great, you'd make a great mural yourself, with your face and words up there. And I'd like to see elders with a cloak on every wall.

Audience3: Jase, lovely to meet you face-to-face now. Confess Biripi to Biripi. I'd love to touch on the point about the mural, because I think as the community rep body, we need to speak. The community never sanctioned the covering of it over, it's not our cultural way to do that. That was individuals doing what they thought was appropriate. With all respect to them, the community did never ever endorse the covering over of that mural.

JW: Do you mean the brown? Yeah, yeah, that was tagged.

Audience3: Yeah, but at the end of the day, we've got to be able to speak. And I love our aunt, spoken aunt, but as the community rep body, no one ever spoke to us about that. Because if they did, as I'm sure you'd attest, we would have said, 'No, no, no, no, that's us, we don't change it for no one'. And I hope through this process we can return that original mural to its full entirety, because I think it's very disrespectful to not go through community channels, cultural authority from the artist, and the community rep body. It didn't happen, so we've got to deal with that, but let's get it back. So I think we're all on the one wave here. You know, it's disrespectful to the artist, and didn't follow protocol for having the community speak for who can paint over that.

DH: Jason, could I just clarify it for everybody. As the speakers have said the snake's head was removed, faded out. So it was left like that for quite a long time, and then somebody disrespectfully came in and, as you said, graffitied the whole lot. As most of us know, once that graffiti happens you've got to get it off in a quick hurry or it's going to spread to the rest of the mural. There were already pieces of graffiti on the main body of the mural. So we rang City of Sydney, John Mousley, and said, 'Can you do something in a hurry about it?' so he came down with his whole team. That's why the brown paint panel went up. We all hate it, but that's what happened. And then during the trouble on The Block recently, someone went back in and painted what looked like the snake's head there. Micky rang me and said, 'Did your group do it?' and I said, 'Definitely not' so City of Sydney went in again and more brown paint went up. The thing to realise is that the section is the brown paint panel, that ends at the beginning of the '40,000 Years' where it's lettered, that section is going to be removed because it's part of the new block development. What the funding we've got for this is about $4,500 is to put up a temporary new mural on the brown paint section, so we don't have to look at the brown paint anymore. The suggestion so far has been for a tribal map, saying that Nathan has said, what is it again?

NM: ‘Always was, always will be, Gadigal land.’

DH: Yeah, to have that saying up, and what Micky’s been saying to us all along, we need murals that represent the animals and the flora that were here originally, so hopefully, goodness knows how, but that was the suggestions that perhaps we can incorporate on the brown paint panel. But that would be up to the artist, and the community to sort it out.

DB: Thanks Desley. Look I’m really conscious that we’ve got another elder, Djon Mundine, who wants to share his insights, so what I’ll do is remember your comments, your suggestions, your feedback, thank you very much. We’re seeing some beautiful lively comments coming through so that’s been exactly what we want. I think what I’ll do just before I introduce Djon is to say that, you know, this here is the… there’s a great old saying that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, you know? And I think this community art is something that is so much more profound, if you pardon me, than walking into a gallery which says, ‘Don’t touch, and don’t take photos’. You know this is something that is defining for Redfern, it’s defining for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, and it’s defining for this country too. So what we want to do here is invoke your input. We want you to feed back into this, and that’s why we’re offering all of these different ways of doing it. So if I may now just ask Djon to come up, and to share his knowledge and insights and again, I’ll come back to…

Audience/Taressa Mongta: My name is Taressa Mongta, and I come from La Perouse community. I have a long connection to this area actually, I was born in 1968 in [inaudible] Street, my grandfathers are down in Circular Quay, way back in the [inaudible], way back then. A lot of our families were pushed out from the [inaudible] to La Perouse, and I pick up on some of things that Jason and Aunty were saying, because I just hope our connection, and I’m speaking with all due respect to everybody, and I have spoken to my Lands Council today about La Perouse, because it’s incumbent of me to speak because I can’t be quiet, otherwise we’ll be built over the top, and there is a thread of connection that comes from our community that extends right back to contact, culturally beyond the boundaries of the legislation of the Lands Rights Act, and the families that are connected to Pemulwuy, and every other person that was documented. And I just wanted to speak to say that I concur with the issues about the ‘40,000 Years’ mural being so important to keep those aspects of it. But I just wanted to speak on behalf of somehow the sensitivity for our community, and our community’s connection because I didn’t know, actually, that this meeting was going to be happening today, so I’m glad that Angela called me to invite me to come, but I have a document here from 1994, which is signed by Millie Ingram as the head of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and a letter from Nigel Scullion that recognises work that I did in the employment service way back in the 90s where there’s [inaudible] that connect from our community. My over here [inaudible] and lobbied for this. We’re connected to the family of the tribal warrior, and there are cultural assets that, in all due respect, keep our connection to, and assume our identity to the conversation, and sensitivity around that aspect of our connection that extends culturally, because of the boundaries of the white person.

[applause]

DB: Much appreciated for that. Very powerful, and I think what we are looking at here to complement Jason, and I think all our thinking, is that there are lots of walls out there, you know, they’re not all in Redfern. But I know that, you know, [inaudible] were looking a couple of years ago, doing something around the [inaudible], correct me if you want, but look, thank you for those comments. I would say to Angela, that’s why, and I’m not being patronising here, but that’s why ‘network’, because it works. So good on you, for getting that message out there. I will come back to you, but that’s what we want from this, we want people to feed into this so we can have a holistic to, yes, just this one, but also looking at other opportunities. I’m now going to invite Djon up so, it’s all yours.

Djon Mundine

DM: Thank you everyone for being here. I've really wondered what I can actually bring to anything today. As you get older you don't get wiser, you just end up with more aches and pains, and you just wonder what you can do other than just get here. My name is Djon Mundine. Some of my family live here. My immediate family, when we moved to Sydney we moved to Auburn, which might sound an idyllic place now, but was actually a really polluted factory place when we went there and I really hated it. It was polluted and ash would fall out of the sky every morning from the factories and so on. It was just a terrible place to live. I'm not an artist, I'm not an academic, I'm not an anthropologist, but I am an Aboriginal, and I come from the Northern Coast of NSW. My family, most probably, has an equal number of relations in La Perouse, it's more to do with Redfern now, but previously it was more of a connection with La Perouse. I came back to work in the field of art. I was being trained to be an accountant, but you can see what happened. I escaped. So the time that mural was put up here was a very important time. It's what I call, I wrote in an essay something about the time of the black beautiful people when lots of things were happening in Sydney. There was a whole group of really talented people that were dancing, singing, going to art school, exhibiting paintings etc. And they were beautiful people. We were, believe it or not, once upon a time we were all good looking people, and it was an incredible place to be. And it's no accident that the mural came into being at that time. I think about that time, Carol will talk about it later, Carol Ruff, she did a mural at the Adelaide Arts Festival, and there was a young Aboriginal boy who got to actually open the Adelaide Arts Festival. It was a teenager, who was asked to open it, so there was a really great Zeitgeist, a spirit of the times, here in Redfern, but also just nationally. At that time I'd been living in the Northern Territory, and I just decided to go back to the Northern Territory. However people like Avril Quaill, Tracey Moffatt, and other people who went on to make up the Boomalli group, they were here and part of that mural is the happiness or the sunrise. You know, it's no accident that there's this sunrise there with all these rays. It's just so happy and so positive, when you come out and you see that sun there, and the football team and then everyone smiling and the song, the words of the Joe Geia song. I hear that in my mind every time I read those words. Now I'm a bit older now, than 1983, but I think the real thing about Aboriginal art, if you want to call it that, art made by Aboriginal people is it's a literature, a writing, that we use to tell our story. We now have a lot of people going to University. A lot of people learning to talk in the jargon of the day, academic speak, and I think this is such a direct way of talking and recording things. And the thing about that mural was, I have a photo that'll come up here, when you come out of the railway and you look at that mural, in the background you can see the city of Sydney. You can see the skyscrapers etc. And if other developments happen we'll see lots of other skyscrapers and Woolworths and shopping malls and whatever right behind it, and yet you've got this stamp of Aboriginal-ness right in front of you. Now I'm all for Jason and other people making other murals. In other countries, and other cities, like San Francisco, and Los Angeles, or even Paris, which is a place that really retains a sort of historical outlook, you can buy books about the graffiti, the murals of Paris. You can buy books about the murals of San Francisco. And I think it is very important for us, whether we actually ever do become integrated, or become the central point of Australian society, we have to make our presence felt, for two reasons: one is, we have to make our presence felt, obviously, to the society at large, that's why the theme, the song, there 40,000, that people are still here and living. And we've had a structure of a society that has allowed us to survive over that period. The other one of course is for ourselves. We need to remind ourselves of why we should be here, of why we're living and why we're happy to be here. And I can relate to the previous comments about trying to retain some sense of the history of this place. And I never thought I'd be sounding like an old fogy, but I think we have to remember these things, because if we don't, no one else will. If you don't make your own art, if you don't tell your own story, in every possible way, no one else will. I was talking to Carol Ruff yesterday, and I asked her about who was the woman in that mural, does anyone know her?

Audience4: There's two women…

MC: My niece is one

Audience4: There's Mum Shirl, and there's [inaudible], and that's my desendants.

DM: Is that it? Yes.

MC: The little girl at the end is Leona McGrath, my niece.

DM: Yes, that's right.

Audience5: And they're obviously powerful elders from the time. You know, they're painted up there, and it tells a story. And everybody who goes past that, you know, their powers just to look at. Because it's being, belonging, coming.

DM: Yes, and they are named, known individuals. They're not generic blackfellas standing on one leg. I can't even stand on one leg. They're not generic blackfellas, they are known personalities in this society. They're relations of us. As I said, I lived in a place near Yirrkala, who did these two pieces. We're talking about artwork that teaches you things. There are two things here. Before their town, their land was ripped up by a mining company, that they reduced the whole peninsula by fifty metres to take bauxite out of this place, they did two things. On the left they did a thing, they sent a petition to Parliament House in Canberra to argue the case. Land rights didn't start there but it certainly got a great boost from this petition, and the enquiry, and government actions from that case. That was them speaking to white people. On the right they did two bark paintings, that was for their own people. They got every major painter to come and paint their stories of every family, because they knew the world was going to change, maybe for the worse. It looked like really for the worse. So a lot of our lives as Aboriginal people is used, or taken up, with patching things up, and repairing things, and putting band aids on things, and trying to patch things up, trying to find the 40c even if it's from Michael Jackson or whatever. Those things are things we do, and they put upon us, and they take up a lot of our energy and time. The thing about the mural that those other people were involved with, with the sunrise etc. is it's a positive mural. It is a happy mural. And the irony in fact of the '40,000 Years' words being opposite the Joe Geia song, opposite the other mural with the needles etc. is not lost on many people I wouldn't think. And he's now singing and recording again. Nearly all of his songs were happy songs. They were positive songs. They tried, or they didn't try, they *did* make us feel good about ourselves, and that's why we want to do these things. Art isn't made, or shouldn't be made, for angry reasons in one sense. You can't make people like art. You know, you can force kids to eat bad food, or cod liver oil, but you can't make people like art. Your art, the murals that you make here should be happy, positive, and about yourselves first and foremost. Now, coming out of the station, you've got the sunrise, you've got this powerful image of people doing positive things and the flag flying there, representing all of us, and the city in the background. It's like we're in a little clubhouse. It's like we're in our own space. I really get moved every time I come out of that station and see that there. Now, I've been involved in a number of things about memorials, or things to make us remember or to make our statements felt. Now I could have done a lot of research, like Henry Reynolds, and spent years trying to publish books etc. that you wonder who will read – another bunch of academics – and then make a living going from place to place, being paid to give lectures in foreign places and having a good time. But this work, in 1988 I was approached to do this work with the people of Ramingining and it's called 'The Aboriginal Memorial'. I put this together for the Biennale of Sydney in 1988. Now in Ramingining it was a remote, it's been described as a remote settlement, and the settlement it was described. It wasn't a settlement it was a society. When people talk about Redfern, they talk about, really, a society of people who meet together, have conversations, and work out common purposes, about what they want to do. It's no accident that all the things that came to be developed in Redfern, came to be here. They came from people in action. It's a society in action. Ramingining, religiously people would come together, their art really was made by people coming together, their art related to each other. They were related already. They came together to make art in a process of meeting and creating art through visual art, song, dance, and so on. The reason really why they were coming together was to reaffirm their relationships to each other. Reaffirm their relationships and responsibilities to each other, the relationships and responsibilities to the society that kept it together, and made people want to be in that society, and to the environment, and to the spiritual cosmos. It was democratic in that this included groups that had about twenty people in those families. There were families that were nearly extinct, but they all contributed, as they would in a religious ceremony, they would all contribute to this artwork. It was very democratic, if I can use that term, it was very social. The artwork was actually not the main purpose. The main purpose was to bring people together to talk to each other. And so what I've strived to do in my own practice is to make exhibitions and artworks where people come together to talk to each other. So, in 2009 the director of the Taree Regional Gallery, it's the Manning River Gallery, asked me if I would come and do an artwork there. Now I don't claim to be an artist at all. I can draw, I can also sing and dance, after I've had a few beers. However, so I came there, she was insistent, so I came there to have a look. I had this photograph here, on the left. That photograph was taken in 1909 and that is a band of Aboriginal people who performed on missions and reservations. People came out there on the flat, as they call it, on the open to dance. They came to gather people together to have fun, basically. Now they just happened to be, I discovered, from [inaudible]. So when I

went there I showed them this photo, and said, 'Look, are these people still here? Or are their families still here?' The [Bungees – unsure of correct spelling], the [Dumars – unsure of correct spelling], and so on. And people said, 'Yeah, yeah, they're all here'. So what I did then was to do a very simple thing, which I thought might have been too childlike. I pencilled the image onto a large canvass about the size of that thing there, and we invited any relative of those people, to come and paint that with them. And they did. There were lots of kids from the primary school next door, there was a high school across the street, there were thirty-five people in the end came to help me to paint that, which is now in their collection, in the Manning River Regional Art Gallery's collection, and it remains there for the history of that place. These people are still here, 100 years later, they are still in Taree. Aboriginal people are still there, they are also active, intelligent, active and happy to partake in this. This year my partner was coerced, or through lack of money, to take a job helping to run what's called the Kandos Art Festival, Cementa. She then through lack of money, coerced me to do something. So she twisted my arm, and I said again, well I'm not an artist, but I had done that work before so I thought well I'll try this again. There were two Aboriginal people I knew who lived in Kandos, and I had a very mixed relationship with them, and they had a mixed reputation amongst the Sydney art community, Aboriginal art community. However, we'll let histories pass, so I was led to talk to them, and they came up with two photos of two people, named personalities, named Aboriginal personalities Peggy and Jimmy Lambert, who are survivors of a massacre from the 1820s, and they are most probably the grandparents, or the great-grandparents of about half the Aboriginal population of that district. So again, I put this out again, 'Would you people like to do this? Is it alright to actually use these images?' In the end about sixty or seventy people turned up, to help me to paint this piece. Now a lot of them came there just to do a selfie with me painting etc. We had a fire going here outside and we were cooking food. The two local people who I was initially engaged with were older people and they couldn't help being grandparents to me, they fed me and whatever and made tea for me. But generally you would find about twenty of thirty people out the front of this mural all talking to each other. Where do you fit into this family? Are you a [Davie – unsure of correct spelling] person? Well where do you fit into this family? How come you're here? Or where do you live? And that was the most important thing. I mean the mural was there, and it's done, and it's now finished if we go to the next one you can see the scale of it. That's me down in the left there, that isn't a garden gnome, a tastefully decorated concrete Aboriginal. But you can see the size of this thing. Even the local white population came along to say, 'Yes, my grandparents knew those people'. It was an amazing process. I pinched myself really at the end of it, to think that we'd actually done that. Now that will stay there as a reminder of two things. And this is what happened with the white people who came to visit the thing in process, they acknowledged the massacre. They had to talk about, yes, these people, Jimmy still had a bullet in his leg, he carried all of his life. When they were kids they escaped that massacre. They had to acknowledge that fact to start with. And the other thing is there is a permanent presence of Aboriginal people in this district. What I did was I met somebody there who talked about Gundagai. Now, you know, who knows about Gundagai? What do you know about Gundagai?

Audience6: Dog on the Tuckerbox.

DM: The Dog on the Tuckerbox! Yeah, that's right. That's what it's famous for. And there's a little statue. Somebody said the other day to me that he couldn't believe how small it was, you've got to really search to find this dog sitting on the tuckerbox. That's what it's famous for. There are two Aboriginal men who are very famous in the history of Gundagai. In fact they've got a park named after one of them. And when white people came there they were told by these people not to build their properties or their houses on flood plains. They of course didn't listen to dumb blackfellas, what would they know? So they built their houses there, and then a flood came. And these two men, however, they'd been dispossessed, they'd been ridiculed, they'd been spat upon, so to speak, they still got their bark canoes and saved over a hundred people from those floods. Now, do people write songs about them?

Audience7: I participated in a musical, that was a very small thing, about [Gary – unsure of correct name]. And I played [Gary's – unsure of correct name] wife Black Mary, and see that was a catchment. They had this romantic idea of the lovely valley, and they said, 'Well we'll put the houses on stilts then'. But the water went way up over the things. And the fella that told not to listen to the dumb blackfellas was found naked in the tree holding his moneybox. A good metaphor.

[laughter]

Audience7: And [Gary – unsure of correct name] rowed out and saved hundreds of these whitefellas.

DM: Yes. And when I did the first one, the Taree painting, one of my artist friends here in Sydney said every country town in Australia should have a mural, or a public artwork, a marker to remind people there are Aboriginal people here, period. We've been here for 40,000 years. With these things to happen, that's only two. Since 2009 I've done two of these, so they don't happen very often. So all I wanted to say was that when you get a chance to do these things, you should really go for it to do them. And I think I would like to see the mural restored. I think it is as relevant today as anything, and I think the drug thing on the other side of the mural, on the other side, was done by people who were in NA, they were in Narcotics Anonymous, and that hasn't gone away, that's still a big problem. That thing of one third of women for instance, are Aboriginal people or something. And incredible figures for the men. A quarter of all men in jail are Aboriginal. Those things, I mean that's an everyday. It's a contemporary experience, and it's something that we shouldn't just wipe out again. However, we should do more of these, and examine other known named people. Not just generic people etc. Known, named people. You might not see that, but today I'm, what do they call it, putting in a tender, to make this rock art engraving on the wall that goes down to the Opera House. These figures, as you can see, it's called 'The Song of Bennelong and Pemulwuy', they are six metres tall. They'll be permanently, if it works out, if I get the tender, they'll be permanently installed on this site so that everyone who comes to Sydney will see this. Anyway, I mainly wanted to say, I think just remember that I'm all for doing murals to make our presence felt. If we are Aboriginal people, if we do live here, we have to assert ourselves, we have to assert our presence. The film Marlene was talking about, you know, people who play music, people who make art, assert yourself, make your presence felt. Thank you.

[applause]

Djon Mundine Q&A

DB: Thank you Unc. Amazing insights and stories. And what we'll do now is just do some Q&A, while you're there, because you're extremely hard to get a hold of, and very wise and knowledgeable. Aunty [Christine – unsure of correct name]?

Audience/Aunty [Christine – unsure of correct name]: I'd like to say I'd love the mural to stay there, the '40,000 Years'. The feet in that mural belong to my father, and I have fifteen grandchildren. Eight have seen that, and I want it to be there for my next generations. And they're in awe when they see it. Okay, so I'd like it to be there.

[applause]

DB: Yeah, a real statement of pride, place, acknowledgment of sacrifices and paths forged. You know, I totally understand that white boundaries are different to black boundaries, and you know, how we incorporate that story properly into the Sydney story.

Taressa Mongta: [inaudible]. This is actual document, this is from us trying to do stuff years and years ago. This is Marie Bashir asked me over for a cup of tea before she stepped down, because it became a suicide thing, because we've got eight youth suicides, but we, for all the reasons that you said, we wanted to do this because we come out of the documents here, 1988, the great depression, the Koori Lockout, the scene in the church. There's a picture that's over at Randwick Council that says, 'We respect our elders'. [inaudible]. My sister was there when it was painted. And this is my brother, and he's actually featured in the front of the official memorial for the South Sydney [inaudible], yeah, and this is in Alliance Stadium apparently, about twenty-foot tall. But the space that's at Redfern Football Oval is also [inaudible] 1988. So we, like you said, just wanted to raise the potential for us to aspire. [inaudible] twenty-eight houses out there at La Pa, and when 98 come and everyone marched I'd never seen anything I'm more proud than that time. Never ever will I, I will always walk the line, I won't go touch no drugs no drink or, only just in moderation you know.

[laughter]

DB: Yeah, beautiful, beautiful.

Audience9: It's about how much control comes from the ground level, artist. I was born a plant in 1954. I didn't become a human being till 68, was it? So I don't have a whitefella education. I don't want it. Because I give all power to acknowledge the ancestral wisdom to which I want incorporated into educational practices and institutions of today. What I'm leading up to say is, I get a bit concerned about relationship that… you know I see a lot of our people evolve into white conceptual bohemians, like I mean art, I'm not mocking it but I don't want it to be overrunning decision making processes, and getting ground level artists out there. Because the only way I'm ever going to get rich is by hopefully selling a painting, you know. But then some of our mob have got a whitefella education, and they're coming from a white academic intellectual kind of process. You know, like, could I very well stand up here and do an installation with baked beans tipped all over my head. Help me. And we want to know because a lot of people are sweeping up the awards and everything. How do you get a tender? These are blackfellas from the jails. These are blackfellas around here contributing to this history by way of that thing there, and I'm tired of those bohemian… don't tell me there isn't an elite group of bohemian blackfella artists out there. I'm going to do a [inaudible] and be one of them.

[laughter]

Audience9: And so, I would like to see, and don't cut anybody from the ground level, because it's our misery, and the exploitation of that. I mean a lot of you fellas are rich, only because you got a whitefella education. So I need more of you bohemian artists, [inaudible] and we're doing what is relevant, significant to us, having gone through what we have, and being brutalised through it too. And I'm not saying that it should be given to you all because of that, but it can relate to us, communicate with us. Educate us on what to do in order to hopefully maybe sell a painting today, because I see that there is a lot of white conceptual art that our people are doing. Good stuff, but should we do what we live through? What is Aboriginal art? Or should we tip our baked beans over our head and call it art? You know? You know what I'm trying to say? And I don't want these academics making decisions about our murals, and

they need to connect more. You didn't even know about this today. They need to come down to the ground level. You know, we're going to know about it, we're going to hear about it by accident. And are you measuring your success by whitefella measuring stick? You know? Are you going to please the whitefella all the time? You going to be always worried about these stereotypes of us? Hey, you know, they got to come to our territory, they're on our territory [inaudible] what is appropriate for us, because we've got a lot of ancestral wisdom that you can't take away from a blackfella. It's not tangible, and that's what distinguishes who you are. Those words, those belief systems, those value judgements. Yes, you can be that. And that's not just the shell of it. You know, that's what makes you who you are. So how much are you reaching our mob before you take off to New York? You know, explain to us why you got an arrow poking up in the air, as apposed to what we normally do with them, you know. Or is that just the distant past? And, whatever, go on.

[applause]

DM: A couple of years ago, I think, just about the time that I did that, I did a project course in Goulburn with a number of people and again the thing that you have to do in all those projects is that you have to actually work with local people. I don't actually paint the thing. The thing is to engage with local people, otherwise it just has no meaning.

Audience9: On their terms.

DM: That's right. And in making that painting up, that's their story, not mine. And I think that's the point of that mural. It's about people living here.

Audience7: The art is the medium that brings dialogue together from all ages, and I done this for twenty years in this area and La Perouse where people come together, and the art is used as the medium. I've never been, I'm not into galleries at all. I just was good at art at school. I joined the Arts-Law Centre to learn about contracts. I still don't know how to do this thing, what do you call it? What's that thing on the computer?

DM: Oh, that's not me. I give the tender paper to somebody else to fill in.

Audience10: No, no, I mean the…

Audience11: Powerpoint.

Audience10: Yeah, that's right. [inaudible] children taught me how to use the computer. I had no education because of no fault of my own. So I was always good at art. Aboriginal people have accepted me into their community. I've worked with hundreds and hundreds of people. I'm constantly frustrated. I'll give you a case study now. I'm helping kids at La Perouse design their bus. Now the workers of the organisation do not want to look at a contract. I have to present them with a contract to get more than $90 for a workshop. This is ridiculous. I want to give you this case study. This is happening now, this week, you know, so I'm frustrated. It's already happening. There's a creative solution for every problem. There are existing groups everywhere here. The council had this space, 107, I was told it was only for community arts. I said, 'What about the inmates, anyone marginalised?' [inaudible] sell their work from here. And now it's turning into some yuppie thing. What is it? What is it?

DM: From that program I ran in Goulburn, the thing that was needed more I think than anything else, was a space to put their art 'here'.

DB: If I could feed into this, what the City's looking at, with support and in conjunction with the community is, and I don't necessarily like this word, but activating this space here. Looking at the Redfern terrace as being this space of celebrating these living cultures. We see the wall up there with all the different totems. And that's what celebrates that heartbeat. I just want to be mindful of the time that we've got here. In my position I'm taking all this on notice. We are recording this. We really want you to feed into this. We will have the ladies doing some interviews in there. You will have to do a little, what-do-you-call-it, application thing. There is also an opportunity to, on your programs here, if you go into one of the pages, we can feed in downcitystreets.com, right? Another channel to feed back on. Feed your input on. And all of this will be calibrated as part of what Desley was saying, the feasibility study, in this process. One of the things before I give Michael a space with this microphone, it was mentioned

by a couple of the people in the room, the Redfern All Blacks. So we're in discussion, of course at their invitation. We're not going to them, City of Sydney. They're coming to us to ask us for the very first meeting. They are the voice. Now we just suggested that there's a possibility, and we saw these amazing photos, and I know that I'll be one of them. We could potentially draw upon you, if you are willing, to have this space, or a space of the community's choosing, to bring these artworks, and these photos and this sort of stuff through the knockout, right? So that's something that we're sort of talking about, and we'll work with the key stakeholders in doing that. I'm getting the nod here from Kristina from the community centre, so she's the manager here. And we'll work with our libraries and bring this stuff back to life, not that it was ever lifeless, but you know what I'm talking about right? So make a note of that one. We'll come back and we might have another meeting around that. But I just want to get this rolling, and give Michael a little chance here.

Michael: How you going? My name is Michael. I'm a [inaudible] and we're very culturally and religiously related to the [inaudible] and also a few other tribes. Now there's three things I want to go on about. One was what Djon said, it was a name, history, and one thing young James Simon said too, that it was bad. They had to cover it over, and the lad here was saying something that was not, saying that it might not be acceptable twenty years later, you know. Some things may, as I'm saying, I find what he was talking about is still relevant to me. I'm a member of AA and NAA.

JW: I didn't say it was irrelevant. I said the intention may have changed over the years.

Michael: Oh well, yeah, that's still the same. Kinda the same thing as well. And being a member of AA and NAA, meaning I am an ex-junkie, an ex-alcoholic, I relate to that so much, and also I feel I can read it. You know what I mean? I love the look of this. And every time I walk past Redfern Station, mate I just stand there and go, 'Woah'. Straight across the road looking down at the city. And, like Jim was saying, there was a bad blue on the wall, they had to cover it over, and we don't want that negativity. You know, some things, whether it's alcohol or drug related, or like massacres or anything, they are not really a positive thing. You still got to deal with it. But you don't want to go shoving bad down everyone's' neck. You know, you want positive culture, positive beauty, positive light. We've got to stick to the truth. You can't go saying, you know, 'Shove the truth under the mat'. We can't go sticking bad things, like something bring evil onto a place. You know, always look for cultural good, that's what I was going on about. I think it is important, the main point is not to avoid real issues, but to give positive, beautiful, lovely art. Make people relax, make people enjoy it, make people love being alive, but still not avoid real issues.

[applause]

DB: So look, just before we, we're running five minutes over, so we'll just go another five minutes if that's cool. We've got lunch coming on, and that's between 12.30 and 2. So we really want you to come back after that, because that's when we will start getting more comments and everything, so don't feel that you've missed the opportunity, do come back.

Audience12: Djon, just a very short question. Can you just tell us again where your rock art is? On this last photograph there. And the name again. Thank you so much for your talk.

DM: It's a proposal, and I know I used the word 'tender', but that's what the Sydney Council call it, I don't call it that. I put that proposal in about twenty years ago, so there'd be a permanent marker relating to Aboriginal people in the centre of Sydney. That's on the rock wall that runs along to the Opera House at Circular Quay.

Audience13: I would love blackfella artists [inaudible] I don't have whitefella education, and I'm not saying that I'm missing out on anything either. But there's a generation, they've got white education, and it's all whitefella ideas of what Aboriginal art is. I want these Jason Wings to come and talk to us about, you know, the whole spectrum of art, and to us, because they're using the jargon in the art world too. You know, there's situations [inaudible] you know, the art jargon. And I want them to talk to us. How do we get our art immortalised in an installation. That's what I'd like to know. And just talk to us about that. How do we, you know, give us the whole spectrum of it. And communicate with us, rather than go out in your own little world, in the white conceptual art world, that's fine, but if you're going to call yourself 'blackfella' the most important aspect of being a blackfella is your kinship. You can't use

a biological bit to exploit. Blackfellas exploiting their own history, and they've got no connection whatsoever with kinship or they don't even know [inaudible] Redfern anyway.

DM: Can I just say, just one ten second reply. Basically, in all those proposals I always go and talk to lots of people. People would run away quite often and say, 'Oh, that's a really good idea', and then I find suddenly they've done it the next day. The thing is you have to go and talk to people. And I talked to lots of people about that project. It took twenty years, I've been talking about it for. So and the response of the Sydney Council was they put it out to tender, so anyone can apply to do it.

DB: So anyway, thank you.

Audience14: Yeah, I've got public art all over Sydney. The four corners of Sydney. From Hornsby to Campbelltown, to Blacktown, to Bankstown, Ashfield to Newtown, and even at La Perouse. You can see my name on the [inaudible] there. I can list many, many suburbs. And I'm going on 73 now, and just this week I got a ceramic to do at a school, and three murals. Because apparently all the schools have got to hand the money back so they're rushing for me to do murals. And I've got some major projects. Some of these projects they give me ten-grand just like that. And I've got many of them. But getting back to the murals. When I was painting the murals I was approached by South Sydney Council, would I fix up the All Blacks there or, not the All Blacks, the Redfern Football Clan. I said no way can I do that, because it's another person's art and there's [inaudible] in doing art. So has anyone ever approached the original artist to get their permission? Because it only happened this week, I went over to a school, and I refused to do it because I had to paint over another mural, that was dated and peeling. I said, 'No, unless you get in contact with that artist'. And Djon, getting back to down the front here of the Opera House. I submit art to the Opera House, you know the little gallery down there? They have my art, and my son's art plenty of times. But, I have to walk through Circular Quay, you know the dancers with the didgeridoos? And I stop to watch them. But what disappoints me is right beside them they're selling boomerangs, art and artefacts, and they all come from Bali, and all that type of place, Indonesia. And I complained to the Circular Quay group, and they said, 'Then Aboriginals start to complain, that we're picking on poor old Aboriginals again'. Because there's an entrepreneur there, and Aboriginal entrepreneur there selling all that gear, and he's onto a lucrative market there. Can we do anything about that? Seeing as the Metro Land Council's here today. Because it's just not right.

DM: That might be another thing to go on. I think the main thing is about the mural.

Audience14: Well, I'm the cartoonist for the Koori Mail, and I've done cartoons on that particular subject.

DB: What I can say to that, again, I'll just remind you that one of the main pillars of the Eora Journey, and I say personally for me, it's not the silver bullet, but the economic development plan and strategy, and that's a holistic strategy. One of the things is, of course, ethical trading in Indigenous art. And, through the many different channels and forums that we have, one of our panel member here, I hope you don't mind me calling her out, Trish, is we did an ethical, an Indigenous ethical art forum to discuss this very topic. And we have transcripts of that. And we have prints of that now. So one of the things we at the City can do in our role is, again from advice from professionals in this space is, buyer beware, provide that platform from authenticity and promote that. That is how we'll stem that trade, but also flourish to the white people, and inform our tourists. I'm just going to give it over to Raymond, and then we will go to lunch. But we really encourage you to all come back.

Raymond Finn: Thank you. Yeah, my name is Raymond Finn, and I just wanted to say about that first artwork that you've done. A good friend of mine [inaudible] was actually involved in getting those people doing that. He's an Indian man, he came from South Africa, and that community was sort of like a Christian community, eh? And when they found out that this man was involved in helping the Aboriginal people do that, they got rid of his passport and he had to go back to South Africa. But he came back a little bit later, and I'm just saying that because he moved back to Blacktown, and is a vey political person, and from South Africa he's been through the whole process, and he's trying to liberate Aboriginal people, and that's what he's trying to do through his art. And the other thing too, I just want to say the Adelaide Museum, I come from sort of Queensland, down to the river there. The Diamantina comes down to Lake Eyre. My people, the [inaudible] people, and we do [toas – unsure of correct spelling], the little things on the sticks through the clay. And we're trying to do that again, but we're looking at what sort of clay they used, and to do it in a bigger object, but we've got to ask permission, and through that there was the

[inaudible] at that time, wanted to smash these things up. There was a [name – unsure of correct spelling] and [name – unsure of correct spelling] people were intermarried through that area and they were trying to get rid of that. But the anthropologists came along and saved that and put them in the museum in Adelaide. If you have the opportunity to go to Adelaide, it's there and the big sort of [inaudible] here, and it's telling the story of where they went along that river, the fish, the birds and things like that, so that's very interesting. Marlene here also mentioned the Marree man actually [inaudible] in the satellite up there, there's an image of the tribal man, on the ground about five kilometres from the town, and I just went there about three weeks ago. Still there. But people are trying to say that we must have to do something there to retain it, because grass is growing all over it, camel walking all over it. It's starting to have a bit of a, you know, thing about it again, tourist thing. Because not far from there there's a new caravan park being put up the top of the hill. So this place that they've done it is not very far. So for tourist thing, and telling the story, like you're saying that man, they don't know where he's from but he's the image on the ground there, so hopefully one day we may be able to get him to stand upright somewhere. Thank you.

[applause]

DM: That's all I wanted to stress again, I think you really need to preserve the mural. That's all I want to say.

DB: Great, well thank you again Djon, very much for your input and wise words. So now I'd like to invite everybody again, to remind you if you can't come back for the next session, we've got these recording facilities.

Introduction to Afternoon Session

DB: I didn't want to embarrass Trish, but Trish is on our panel, and I said to myself that [inaudible] from copyright agency Viscopy, and when I mentioned that ethical art forum, Trish, your organisation contributed to that. Do you want to say a few words to that Trish, while we're just getting set up, yeah? Because I know it's a really important issue, and the City really values all this expert input onto that.

Trish: So, hi everyone. My name's Trish [surname – unsure of spelling]. I work at the copyright agency Viscopy. We are what's called a copyright collecting society, so we collect and distribute copyright licensing fees for visual artists, writers and publishers, and I do all the Indigenous engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists across Australia. But as Dave mentioned, a couple of months ago at the Leichardt Town Hall, there was an ethical trade forum for Aboriginal art talk. So there were about eight panelists from across Australia. We had a collector, and Aboriginal arts collector, a senior Aboriginal curator, an Aboriginal artist from the [place name – unsure of spelling] in Western Australia, and a couple of other people, an art dealer, and they were all talking about issues around what was raised before about how we stamp out unethical trading of Aboriginal art in Sydney, with the different councils like City of Sydney, Leichardt, Botany, Waverly, Mossman Council. So on the Leichardt Council, and also City of Sydney website you can actually go and look at the transcript of what was discussed that day and some of the issues that we've been talking about over the last sort of forty years around unethical trading of Aboriginal art. So there's a lot of information from that transcript and also a lot of advocacy bodies out there like Viscopy, we've actually got a Viscopy board member in the audience, Kath Fries, and the Indigenous Art Code which was set up four years ago to also help address some of these issues around unethical trading of Aboriginal art. The Outsource Centre as well that someone mentioned that has free legal advice for artists and they've got sample contracts as well on their website. National Association for Visual Artists as well, they have a lot of information. So there are bodies out there that are working to help artists, Aboriginal artists, Torres Strait Islander artists, in this space. Thanks.

[applause]

DB: That's great. And like I said, with the fourteen panel members we had at the City, and you know, there are sub-working groups of that, it is so good to be able to form this relationship, I think it was back in 2008, and to have a really good consistent input and dialogue. And so, that being said, with the word dialogue, I'm just going to say, and I'm never going to look at a can of baked beans again. Gee whiz. I might get home and just hold one, but that's about it right, I'm not going to tip it on my head. But look, I just want to, before I introduce Desley, you know, for me a little bit of respect in what I've noticed in the many different black forums, I MC a massive event called Rainbow Serpent Festival, and it's in front of almost 10,000 people. And I never thought in a million years that I'd be standing like this with a microphone in front of you, let alone 10,000 people. But for me myself, I stood there and said, 'I stand before you on the shoulders of my ancestors.' And for me personally that's [inaudible]. The language that I've always wanted to use in that forum, for people who come from all over the world, to this great festival which is a celebration of humanity. It happens to be electronic dance music, which I love. It's culture, it's art, it's music, bands, you know, the lifestyle, there's a kids area, it is a massive holistic festival. So one of the things I said there in front of all these different people, around, again, me seeing there has been exclusion and that doesn't work in anyone's language, and I sort of said this, 'The law of probability says to me that not all of us are going to agree. The law of associations, hang on, I'm jumping up there. The law of averages says that some of us will resonate with some of the key themes. But the law of association is what puts us all in this room together.' And I sort of think here with me, it's why I came to this today, to be a part of this jigsaw puzzle, where we know the end vision is what we want up there. We're seeing a really strong collective voice. We're seeing some opportunities that are going to arise, but we've got this jigsaw puzzle, we know it's there because we ticked it out in the boxes there. We know all the pieces are there and we've just got to put it together.

Desley Haas

DB: So without saying anything further I wanted to introduce Desley, and all the amazing work that she's done over the years, and it has been over the years, and see if we can get some good, strong dialogue going here, thank you.

[applause]

DH: I'd just like to thank all of you for such an amazing. It was great to hear all the discussion and all the different ideas coming out. We formed the Redfern Station Community Group, not to really do public art so much as we desperately needed a lift at Redfern Station. And REDwatch, and a group called Lift Redfern, had put an amazing campaign together, they'd worked for months, 5,000 signatures to Parliament, but it just didn't seem to be making any difference to the Minister of Transport. And one day one of the managers at Sydney Trains, while we were discussing why we didn't have a lift, just casually said to me, 'Well, maybe if Redfern Station was in the North Shore you might have gotten a lift.' So that was a bit of a wakeup call. And then a couple of things happened, and one was letters in mX, the magazine that used to be in the railway carriages at night that you pick up at the station, and some body had written in a letter and made the comment, 'Why should Redfern have a lift. Just imagine what it'd be like. It'd be covered with graffiti and full of people shooting up,' which to me was just horrific. And I think that's part of the problem that we've had in this area. Because to be honest, if you come in via train from Central, or you come in from West, what you see is graffiti all the way along the lines, graffiti over the historical buildings, the station has been allowed to deteriorate, a station that was once winning prizes for the flowers, gardens that were there. There was this wonderful station manager caller Hilton Smith, and in his own time he had all the gardens flourishing along platform 1, there were trees along each of those platforms, so it was really quite sad to see what was happening to the area. And then of course we've got all the development push coming straight directly at Redfern. So a group of us got together and we decided, well maybe the three things we could do something about was the graffiti, to be able to put more gardens in around Redfern Station and tidy it up, and to lobby for more murals on the station, and outside the station, so that's how we started. Now, Jason Wing asked me a question over the phone a few weeks ago, and he was wanting to know what we'd done so I sort of explained that a little bit. And then he said, 'But who are you?' and I said, 'Well, we're just local residents, we're community.' And then he went on quite frustrated and said, 'But who *are* you?' and I thought well what's he really asking? And then the penny clicked of course, you know, we're not artists, we're not public administrators of murals or anything else, we're just people who live in the local community, and we're people who care very much about Redfern, its history, and it's been part of our lives for a long time. So, if I could introduce some of the group to you, Irene Doutney is a councillor on the City of Sydney Council, she was here this morning but unfortunately she's not well so she's left. She's been a foundation member, and she's been the main contact to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island advisory panel. Lynne Turnbull is a long term resident. She's our main history person, because she knows most of the history, having lived here for so long, with what's been happening in Redfern. She can remember the mural being done, and Lynne's also the editor of the South Sydney Herald, so it's a wonderful contact to have. Cara Martinez, we were lucky to have Cara because she knows more about the public art than any of us did, so she's been an absolute boom to have. [Canning – unsure of spelling] Smith, who is the manager of the City of Sydney neighbourhood business centre in the main street of Redfern. And Margaret Brody, I don't know where Margaret is, she's the one who led the main work on the gardens, and if you want to see something artistic and creative, if you walk to the back of platform 10, that was once an old pile of rubble out the back. It was covered with weeds and goodness knows what, but thanks to Margaret and her team it's improved out of sight, and then City of Sydney Council has just come in and created the most wonderful garden along Marian Street. So even though we didn't get all we wanted with the gardens on the station or the native plantings we had imagined for the back of the station, at least a lot has been achieved. And a lot of that work is done by Sydney Trains. So how did we come to be working on the murals? Well our original idea was that we wanted murals inside the station and outside the station, and we were lucky enough to find Ralph Hoffman, who if any body understands community, he did, in spite of being huge in a business suit, and one of the senior managers for Sydney Trains, so we were actually negotiating with him to have, once the gardens were moving, to have murals on one of the platforms that had, I think platform 10, he'd been discussing with Cara, we were actually going to have murals that were going to be there for a short time and then replaced. So there was the idea of circulating murals. Everything was going quite well until Ralph called me one day and said, 'I've got a message from you from quite senior up in the department.' And the message was, 'Tell them, no discussion about murals until something is done about the dilapidated murals outside the station.' So even though that was part of our plan, we

swung all the projects to the mural, so that's how we came to be involved. We're not doing it out of the kindness of our hearts or anything else, it's just that we care about Redfern, and we believe that Redfern can be the very best Redfern it can. It's been a fabulous place in the past, and it's great now, but it's just the perceptions that people have got I think is really affecting us all. I know a lot of people have been down this path before of trying to restore those two murals. Carol Ruff, the artist, this is her third attempt of trying to have the '40,000 Years' redone and restored, or whatever you want to say. So luckily, we've now, as I mentioned before, we've received a grant for the City of Sydney for which we're incredibly grateful. Part of it will go to the feasibility study, which Carol, and Peter Day will be looking at the whole design. As I mentioned before, the wall that the mural is on is going to be a shorter wall, so that design has to be recalculated. We've got to work out the paints, as you can imagine, the safety etc. I can't remember now, it might be two years/18 months ago, we just haven't come up with what we think needs to be done, we had two very large community meetings. If you thought the debate this morning was quite interesting, I can tell you these two community meetings were really feisty. So there was a lot of difference of opinion, exactly as this morning about 'Say Now', whether it should stay, should it go, the issue about the needles, and with '40,000 Years' as you've probably heard, there's been a lot of discussion about the snake that was in the mural. So whatever we've done from that point to this, it's been based on the information that we've received from those two community meetings. We've often been asked, 'Did you consult?' well all I can say is that we tried as hard as we could, but I can understand, we invited a lot of people to be involved with us, but they didn't know who we were or what we were about, people are busy, and I can see, you know, there's lots of reasons why people didn't join in at first. But the two people who have come in with us from the beginning are Micky Mundine and [Lany – unsure of spelling] from the Aboriginal Housing Company. At the two meetings we had it was unanimous, sort of, that both murals should be restored. The issue was, as came out this morning about the thing that we need some positive murals, and Micky was the one pushing that most of all. So what we're saying at the moment is that we've got the money to do the feasibility study. The next step will be getting funding to do the restoration of '40,000 Years'. The issue is the brown paint panel, which everybody is fed up with, and Cara will be talking about that. But the one we really want to move on and have it firmly in place, is this idea of having more murals for Redfern, and definitely, as Micky was saying, and a lot of you were saying this morning, something that's bright and it's positive, and I personally would like to see, with Micky, something that shows what would have been here in the beginning, the animals, the flowers, whatever, but so that we can capture the whole range of Redfern. And what it was like, what it is now, and what it can be in the future. To me, the most significant part of the mural, '40,000 Years', is the footprints, and that's the thing I hold to most. Because if you stop and think of how many footprints would have gone through this area over the years, all of our footprints, the recent ones, the ones that went in the past, and when people like Cathy Craigie is talking about what The Block used to be, and how people would go from The Block and sit opposite the station, and there used to be a hill there, and they'd sit there with the wind and the breeze coming through on hot days and being able to see down to Botany. I mean, nobody in their right mind would go and sit there today, because it's just full of cars and noise and everything else. But it's somehow I think really to capture those stories and the feeling that Redfern was a special place where people could sit outside, and the best way I can see of doing that is through the gardens, and it is by having murals that are capturing the history of Redfern. So I'd like to also to say there are two murals out there. The second mural, 'Say Now', I really appreciated Marlene's comments about it this morning, because at those two community meetings the most aware people, the most interesting comments were coming from the young drug users of Redfern, and they were just the most amazing people, that are part of our community too. 'Say Now' is in actual fact a memorial to a lot of the young people who painted that mural. So even though we're concentrating on '40,000 Years' the 'Say Now' to us is also really important. NUAA as I mentioned before, has signed the contract, so we're no longer involved in the restoration of 'Say Now', but it doesn't need that much work to be honest, so the main thing is just keeping it clear of the graffiti. So what else can I add? I think what Nathan said this morning, it's almost like the stars are aligning for the mural because we've had this fabulous day today thanks to the Sydney College of the Arts, it's been a wonderful opportunity. We've had a grant from the council. The lift is going in on the 30th November. Big party for that one. The fence in front of the mural is coming down on both sides, I hope, so at long last we're going to be able to see the mural in its full glory. Carol and Peter, hopefully, will be starting the feasibility study in January, and as I mentioned before, we're having a meeting with Troy Daly and his team to discuss how Urban Growth may be involved in restoring the mural, and hopefully finding some more walls for murals in Redfern. So I'd really invite anybody who's interested, we would love some more help, and more people to be involved, because the mural is for all of us, and to me it's only a starting point to be able to say, as the vision was coming out here this morning, murals on all the walls of Redfern, that you walk out of Redfern station, and you know, this is Redfern, this is Australia. So thank you all for listening.

[applause]

Carol Ruff

CR: Okay, so, it's kind of quite touching to be here again, it's been 34 years I think since 1984, I'm not very good at maths. It's a long time ago that I first came up with, I was living in Redfern and I was very active in mural painting, that's when I met Marlene in Townsville, we were doing murals up there on the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Medical Centre, and various other places, all over Sydney. And I was living in Pitt Street, Redfern, and I'd been living there for a number of years. And I got an arts grant from the Community Arts Board at the Australia Council, which was supposed to be to do my own practice, but I thought, you know, there's nothing I'd rather do than put a mural on that great 300ft long wall, opposite the Redfern Railway Station. Because so many people come through those walls, and you look at it as you come out, all the students from the University, all the people from The Block. Everybody uses the train, everybody walks past, and somehow or other we did get this project funded. I applied to the Aboriginal Arts Board for Aboriginal artists to work with me. A lot of people thought I was Aboriginal, because I'm a little bit dark. I'm part Javanese. That's Redfern for you. So, what I might do before, I'm just going to read a couple of facts, because I'm a lot older than a lot of people here and my memory's gone a bit. So I'll give you a few facts, and then I'll tell you a few yarns about the story of this mural. So the mural, the idea of the mural is that it'd be a history of Aboriginal people in South Sydney. And we've got an image to put up with the mural. It's not a very good picture of the mural, but what I've got up behind me is just made from a series of snaps that I had. It's hard to see the whole mural in one piece, so I thought if we, I just pasted a whole lot of photographs, this was the days when we had photographs, just so you can see what's in this mural. So the way that the design worked, was the whole mural, there's beginning and there's the end. It has the rainbow snake going right through it. You can see it comes and goes, and weaves its way through and it ends up at the tail. And there was the thought of 40,000 years, one of the artists in the team, an Aboriginal musician called Joe Geia, from Townsville, had written this really great song, which we couldn't find on Youtube to play it to you, and I won't bore you by singing it although I could. It's like a little reggae song. The chorus bit goes, '40,000 years is a long, long time. 40,000 years, still on my mind. Long, long time, still on my mind.' So this is the song, and you'll have to listen to Joe Geia. Marlene can play it on the radio program for you. She's already done that a few times I'm sure. So, that was the beginning. We thought, of course talking to Nathan, in 1984 we had just realised that people had been here for 40,000 years. That was very significant. Now people are saying 50,000, even 60,000 years I read in the paper the other day. But given that this is a, what we're viewing here is a piece of history really. This is very much 1984, where The Block was, what people were aspiring to. That flag was still quite new. People didn't even know that flag very well, which was designed in 1975, was it? Does anybody remember? I remember we painted it in Townsville on a big mural, and I think it was the first time that anybody had put it on a public mural. So things that we take for granted were kind of spectacular, and the mood of mural painting at the time that this mural represents, I mean, I've gone to Mexico and looked at a lot of the work of Diego Rivera, we were very into art for the people. Get the art out of the galleries, put it on the public walls, so that everybody could access these murals. This mural was to give, well everybody in The Block a sense of place. Because people in The Block, coming from all over different places could get together, and have a sense of identity. Just like, welcome to Redfern, you come out of the station and there it is. Welcome to Aboriginal Redfern. It was just the whole mood of this social realist sort of thing, and everyone in the mural [inaudible] would say, the woman here, Norma Williams, was living in The Block. Arnold Williams took me over to meet her, and we'd had a lot of meetings with the medical centre, Mum Shirl, and I've got a letter here from Mum Shirl, giving us permission to paint her in the mural. And in the end we ended up painting the portrait in the [inaudible] important image here. The politics at that time were we weren't really looking for stars, we were looking for people who represented everyone. You didn't have to be famous. Mum Shirl was very, very loved in the community, and she was very helpful at the time of researching the mural. And I was working with Tracey Moffatt at the time. And we did a lot of research together. We went and met people, we went to all sorts of community organisations in the area, looking for what this mural should be. We got an empty shop in Lawson Street, Redfern, and we said to people, 'Come and talk to us. If you've got any ideas at all. This isn't a shop. We've got this shop for the duration of this project, so come and tell us what you want to see on the mural.' And lots of people dropped in, young and old, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. All sorts of people came in. And we had a little box. 'Put your ideas, what you want to see painted on the mural, write it on a piece of paper, and put it in this box.' Okay, no prizes for guessing what was the most requested thing to go into this mural was, the Redfern All Blacks footy team. Here they are. That's not it twice, it's just the way we put this together. So here's the Redfern All Blacks, in fact I think they won that year. Lots of people came in from the country to the knockout. So, Avril Quaill, another ex- Boomalli who did a lot of work on the mural actually put this together. I said, 'We can't paint a footy team on a mural. You've got to be joking.' But we did, and this

is, these are all known to some people in Australia. And of course, everybody in this team used to drink at the pub on the corner. Black Lace used to play, and everybody loved this mural. It was very pristine and beautiful. It hadn't started peeling off at that stage. And, you know, Mac Silva, and all these people who you wouldn't remember, but people who were around Redfern then did. So [inaudible] and Black Lace, the band, and they'd be saying, if anybody walked in, 'Hey, get away from that mural.' No body was allowed to make a mark on this mural. One of the things that everybody said about it, in fact I was poking around, how wonderfully and in what good condition this mural was. I found one old newspaper article last night, which I didn't scan. I'm so old-school I don't scan, okay, I just carry bits of paper around. We'll scan it next time. It's a picture from the Sun Herald of the mural, it's corny, it says 'Wall Games, take a tin of paint a brush and a good imagination, and you're all set to make your mark on society.'

[laughter]

CR: Oh, the curse of a mural painter. So we're almost, all we need now is the approval of the council, and we had that. 'Then choose your location and start painting'. Sounds easy. But it hasn't always been that way, it talks about a lot of murals, there were always so many murals in Sydney, but going down a bit further, 'Some of Sydney's best murals include the Aboriginal mural painted on the Redfern railway bridge, a mural cynics said would never last, but which has been there two years, practically untouched.' So that was something to be proud of. So I'll jump back, the mural was actually funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board, the Community Arts Board, that was me, the Aboriginal Arts Board, and also the South Sydney Council, which is now Sydney Council, and of course the State Railways who own the wall. The wall of dubious strength. I thought that fence was for strength, but somebody said its coming down. So I was right, it was, there used to be a thing in the late 80s, that was actually to stop people crossing the street at any part, because there was a little deal going down that…

Audience (group): [inaudible]

CR: actually it was put there because there were these young kids on The Block who had this fabulous trick, which was if you sit at the traffic lights, or the pedestrian crossing, you're sitting there, and the back door's open of your car, and two of them or three of them would walk past really, really slowly like this, and then somebody else would open the back door and steel your computer and bag. So I think that's why that little, I think that's why that fence came up, but who knows. Anyway, it's going, because it does block off the view of the mural, and I think if we put the mural back that would be terrific. And then you could see it again, because there's no use doing it if you can't see it. Kids from the Settlement, I was going to say, people, people, is that still going, the Settlement?

Audience (group): Yes, yes.

CR: Eveleigh Street School, Eora College was very, very new then. So lots of people came and painted with us, and picked up brushes. Now, the other people who had helped us, Mum Shirl of course, and Elaine [Hitchen – unsure of correct name] even gave us some photographs. We went to the Mitchell Library, so a lot of these early photographs, after the lovely people Desley was talking about, we went through the, kind of, the old days, when people were fishing and using canoes, and walking through history with the footprints, using coolamon, beads, walking through history. This is based on a photograph from the Mitchell Library, you might have seen, if anybody knows that picture file, they've got a really interesting small picture file. This is somebody fishing in the Hawkesbury. It's a beautiful photograph. Walking, walking, and then, sort of, where's the boat? We've cut the boat off. Oh no, there it is. So then, it comes to the arrival of white people, people being killed. And then this little, I forget his name, with the breast plate, you know how people were given breast plates. When I do the survey [inaudible] all of this will be properly written up, but it's a bit early here. This is the church that's still up the road on Cleveland Street, on the corner of Cleveland and Regent, Saint Paul's Church. And the institutionalisation of children from this area. Especially children who were mixed race, they were put into institutions, the missionaries, so that's what, that's a very important part of the mural there. Then of course The Block, with the view of the city behind it, which is now on the Aboriginal Land Council's logo. So the corner here, of Lawson Street, and Eveleigh, being painted into the mural, because this is sort of, this is the place that people really identify with. Sydney Town was quite new then. The Redfern All Blacks, the cheerleader. You had a name Marlene, your niece?

MC: Leona McGrath.

CR: Leona McGrath. And this image here was on the front of Bobbie Sykes who was living in Redfern then, you may not remember her. This picture was on the front of her book. Oh, there it is there. Doctor Roberta Sykes, sadly passed away, on the front of the book that came out at the time. And then ending up at the end of the snake's tail. So, the response to the mural was fantastic. We actually did this old-school way, we'll probably do it again the same way. We actually cleaned, we had a street closure, in order to get an old-fashioned epidiascope in the middle of the road that projected some of our images up and drew them at 2am in the morning. When we first, there was a lot of old advertisements on this wall, which we sanded off ourselves wearing masks. All this lead paint, which I think is going to come back to haunt me one day. And then the fire brigade, the local fire brigade came along and blasted it clean for us and then we undercoated it straight away. And then when we finally finished it we had a party. And I think we had another street closure. It's hard to get street closures, maybe we didn't, but I think we did because that park wasn't there then. And that was all housing where that nice little park is now. And the mural is painted with acrylic paint and over the years, even though we did all our preparation and sanded it, and it shouldn't really have rising damp, given that it's in mid-air, but it started to flake off. And I think it was at that time when the mural started to fall off. I mean we haven't really, I never really expected any of my murals to last, or our murals, to last more than ten years, when you're using house paint, and there are some really wonderful paints now that I use, which are fresco paints, which cost more, but they don't flake off because they go right into the substrate. After that there was a bit of tagging, and then there was some fabulous guerrilla repair work going on for quite a long time. People were fixing it up and repainting bits and pieces on the mural. Until I left Redfern I used to always carry a little cleaning kit in the car, and hop out and clean and touch it up lovingly. But then I left Redfern, so I stopped having that relationship with the wall. And we would hope, of course, if the mural is restored, and that's what I'm here to represent really, putting history back on this wall, would be that we put some money aside, in that budget, which Peter and I will put together, as Desley said, that we will try and have some maintenance money in there so we can keep it in good nick. Usually you find, and very much with this mural, that people don't generally tag murals. There's only just started to get a bit of tagging when it started to fall off, because most artists, there's a street cred between us, we respect one another's work. And unless it's a wall that's known to be done again, and again, people tend to back off and find their own bit of wall. And I've never really had trouble with graffiti with murals. I just think it's some sort of honour between artists that exists. I paint a lot now, a lot in the city, and I go to Alice Springs to paint, and I've finally become that terrible thing called a 'gallery artist', and now I show my artwork in galleries. And I sit around, I paint outside, and I sit around in Alice Springs a lot, and I paint a lot of paintings in the town of Alice Springs. And people often say to me, 'You shouldn't sit in the Todd River there to paint. It's dangerous, you know, there are drunks.' And it's true, there are drunks in the Todd River, more and more, as there are less and less places for them to drink. But I've painted in that Rodd River bed so many times, and people always come up and all they ever say is, 'What are you painting? Keep going! Keep going! Don't disturb her, she's painting.' I get the most amazing respect, and I feel very honoured to be an artist. It's never made me very rich, but it certainly has a certain amount of cred that I'm very proud of. And I will hope that we will put this piece of history back. I'm happy to answer questions, or do you want to keep going? That's sort of a background. I think that sums up at this point. There's some stories that you might…

Audience14: [inaudible]

CR: Oh yeah, that's an important point. This is what Desley said, there have been, I am a little bit old now to be doing this sort of work, but like I have made two attempts before. The first time we tried to get it restored and the council knocked it back. Then the second time we actually got a contract, the whole budget, Peter day and night, and he's my technical producer and I'm the artistic director, in the old days I was the manager, and we've changed the names as the years go by, and then the project, even though we had a contract, it was pulled out by a development group who were trying to develop something called Red, Red…

Audience14: Red Square.

CR: Red Square! Which was interesting. It sounds so communism, and it so wasn't.

[laughter]

CR: You know, we had the politic, what were they calling themselves, now of course everybody's green, so it's probably Green Square now. Green Square, you know they decided red wasn't quite a right colour. And that was really radical, I had the contract in my hand and I didn't take them up on it. Interestingly though, Red Square never happened. And here we are again, thanks to this wonderful group, we're here again to talk about the mural. One thing that I'm sure, that came up this morning, was the image of the snake, there was a group of people in Redfern in the 90s who were saying that the snake was a problem and I think they were a fundamentalist Christian group and I don't have a problem with that, but maybe they were coming from some sort of biblical point on that, but the snake was always the creator, the rainbow snake. We all had that [name – unsure of correct spelling] book, the Rainbow Snake, you probably read it to your kids, and that snake's even more scary looking. But you know, you can draw a snake with a simple head, you know, this is a snake, a snake or an eel, I know where that came from, but, you know, things can be modified if necessary, snake's mouths can be closed, but I think the snake is part of the mural.

MC: I don't think so. It's about white is white, and that thing takes over our spirituality. We don't have the same connotation. The snake is a creative spiritual thing, and they come, [inaudible]

[laughter]

CR: Thank you, that's right.

MC: And we're in the spiritual realm everyday and I challenge them on that ground. Don't you invalidate my spirituality. And it's all about the invasion. It's always indoctrinating us with their so-called education, and so-called wisdom and spirituality, and that is not an evil thing, and that will always be a part of the spirituality of creation of our people.

CR: Yeah, thanks Marlene. Because I think, obviously that is a part of the mural. Yeah. It speaks. There was something else somebody touched on, but I can't remember what it was, but, you know, if there's anything you want me to mention or… Oh there it is, there's the rainbow, the [inaudible] oh it's quite different. Yeah, it's always painted different. That's one of the interesting things about that old snake. When you go to Alice Springs it's all another way of painting it again, but it seems to be all over Australia. And I don't think the rainbow snake right through 300ft of Redfern wall is a very good idea. The snake sort of links the image. I think if you tried to take it away, I guess for myself, I love the idea of more murals in Redfern, and I would like to, my job here is to represent this drawing, and I think it gets very complicated if we start pulling it apart, changing it. I just think that's another job, another mural. And I just think if we get this back it will get other murals going. I think murals got a bit out of fashion in the 90s, and I think they're very much back now. Although, my daughter's 28, and her husband is a young chef, and I go into these restaurants, every restaurant that sort of springs up now around here, and everywhere, they all have murals inside, but it's a different kind of mural. These are decorative murals, and they're very popular now in this café scene. But these murals, and there's a whole lot of other ones that I have worked on, like there's a really faded one in the Domain parking station. One of mine, there are some beautiful portraits in that mural, that's in really bad condition, there's been many moves to restore that one. The one on the Adelaide Festival Theatre, called 'Aborigines Discovered Cook' which I did with a bunch of Aboriginal artists, because I'd just come out of working on this film, and I won't bang on about myself, but this film was called 'Wrong Side of the Road' and it was a really amazing film, about No Fixed Address and Us Mob, and they all painted on this mural. So in a way, I see the role of a mural person like myself is to bring people together. Some of the murals that I worked on weren't about Aboriginal people, they were about women's issues, because Feminism was really important to us in those days. And my daughter tells me that it might even be coming back into fashion!

[laughter]

CR: I think when she was about, when she was studying fashion I said, 'Put your hand up anyone in the room who's a feminist,' and only she and her girlfriend dared to put their hands up. And she said, 'Mum, these are things that don't go away.' This is another mural that we have just successfully restored called 'Proud of Our Elders', which has reference to the Aboriginal community down at La Perouse, and it's in Randwick, which is of course very close to here. And we've just restored that mural completely, and pretty much the way we're going to here. That's one called 'Proud of Our Elders'. It's, actually I have to say, painted with better paint, and it looks better now than it did in the beginning, because I guess we got better at doing what we do. I don't know. They can be restored. The one on Bondi Beach I did there

on the school, the 'Peace Mural', that's being restored by the parents, they raised the money for that. So I think that we could raise the money for this, you know. What else should I tell you about the mural? The artists [inaudible] who worked on it. Some of those artists, like Tracey have become very well known now.

Audience14: So are you just going to restore exactly what's there?

CR: Yeah, well I think that, that's what I'm proposing, that's what the present feeling is. I guess, it's a piece of history, it's what we call now. It makes me feel very old to call something a heritage mural.

Audience15: Could you make the snake a bit longer?

[laughter]

CR: Okay, we've got a vote for a longer snake. I like that.

Audience15: [inaudible]

CR: Yeah.

Audience15: [inaudible]

CR: Yeah, there's a tail and there's a head. It does rise up in the middle. That's great, okay, I like that. Somebody write that down, we want a longer snake.

Audience16: I've been working with youth in Southeast Sydney area, and one of the things that we worked on a few years back was something called 'Past, Present, and Future', and some beautiful poetry came out of that and… I've been working with kids, teenagers, and youth in Southeast Sydney and this area. We worked on one little project, with [inaudible – unsure of correct name] Council, and the kids came up with something based on past, present, and future, visual stuff, but poetry came out of that as well. And I just see the potential for, if this is being restored, then there's just this amazing potential for stuff to be happening in schools, dialogue created, and there's some beautiful stuff to come out of the dialogue, and linking also, all these people have moved into this area, like the [inaudible], all this different level art world that would love to know more, or be connected with Aboriginal people. I see this potential for really great things to happen as a result of this…

CR: I think that's great, and actually one thing that we have talked about with the group is because this mural, we didn't even sign it, we took the [inaudible], what, I think like the little story I just told you about the history is in this mural, and we would put a, something on this mural that can link, because we're about to do all this research on the mural with the feasibility study, so there will be a link to a website, so if kids want to learn more, they can look it up, and the whole story of the mural, because everybody's got a little device, and they will be able to find stories in this mural. I think that's the great thing about murals, is that they tell stories.

Audience17: Can I just say, I'm admiring your work ever since I picked up a copy of [name – unsure of correct name] magazine, and saw you on scaffolding, scaffolding in New Guinea…

CR: Oh, yes, New Guinea, that was wild! Yes, I did, I have to repeat that, because I have been spotted on the scaffold in Papua New Guinea in a photograph. That was incredible doing those murals in Papua New Guinea. That's just like another world over there.

Audience17: Thank you for all your hard work.

CR: Thank you. They've got a lot of beetle nut juice on them now, at the low level.

[laughter]

Audience/Chico Monks: Hi Desley, my name is Chico Monks, I'm one of the art teachers at Eora Tafe, just down the road. So I put my hands up for my next year students to all take part in the mural. I can put it into our program or whatever, but just the idea that Eora was part of it in the past.

CR: I think that's great. The important thing with, obviously with the mural it's hard to have masses of people at once, but there are simple bits like even just helping to undercoat, and get some of the [inaudible] just so the kids can go away having made a mark there.

Chico Monks: I think, yeah, the idea of just one paintbrush touching a wall.

CR: Because I have no idea these days, the old days you just go and find a brush, now you've got to be insured even just to be on the street these days, you have to go into all that. But I think if it's in school time, they would be totally allowed to come, you know, and be under your guidance. Okay Margaret, who moved in one year after the mural was painted.

Audience/Margaret Brodie: Carol I love the idea of the mural being restored, obviously, because we've been involved in trying to do this for a while. I know that the wall is going to be shortened. You're talking about restoring it exactly as it is. Can you explain how you might do that, with the wall being shorter?

CR: Okay, I didn't want to disappoint my friend who wants a longer snake, but in fact…

[laughter]

MB: But you'll have to deal with the physical reality of what's going to happen.

CR: No, it's fine, it's absolutely fine, because we have to make it a bit shorter, because the wall, when it's rebuilt, will be a little bit shorter, but because I have areas like this, and areas like this, and even areas like this, that can be very easily compressed, and no one would even notice. It's very easy to move a line like that, you can find a couple of feet there, same here, this passage could be reduced, so we can actually compress the mural design quite easily, there's a lot of sort of breathing space in it, and we'll just compress it here and there when we redo it. I've got all the original plans they're 1:10 scale, they've been cluttering up my studio for so long now, waiting. And I must say there's one bit missing, when I got those mural plans out, when I met Desley and Cara and the group, and there's one piece missing. No prizes for guessing which piece got knocked off! This bit's not there anymore.

[laughter]

CR: But we can restore it with photos. Any more questions?

Audience17: Hi Carol.

CR: Were you here when it was built?

Audience17: No, I'm Nina's sister.

CR: Okay.

Audience17: Yep. So I was thinking, because this is 1984, and there are two other things that have happened since then, major, I mean probably more than that. There's the 1988 thing, and the year 2000, and I was talking earlier in this forum with the connections that start at contact, that are still in the communities, particularly out at La Perouse there are connections, which you would be aware of it, a lot of it. So I was thinking, if there was a way having representation somewhere, that updates it to the, particularly the, or a juxtaposition of 1988 and the 2000 bridge march, because there is an oral history that on the 26th of January, 2000, when the bridge march happened, we went out in the Tribal Warrior bus, out to La Perouse, and picked up the [inaudible] and I drove the bus back in here, and we got on the Tribal Warrior and took the [inaudible] and our families were waiting back before they had the old boat shed, and she was represented over in the mural that you did over in the at Randwick with the 'We Respect Our Elders' things, so just trying to figure out how we can include that community that's got that connection and those two last big things, is what I was thinking.

CR: I think that's a really interesting idea, and I think these are things that we should consider, although, as I have just said, I'm nervous to start…

Audience18: [inaudible] consult the rest of the Aboriginal community on that. Because there's not a lot of Aboriginal people [inaudible]…

CR: Were we saying there should be more or less representation?

Audience18: More

CR: You know, I think really, that this mural is what it is. It took ten weeks to design. I'm tending to think that what would be great with all these ideas is that there should be another mural that is the next mural, rather than try and pack more into this. This is what it is, and there should be…

Audience18: Everyone's got different ideas about what they want on the mural, you know, and there's a lot of [inaudible] that people have had their contribution to especially the Aboriginal side of it, and I think that there's not a lot of us here today that can do that, you know, put their ideas forward, and I just think…

CR: Well I think, as I said, the thing about this one is it's the ideas of the people, when we did a lot of research, it was the ideas at that time. I mean, this has to be seen as ideas of 1984, that's what it is, I guess. But, I would also like to think that if we get people painting, and maybe train a couple of new mural artists, that there would be more murals. And I don't know what's going to happen to the diagonal corner. Will there still be another annex section, or…

[DH - ?]: Yes, the wall's got to be on the diagonal, the wall is on a diagonal, and I've seen a design, it's on perspect, and it's of about, it's got a large turtle and a number of little turtles coming after it, so that's what's going to be on the corner, that will then go down toward where '40,000', where the actual words start. So that was the plan. I'm not too sure what the Aboriginal Housing Company is planning from hereon, but that was what I was shown that they were going to put up.

Audience19: I wasn't sure what Chico meant before. I'm just imagining that when you say that it'd be a great project for Eora students, I would be hoping that there would be some other students, who were specifically geared towards restoration or something.

Chico Monks: [inaudible] just physically…

Audience19: Yeah, but that requires a certain skill too. You know, if you're not trained in restoration, you know, it'll lose a bit of shape, the whole collective look will. If you just put new kind of students on it.

Chico Monks: But like what Carol's saying, if they do the [inaudible], if she just gives them the [inaudible].

CR: So what happens, I'll just give you a bit more detail on this. You're absolutely right, what you're saying, and I have been in so many, especially in the 70s, the sentiment was very much, 'Go and ask Carol for a brush.' But the thing is mural painting really is a skilled thing, and you know, I've been on, I think it might have even happened on this wall that I gave some brushes out. And you can really only have two brushes at a time, because if they get away from you and you've had a street closure and you've drawn up all the stuff very carefully with a texta colour for example, or something more shifty like chalk, and you turn your back and a kid gets a brush and goes swipe and I remember turning around and going, 'Oh my god, you've just painted out that whole space.' You know, you can only do small groups at a time, like two at a time is really, I wasn't going into the detail, but in fact you're right. What happens with something like that is that you really need to work with people, and what I prefer, obviously, is if there are a couple of kids who have really got it, who shine at art, who are going to do it in their lives, they're the ones to target. They're the ones who stick around and help you wash the brushes and you can't get rid of them, and they're there the next morning. And those artists get mentored on, you know, I would hope that to actually seriously have two really artistic young artists, with your advice, people here, and that they would be, really, and I, you know, because otherwise you get a whole, there ends up being five or six kids in, and three of them a just wagging, and the ones who vanish after lunch, and then the two, the ones we're looking for are the ones who are going to be artists, but I also understand what you say, being able to say, 'Oh I made a mark,' but it's a sort of a token thing as opposed to being a real painter, you know. Very different things.

Audience20: How many people worked on this?

CR: Well the main artists were; myself, a guy called Emu Nugent, Joe Geia, Avril Quaill, Tracey Moffatt, a guy called Bo, who was a mystery who came, and I don't ever remember his name, he was beautiful, he was from the bush, and also there was a friend of mine called Charlie [Aarons – unsure of correct spelling] used to come. So that was the core group, that was what like seven people I think, and then, you know, yeah, I mean I think people at the end of the day were quite respectful of, 'Oh well, you know what you're doing when you paint it.' It wasn't like everybody needed to hold a brush. Kids get excited about brushes, but they can't, they've got to be able to paint neatly to do something like this. It's true.

Audience19: We're talking about a [inaudible]

CR: Well, it's funny. This one was painted originally with people going along and ask Carol for a brush, and when we restored it I did it with four people on my team, all of whom are artists. And it's just beautifully painted. It's a beautiful thing. So I think there are two types of ways of seeing a mural. There are community murals that are painted for the community, by people in relationship to the community, and I think there are murals that are painted by the community. And I think if we want something really slick and smart then it needs to be painted by people who know what they're doing. And sometimes I see so many, I watch murals a lot, schools got a lot of murals up in the 90s, schoolyards, and they really vary, and I think that it's great to try and do something that kids can paint on. And some people have designed murals, and this isn't really a kid's mural, but you've got grownup kids, you've got big kids, you've got people like Marlene and me, at the school. Where are you studying? Yeah…

Audience19: But this is a restoration.

CR: Yeah, it's a restoration, yeah.

Audience21: Can I ask, you're talking about restoration, but you're also talking about condensing it. How can you restore something that you're going to be changing the…

CR: Well, I'll just redraw it again. It has to be drawn from scratch. All the old paint has to come off. What we would hope to do, sometimes with these murals now is paint them on panels. That's really great so people can paint in a private space like in a big place out of the weather. It was really awful working on that bridge. Sitting out there is not something one would look forward to particularly, but a lot of work I do on panels, and then you bolt the panels up, but tragically, and the restoration of the 'Peace Mural' in Bondi was done on cement panels, because the first one was done on wooden panels, and it blew away in one of those Pacific storms, so we did it on cement sheeting, which is like the modern asbestos. It's really great, you can use fresco paint and it's never going to shift. But it's very heavy, and I'm pretty sure that we've already been told that it's too heavy to put panels on. So what we'll actually have to do is clean the entire thing. This one here we did, because this is painted directly to the wall, we have to clean the whole thing off, this is what Peter Day looks after, and then treat the whole wall with a special anti-fungal thing so there's no mould at the bottom. There's bits of mould in here. And then a special undercoat, and then a sealer, and then we draw it again from my plans. That's still a restoration, but you wouldn't want to paint on this flaky old thing. And that's how we can condense it.

Audience22: You see, I'm sure we have a community consensus on, just going on what Linda said, that we haven't had enough community input, is that right?

Audience23: I think Djon before said, said something this morning, that we all had a bit of passion about our football team, because that was the driving force and the backbone of our community, and then we've just sort of resurrected [inaudible] in some of our team, you know. And that's very much what keeps us all together to, is our football team. And somewhere along the line, that has to be put in too, somewhere in another mural.

Audience22: What the same [inaudible] regional football team?

Audience23: No, we'd like, these kinds of things are very [inaudible] for us, for Aboriginal people, people from Redfern too. Our football team, this one here's the grand final, you know, they won, back in 1970-something, and we've just currently had another [inaudible] I'm sure a lot of the young people

that are inspired by these things. This is what we have, this is what keeps us on track, is our football team, our passion is our football team. And in fact, this lady said something about 1988, now that was very significant too, and a lot of the things that bring us together, and keep us together here, is our history, and the Redfern All Blacks goes a long, long way back, and that [inaudible] keeps our community together, and inspires young people to turn their lives around. So that's what's happened this year and last year, is that a lot of young men in dark areas of their lives were brought back through football. The people who took the opportunity to get up and be a leader, and inspire young people to draw on their inner spirit, to turn back [inaudible] on the good side. You know, football is one of those things, so we're yeah, you know, and that's what a lot of us, our kids, you know, that's what brings a lot of us, we've lost a lot of people in this community through drugs and related issues, but, you know, football's brought a lot of that back, you know. So it's very important. My thing is that those things should be identified more on these murals too. Not just this one, but maybe another one.

Audience22: Yeah, I'm just sort of trying to keep on track a bit. The restoration.

Audience23: [inaudible]

CR: Yeah, I think we're all on the same page, as we say now. I think we are actually. Now I think Cara's going to speak, so we might wrap up this section.

DB: So as Cara mics up, thank you so much Carol, that was absolutely brilliant, and you're not going anywhere.

[applause]

CR: [inaudible]

DB: We'll get the audience setting up the reggae beat. Just while you set up there, you know, you mentioned the word 'flaky' a couple of times, you know, I'm tending towards being a bit flaky myself. It's actually my favourite chocolate. And I also wanted to just go back on your comment Carol, you know, the City of Sydney, we've got a female Lord Mayor, the CEO is female, a lot of the directors are female. You know, I made up a little saying around that and that's actually, I think I think there should be more females in leadership, and that should be mandatory.

Audience24: Man-datory!

DB: Yeah, you know, it's playing on words there, you know. So look, the other little thing in there, just while we're micing up, is one of our other panel members [name – unsure of correct spelling] was at Redfern Public School, and said in two-by-twos, they came down and painted, she said, 'I can't remember, it was about the 90s, and we painted the red section.'

CR: I think we did have some kids come a long, painting those red sections. And that was easy enough. You can't really go wrong, but you've got to have somebody watching you don't wipe out a snake while you're at it.

DB: Yeah, so, just a beautiful little thing, I mean gee whiz, just to see a bunch of kids go down there and slap it up, I mean, come on. And that leads me, before I introduce Cara, to this great saying, and that's 'credit where it's due'. A guy called Dr D. Martini, and I used to thing 'what a really cool name', and the irony of that is, he was actually an alcoholic, who was literally, I mean I've seen the guy speak, and he's sold 40million copies of inspirational books around the world, right, and his comment, his say, he's got many of them, is, 'Nothing is ever in the way, it's only ever on the way.' To me, that's a beautiful thing for us in this little microcosm of the world, and any other big thinker, whether it's Obama, or our new fifth Prime Minister, nothing is ever in the way, it's only ever on the way. So, I'll hand the mic to Cara now, and just a little reminder too, in 45 minutes we've got some afternoon tea. So we really want you to all hand around and continue to feed in.

Cara Martinez

CM: I'm a bit of a nervous public speaker so bare with me please. I'd just like to pay my respects, I know it's been done today, but to the traditional owners, the Gadigal people, and all the elders past and present in the Redfern community, and to say that it's an honour and a privilege to be here today and to have played a small role in supporting the Redfern Station Community Group. Basically I am, I'll explain who I am, I'm a Kaussie, that's a Kiwi-Aussie, I was born in New Zealand. I'm Pakeha, which as a white person my heritage is Europe I guess. But my family, my father was adopted by [name – unsure of correct spelling] and my mother married into [name – unsure of correct spelling], and I've married a Mexican guy as well, so my little girl down the back is half Mexican. So we've sort of got that multi-cultural heritage, and I lived in Redfern for two years. And I, I lived in Mexico as well for a few years, and when I came back I did my, I wrote a thesis on public art on trains, and I ended up getting to know Ralph Hoffman from Redfern Station, and he put me in contact with the Redfern Station Community Group. That's who I am, and how I got involved. That was about two and a half years ago. And there's some images coming up. I remember a mural being painted when I was about ten years old in the Blue Mountains, and I loved it. I went and watched the artists do it over a couple of weeks. But then in Mexico, and Carol mentioned Mexican mural art as well, I was just overwhelmed and blown away by their mural history. And this was by, so not all murals have to be flat on the wall, this one was actually looking up. If we're standing here, you'd be looking up at this mural and it's called 'The Man of Fire', by one of Diego Rivera's contemporaries. His name was José Clemente Orozco. And the reason this is, I'm telling you this is because this is a historically important mural in Mexico for the country, but also for the people of Jalisco, where it was painted. And the next image that we come to was a group of young artists, and they're Mexican, and this mural was also painted in Mexico, and it's a homage to José Clemente Orozco. It was painted last year, and it's a homage to Mexico, that's Mexico the country basically, the map. So we can have new murals that pay respect to the past. We can have new murals that are done in a different medium. That was done with exterior house paint and aerosols as well. And Jason Wing mentioned aerosol and street art, and how it's relevant as part of a mural, it's relevant as public art now. I don't think we can annex off and say that that's not valid, because it is. And I think it's a way of, sort of, connecting younger people as well. You know, street art's part of it. This mural was like three stories high. So I played a small part in getting the artist over there, from here. A Mexican artist who is now living in Sydney. So he went back to do that last year. The next image, I was, I basically supported this, did the contract and everything for this mural with the Ted Noffs Foundation. It was done for [Palm – unsure of correct spelling] and the letters Palm. And it references graffiti because it's in a place where the people that live there, they're teenagers basically, they're all under 18 years old, and they're people that are at risk. And this is, you know, it's sort of referencing mural art as a movement, but it's also street art, so it's speaking to young people. And it's a community mural. You know, we had a community consultation to get that done, with the young people as well. The next one, I just put that up there as an example of something that we did with Marrickville Council because it's about culture as well and it's recognising, you know we've got the explosion of interest in Mexican culture here in Australia, and this was painted in Marrickville, and it's just a way of sort of, a Mexican artist paying respects to his own culture here. And the next one is a mural that was painted for Wollongong Council, which is huge. It's on the side of Coles. That's only a detail of the mural, so it's longer than that, and there was three different artists who painted it. There was also a community consultation process behind that, and I did some of the [inaudible] work, making sure the artists got down there, you know, making sure they signed their contracts and that sort of thing. And like Carol said, you know, they've all got to have $20,000 worth of public liability insurance, and that insurance has to cover their assistants, and the young people that work with them. So my job is really as a supporter, which brings me back to now, and here in Redfern. When Desley put in, she filled out basically all the paperwork towards the grant, and I played just a very small part in that, and I think that's a really significant achievement having got the $10,000 for the feasibility study on the main mural, and also a portion of that money is for the brown paint panel, so we can have something new painted on that brown paint panel. And I think, something that was said earlier today was that where that brown paint is going to be cut off, and we don't know when exactly. I mean, it could be next year, it could be the year after. It might not even. I mean, I don't know, we just, we don't know. But we need to know that, whatever's there is not going to stay. And there are a lot of different ideas that have been brought up. One of them is that it could be the words, 'Always was, always will be, Gadigal land.' And I think that, everyone's ideas are valid, but I think other people have said today, it's not, I'm not a decision maker on this. Like I said, I'm just a supporter, and far be it for me to say what should go there, you know. But I think this is supposed to be an opportunity for everyone to have their say, and their input, and for that to be duly recognised, and recorded. So if you want to be, people can still have, record on video, their input, can they? You can still have that opportunity. So after this then there's the

opportunity to still do that. But we've been writing down the ideas basically for the brown paint panel. And the other point I want to make is that, a lot of people have said today, there's a lot of walls around Redfern, so whatever, all those great ideas that can't go into that mural that's to be restored, or onto that brown paint panel, can go onto other murals around the place. If we just keep going, so for me, that was an amazing mural in Sydney, moving to Sydney, and yeah, very impactful.

Audience25: If we're talking about culture we better use Pemulwuy.

CM: That's right. Sorry. And the next one, this was painted next to it we have the Dreaming.

Audience25: [inaudible]

CM: Yeah, there might be better examples, so I apologise if that's not the best one.

Audience25: [inaudible] unless you had Malcolm X next to him, and you had balance, Feng Shui stuff.

[laughter]

CM: And that wasn't, it wasn't done by Aboriginal people either was it?

Audience25: We're always dreaming [inaudible]. There was a guy with a greater dream and he fought the fight.

CM: And part of my point of having another work there, was that this says here that murals are no longer a valid art form, which I beg to differ, I think they are. And they are with young people now, with street art becoming a real thing. And they, I think they always have been as well.

Audience25: Cara, can I ask, when did that ugliness happen on the left?

CM: Look, I don't know, I've got to say, I don't know the whole history of it. But, you know, people that do.

Audience26: This mural has an incredible history.

CM: Yeah, we could have a whole afternoon just on that mural.

Audience26: The man, he had come out from England, he was here at the church over the road there, he had actually committed a murder in England and he had confided to the priest. He went back and he did time. He did a few murals in Sydney. It's a very interesting history.

CM: There's been, I think City of Sydney knows a fair bit about it, but there have been people working on creating an archive of information, which actually leads me to something that Jo Holden just told me before that's, she's a curator, she said that she used to work on the Public Art Register of South Sydney Council, and she said that she was part of the Cultural Advocacy Committee, and there was a project funded by the Attorney General's department back then, for the South Sydney area, that all murals and public art were archived. Basically, it's in paper form though. It hasn't been digitised.

Audience27: [inaudible]

CM: Yeah.

DB: The City has a convenor of public art, and you know, we can take that and fine-tune exactly what, it's not my job, you know, some people think I'm the ranger, I'm the mayor and everything else, no I'm not. And I'm also not the keeper of 60,000 years of history.

CM: But, yeah, I know there's a few artists that are working with City of Sydney to create an archive of murals now as well, and that's in there, that one's in there, and hopefully when the '40,000 Years' mural is restored that'll be in there as well in its restored state. One of the things that we were talking about too was to put a QR code there, does everyone know what that looks like? It was made just as an engineering tool, like literally for engineers I think. Now what it is, is a digital code, like a barcode, but it's square,

and instead of numbers it's sort of got a shape. And you can put it onto a public art thing, and you can get an app on your phone and scan it. So it's sort of, it's a way for the younger, digital generation to connect. Because then if they scan it, then it brings up a website, and the website's got all this history about the murals, so that's a possibility.

DB: And if we talk about Sydney being a global city, and I know Jason spoke about you know the tourism benefits and financial benefits, and all of that sort of stuff, and you know, it's that sort of translation too, where people do come from all over the world to see traditional and contemporary art, it helps facilitate that process too.

Audience28: A Greek man named Tony Spanos had a lot to do with the restoration of this one.

CM: I remember Spanos. And he had a thing called the 'Graffiti Hall of Fame'.

Audience29: I just want to tell you all, while we're here, in regards to up there at the station, is it a restoration, or not? And let's be clear on what a restoration is. We don't add things, or take away things, do we, because it's about a space and time where we were, and sure we have gravitated from that, and we can put other levels of where we've gravitated to up till now, but this is a restoration, isn't it? And that is not adding or changing. Am I right? Is that what we're here for?

CM: I think Carol's the best person…

Audience29: Is it restoration? Give me a definition of restoration.

Carol Ruff: No, no, you're right, but you might be misunderstanding what Cara's talking about. We're talking about a restoration. The restoration is putting it back. Putting history back exactly as it was, except I do need to take that little snippets up and nobody would know. Because it's going to get a little bit smaller. So the bit that Cara's talking about, the brown bit, is the bit where the head of the snake was. That bit was actually, when they rebuild the wall, the wall is going to get a bit shorter. In the meanwhile, we don't know when that will happen.

Audience30: [inaudible]

CR: Yeah, the snake's head is in the mural that I'm here to represent the restoration of. And Cara is talking about a temporary mural, because meanwhile, this thing could be years in the coming. I mean, I've been trying to get this restored for so long now. Meanwhile there's this ugly bit on the end of the mural where there once was a snake's head, and now there isn't. So what Cara's talking about is a community mural now, that probably says something like, what was it?

CM: 'Always was, always will be…

CR: Gadigal land'. That's in that one. And then when the mural gets restored, it gets completely painted and that goes.

Audience31: Will you leave the snake head in?

CR: Yes…

Audience31: Good, because I want you to realise too, at what strategic point are they matching the Dreamtime snake [inaudible]

CR: No, no.

Audience31: [inaudible]

CM: Oh yeah, there's another question.

Audience32: [inaudible] I'm new in my position. I'm also an artist. I've been an artist since I was ten years old. I've only just started to get quietly acknowledged for my work. And I also had some images in the Vivid Festival. So I went in the [inaudible] because I would like to empower our women and this

community. We really need empowerment, so I would like to bring a bunch of women who have been involved in domestic violence and bring them on board. I would like to know, how would they go if they haven't had any experience in art, and who would be in charge of mural for the future murals, because how else as artists [inaudible] to have our opinions and our stories put on murals in the future. How would we go as elders and as young people, who would we be able to go to in the future without asking all these questions at a panel. Is there someone we can go directly to? That's all I'd like to know.

CM: Hopefully that's what will come out of this. Hopefully what will happen is there will be someone in charge who will make it really easy, getting artists like yourself and other people here, like Jason Wing and Djon Mundine, I've actually got a list of people. Like imagine if Tracey Moffatt as well, Karla Dickens, Bronwyn Bancroft, I don't know, I don't know everybody, it's not my place but, and then we could say to those artists, we could say to your people, there's money, could we pay you to work with a small group of people, and each mural could be different, where it's an artist working with the community. You know, there's so many walls.

Audience32: Should we specifically have someone in charge of…

CM: Maybe through City of Sydney.

DB: If I can just add to that, so the way I see this transpiring is in this community group that is representing this piece of art, this conversation can be reflected in the acquittal of their grant, just as one technicality. In my position, as I have taken on a lot of other stuff, and [inaudible], and what part of my role is, and as a community member, and also working in my role at the council, is to hear all these things and find solutions, so…

Audience33: I don't see very many young people here today. Can their voice be heard?

DB: Yep. There's been community sessions before around that, yep. But what we want to do is inspire the creative input, and what you have just tabled is brilliant, and we want to be able to, how do we support that?

Audience34: [inaudible] for years and years you got the same old high-profile artist getting these jobs too, and there's a lot of artists around, and you don't have a kind of platform, or you have emerging artists, give them a break. I been seeing this same kind of job, and they got houses and everything. I'm flat out paying the electricity bill, but anyway. A platform where you have a rotation of giving emerging artists a decent break, and you're giving jobs to the same old same old, well I'm going to be straight out, and they're very well off and the same artists are getting these jobs too, I seen them getting jobs thirty years ago. You know, give us a break.

Angela: Because I'm self-taught, I've always had a condition, if a community centre has said we like your idea, let's sit down and talk about this, and I've always had this condition that I'll only work, and that's because I've raised seven children on my own, that I have to train somebody in this mosaic or mural, and so I employed, the Arts Law Centre taught me heaps, the guy from prison helped to teach me how to type on a computer, because I don't know how to use that, and I still don't properly, so I employed guys from the art programs in prison, and I've only ever employed marginalised people, because I was marginalised myself. But I've had to teach them about contracts, but then it's very frustrating when you have to teach people that are winning national awards based on their ideas, to use a contract. It's very frustrating. And I've just sort of stood back and am doing voluntary work, I'm so disillusioned with this whole system, it just seems to be getting wider and wider and wider, that there's all these hard working artists who go unacknowledged, there's all these fantastic artists who their ideas get used to hang on council banners or whatever, but they're not, are they getting paid? Are they getting paid?

Audience35: Volunteer.

Angela: Yeah, so this is what, I would like to see this bridge. And for every problem there's a creative solution, but I'm quite frustrated, and I've done a lot of work, and I'm quite tired as well. But each-one-teach-one is the way that, I know there are creative solutions, there are fantastic artists everywhere in this community. Like through everywhere, there is, and everyone in the community knows who they are, but they're not the ones who understand how to do a contract always, and what to sign. And so this is where Trish, I had a great talk with her just before, because she said that she could actually organise a

workshop in the community, where we can go and learn some things. So this is very important, and places like here could hold that workshop, and La Perouse, and many artists would love this. I know that Terri Jane here, she's a friend of mine, she can do things like this too, but at $400 and something an hour, I mean I can't afford that.

DB: So if I just roll off that, just to be clear to also, I'm sensing that there's artists who are commissioned for private works, on private buildings. Now, as a City of Sydney organisation, we can't tell people what to paint on their buildings. Yes, we can be proactive about what happens on public spaces, but in order to be fair to everybody there is a process with that. You know, for example if I [inaudible] community centre, that was painted downstairs, with the kids too? Yeah. There's an example that just came the other day, Australia Post just said, '[Jim – unsure of correct name], just set it up'. You know, if it comes through to me, I'll flick it through. I ask permission first, before I go and do it. And then I'll hook them up. But just to be very clear on that private thing, and now the other thing here too in the community centre, what a beautiful opportunity too to possibly come in there and do those workshops that can then possibly go into pathways, Eora College, College of the Fine Arts, I don't know, whatever. So the community centre is always a really good spot and it's brought up a lot of goodwill since it opening. But I hope that sort of answers and then, Kristina Karasulas downstairs, centre manager, we'll go and have a chat, right?

[Taressa Mongta?]: So, that's really good to know, and not to be negative at all, but I just reiterate what my situation is. Why I'm here. I understand we're talking about the mural, and the restoration, and then we've also got this other aspect where the brown patch is, the broader aspects are what you're listening to which I'm addressing now, the local government's social policy, their cultural policies, their responsibilities, building into to support people who are on the fringes or marginalised, give them the support and aspire to be something, you know a pathway out of. So this stuff that I had showed you earlier, was documenting from La Perouse and from the centre out in Maroubra, which is where I was actually working way back in the 90s. And the whole of this project, this project here is documented in these pages in my thing here where there's eight youth suicides, and I'm hoping that you guys are hearing and we'll get the support to get across the line because basically the community that's there has the longest continuous connection, and a direct living connection that goes through all the kinship connections that are in Sydney, and it's really important to get us across the line.

DB: So what I'll say there, is that we had that discussion, and I can have more discussion and give you my contact details in how we can actually make that transpire. Because you have to, from my position, what I'm trying to do is my best here is help facilitate this discussion, but also take on everyone else's points. Totally happy to do that and look at opportunities there, but because it's been very new to me in the project that I understand has been going for a long time.

[Taressa Mongta?]: 22 years.

DB: Yeah, that puts me back to, you know, probably my early twenties, and you know, I hear that. Let's take that on board, and take it offline and I'll help where I can. Cara, have you got more?

CM: Yeah, there's just a couple more images taken from artists that were done by local artist. So this is Danny Eastwood, who was here, he's not here now, but he was talking about his murals before. And that's only one side of one of the things that he did in Blacktown. And I just wanted to show you because these were people that were speaking this morning. And also, so that one's just down there. Bronwyn Bancroft. And then there's one from James Simon who's here as well. So those people were kind enough to, for me to grab them during the break and get permission to show their work as well, because I think that's relevant. And I can't remember what the last, oh yeah, so this is by Reko Rennie. There's a Reko Rennie work just out here that Hetti Perkins curated as part of the Eora Journey. And the reason I'm showing this as the last one is because it says 'Always Was, Always Will Be', which leads us back to now, and the brown paint panel. So the other thing I want to say is that, I think let's value what every artist, and too often artists are not paid for their work, you're right. So the intention would be to actually try to raise money to pay people to do it. Including artists that live here now that are, you know, emerging artists as well definitely. And Arts Law does, I mean I went in and did some workshops to go and learn about different things as well, to fill in my gaps in my skills and knowledge. And sometimes they'll do workshops to show people how to do stuff. But I agree, we need to uplift artists. We need to uplift emerging artists, we need to uplift young and up and coming artists, like what Carol said, people who already have a bit of skill, and it could be a professional development, or a mentorship or something.

Audience36: [inaudible] they grew up under policies, they were sent to a boys home, and they're starting art in their 50s and 60s, like I am, I started in my 60s, but I was a good artist. But there weren't any support networks, like what we have now, in order to bring out the art, you know, you could only [inaudible] conveyor belt line. Please don't ignore the elderly.

CM: Definitely not.

Audience36: Because we never had the opportunities you got now. There's always this concentration on the young all the time.

DB: The general term might have been students.

Audience36: Well you're being ageist aren't you? But they're coming out, they've been through [name – unsure of correct spelling] Boys' Home and it's the most enriching thing that they've ever done because they're finding their natural talent for it.

Audience37: [inaudible]

Audience36: Yeah, and it's not always youth. Please be mindful of that because the policies of those days kept us down in every area of our lives, through the dormitories and missions and everything, and you know like I'm saying, we've got no education, like [inaudible] all I've got is my art.

CM: Yeah, this isn't, this wasn't going to be part of my role, I just want to ask the questions. So what would you need to be, well hopefully you could get the support you need to make a mural in this area as well. And you can ask for it and you can get it.

[Taressa Mongta?]: Having support, I can't say strongly enough, having the support of people who understood administration has been why I've gotten regular continuous work over twenty years. And having people who have had an understanding that I had been marginalised, and I had been outcast, but having those team of people, whether it was in a community centre, a council, wherever it was people that had hearts, and there was other people who didn't have hearts, and I learnt about nepotism then, but it's so important, because I think everyone is on the same page, but those people with skills in admin those of us who have had education stolen from us, through no reason, for whatever circumstances at the time, we were not able to keep going to school. So all I knew was that I was always winning everything in art, that's all. So yeah, I can't say it enough, having the support, people who understand admin, who sit down and actually listen because they want our ideas. They want our ideas, but we don't want to be stepped on, like stepping stones, for someone to win a national award, which has happened to me recently.

Audience36: And a lot of those art competitions are age categorised, and it's not fair. Because we've had it pushed on us only because we're Aboriginal. And so, you know.

CM: It's good to hear from this side of things as well, because otherwise art can just be elitist can't it, if it doesn't have that strong reference. I think I'm going to finish up because I don't feel like I, because I'm sort of in my own role. I don't know if I can add more to it really. But I think now it's discussion time. But I just want to say that what brought me into public art in the first place is not art that's for community, but art that's by community. That's what interests me, and everyone gets to have a voice and a say, and a part of it. And not just young people. Not just the ones that are doing really well, but everyone.

Audience36: How much do you come from an Aboriginal perspective in relation to art?

CM: I don't know if I can say that I do.

Audience36: I'm not saying you, I'm talking generally speaking.

CM: Yeah.

Audience36: In the art world. Because the great artists are the elders who live through it. They are the libraries of wisdom and everything. You know, art's been evolving before the white man come here, and we started from the white man's panels of what is Aboriginal art, and not from us. We don't have any blackfellas up there, because they can't speak academic, you know. Last time I heard someone say some word, what was it? Egalitarian, what was that? Anyway, some big flash word, anyway, you just got to think about that too. This is why the elders have got to be incorporated more, because you got a, we got to incorporate the wisdom of our ancestors from an art perspective. You know what I mean? It's all coming from bohemian, whitefella, you know, cultural art. And we go back before the Leonardo da Vinci's. We go a long way back from Michelangelos. And that's got to be taken seriously. And land rights started in this country to by the way, not by the Yirrkala bark petitions, but by Pemulwuy.

DB: Ah, Michelangelo, his famous quote, 'I saw the angel in the marble and I carved until I set him free.' Isn't that beautiful? So thank you Cara.

[applause]

DB: If I can just drill down, surmise that last panel, because it's part of this grant, in how it's going to look. There could be an option for the team that just won to be on that last panel as one example. There could be an option to also complement that with 'Always was, always will be'. Now we know it's going to be part of Micky's, I think he's coming in from this big wall, it's coming off the view of the beautiful Block, and that's his argument for that. So we know that it's going to be, we want something there and what it's going to be. That could be an option. Another option is, there's a guy called Brett [Leedy – unsure of correct spelling] who's done, my understanding, correct me if I'm wrong, but I was talking to him this morning to seek his permission to bring this into this conversation. Amazing guy, who's done the sacred tracks of the Gadigal. We at the City did this in 2012, at Customs House. We have one million visitors walk through those doors annually. We just did that again, and we have now a permanent installation, I saw the flags up there, we have a permanent installation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on sites of significance that have come through our research history unit, in consultation with our panel. So things like Bangarra, Bennelong Point Opera House, if you go down to those, if you go down to Customs House you'll see little flags on that model. It's not an exhibition, it's a permanent installation. So on that side there on the video wall we had this great map that was constructed, went through the Land Council [name – unsure of correct spelling] and my understanding other elders, and his bloodline is Gadigal. That could be another example on that panel, just putting it out there. So the idea of this is to evoke, inspire, your input on that. I'm just going to say this one little thing here. You know, from what I've seen today, to have this done up, again in this global city, this is educational, coming back to community art, as opposed to in galleries, educational, transformational, informational, and it's also informative.

Audience38: So it's not set in stone yet, we're considering, so I'm asking the question, because the language that I'm wanting to hear, and I take it on board that we're going to talk out of this space, but this is the space to talk about this also, this is cultural copyright. The knowledge system that is in that representation belongs not to one person, it belongs to the community, and the community that holds a lot of that, the majority of that, is out at La Perouse, so I'm hoping that there'll be a way to consult with them, maybe because we've got people here who do know the community very well, and just have a little bit of a conversation. Because I'm sure they'd be validated by it.

DB: Okay, so what I'm hearing is that maybe we need to do, from Aunty Lynne and yourself, we need to do some sort of other community engagement, which we will, even, you know, try and get buses and stuff like that, to really make it easy and accessible, so that's the stuff that we can chat about, and thank you for that. Again, in my role, I've got many hats on here, and vested interests in this, and of course, I'll advocate on every level, because I've seen such a beautiful, you know, input into this process, and so many opportunities from the pathways from the ground up. Part of the stuff that we're talking about with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel, our key business units in the City of Sydney through the Indigenous economic development plan, is, as I mentioned earlier, this holistic approach. What I've been saying in many discussions on many different levels is the unheard voices. For those who don't know, I also a director, facilitator, and participant, more importantly, my brother Leo was here earlier, and we started an Aboriginal men's healing social and emotional wellbeing program here. A structured ten-week program. I have been down that road, I did it for myself, we did it in here for so many reasons. That program went on to win the Premier's Excellence Award. I don't care. We didn't set up to do that. I did it to help me get over my hurdles, and as I said earlier, nothing is ever in

the way, it's only on the way. So I totally hear that, and I resonate with it. And what I do in my role, I got to pinch myself to realise where I've ended up, because at the age of twenty I got kicked out of my foster home too, and ended up on the street. I've been on this road, I've been on this journey. For me to be standing here in front of you now is the most amazing journey. So I resonate with all of those things and I realise, I've been on that journey for that reason, and so I hear that, and where I can, and you know it, I table it. And when I'm pointing over there, it's because I work behind Sydney Town Hall, in strategic community consultation, and over ten years, there are people who are starting to listen. But for me, I don't shame them into that place or that space. I celebrate the opportunities to evaluate our story compliments your story. Your story compliments our story. Am I hearing a rumble now?

Audience (group): [Cheer] [inaudible]

DB: Now, Nath my brother, now we are running so perfectly on time, did you just want to say a few little words and anything, a summation. We'll have afternoon tea, and we are going to come back to do a little bit of a wrap up, so, you know, I just want to hand over…

NM: Look, there's not much I can really add other than the proudness of the Land Council to see this occur. And as I said this morning, for those who weren't here, to have every part of the community behind it, it's really rare stuff. There's not many opportunities in our lifetime, and certainly in mine, where we see everyone get together, and we talked about 88 and the march of reconciliation, and I reckon we can probably put this down as the third one that I've seen in my lifetime. Look, from here there's going to be more consultation. We've had a lot of our community ask for more of it, and we'll do our best to ensure it gets out to as many as possible. But I would say openly, behind the scenes that we'll be talking to the La Perouse Land Council about ensuring that there's culture and more appropriate protocol being observed, and we do that with the Barangaroo project and we'll be glad to do it with this one as well. Again, thank you for all coming and showing your support.

[applause]

DB: Thanks, and I just want to say too, part of that conversation we talk about Redfern being the heart, and it's what drew my mother here, and it's what drew a lot of us here. And it will also be what draws a lot more here. For me, there was no system in place, having taken me away from my mum, my culture, my communities. I had to put that back myself. So what I say in things like this, the work that I'm doing with a lot of my colleagues, that's one of the unforseen beauties of what we're doing. We're also going to create the space, the place, the country, where people are going to be proud and identify and come back. So that for me was why I signed up for this day today and will continue to support it in any way I can. So let's go and have some afternoon tea, and we'll come back for a wrap up.

[applause]

Afternoon Wrap Up

DB: Alright, so, ladies and gents, comedians, aunties and uncles, we're at the final end of the day, final end of the week, and what a week. I just want to point out, some of you might have heard Aunty Marlene's story with Eora College. It's an annual event. It's probably one of the most brilliant events I've ever seen, the Eora Aboriginal art exhibition. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it's the students that have created these works over the year, two years in their program, in their course, and there's an exhibition at Eora College. So, there's some information on those. Like I said, I'm waving a pamphlet out here. And my understanding, Aunty Marlene, is you can actually buy those artworks, yeah?

MC: Yeah.

DB: Yeah, so if nothing else, when you want to talk about empowerment, self determination, from you know, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in this global city, this is an appropriate example, the very same way Bangarra will do a new dance, the community will do a new mural, it's a celebration of contemporary culture, drawing on tens of thousands of years of culture. So, my dear friend Kristina Karasulas is the centre manager here.

KK: Hi everyone. We've got an Aboriginal astronomy evening on tonight. We didn't publicise it because all the people who didn't make it into the last event that we had during Science Week, but we've actually had some cancellations, and with the rain I think we'll get a few more. So if anybody here wanted to come tonight, we've got two PhD's who are studying Aboriginal astronomy, and they've been going onto Country, and they're very knowledgeable, and it's a fantastic presentation. It's from 6.30 tonight. So I'm not going to put it out to the radio station to promote it any more, but if anyone's here who really wants to come, there's definitely a couple of spaces.

Audience39: Is there going to be another one?

KK: We will definitely hold this twice a year, because it's such a great connect to all kinds of communities coming together with an understanding of astronomy as [inaudible]

Audience39: Thank you.

DB: There are so many stars in this room. Folks, one star I do want to thank is Christy from Aunty Beryl's Gardeners Lodge. Can we have an applause please?

[applause]

DB: For looking after us for today. And take that message back to Aunty Beryl, and Wendy, and sincerely we thank you for looking after us. So, I also just want to acknowledge the photography up the back of the room there. I've been given this by Margo from, all these names I've got to remember, I'm sorry folks, I'm just going to read this out, Spaces of Redfern, 1983, so there's a nice little synergy there. These images were taken on Eveleigh Street around 1983, soon after photographer [Carol Hampshire – unsure of correct spelling] arrived in Australia from England. They were exhibited at the Australian Centre for Photography in Paddington, in 1983, and have not been displayed since. So they're just sort of saying, if anybody knows anyone on there, and I'm not sure how long this will stay up there, either, so Kristina, do you know anything about that little thing? How long is it going to stay up here?

KK: We're just taking them down at 5pm.

DB: Okay, well maybe we can work with Kristina to put it up, and you can say to Carol, and then we can have like a, I mean, you're not going to get, you'll get a lot of people coming through here over the months, so ask their permission to set it up.

KK: [inaudible] by Carol.

DB: From the artist?

[inaudible]

DB: So, she's looking for the names of those people, right? So, yeah, let's put that up. I just want to, we mentioned the lovely councillor Doutney, who's part of the committee, who is an amazing individual, and I know her heart is in the right place when it comes to First Nations people in this local government area. She supported me personally and professionally. She's had to leave, but when she tabled this '40,000 Years' mural project at our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel, there was a nice little typo at the end of it. I bet you can't guess what it was. It was an extra three zeros. So it actually read 40million years!

[laughter]

DB: And I thought to myself, that's excellent. I don't know if that was done on purpose.

Audience40: [inaudible]

DB: Yeah. And that's in the finance room at Sydney Town Hall where these meetings are held, and I'll have you know, there was a cheeky little, between her and I, and it was a beautiful little thing, so I just wanted to share that. I'm just writing down some notes on everybody, so I think I'm ticking them off. One of the other things that I think there is a possibility that I saw, that we didn't necessarily talk about was, if I can roll off some of your comments Aunty Marlene, actually we don't really need to explain it to people. But when I came back to the project here I worked on with the young kids in the community, there's a plaque on there, and it sort of reminded me, after what transpired today, if people have an issue with anything up there, there might be an opportunity where we can put a plaque on there that explains the Dreamtime story, and that this aint no snake, and it actually forms part of this whatever. So that might be something that we could consider in this process. Just putting it out there, when we're talking on that last panel piece. So we need to get some closure, and get this rolling, because as we know it's been going for far too long. This one, two and half, three years? The one before, so you heard Aunty Linda down the back there, her daughter, she's not here now, she's left, but we thank her for her comments. Her daughter, Sara Hamilton, I've known Sara for a very long time. She was on our first panel, and she was setting up when NCIE first set up, so I'm hopeless with dates, but that's probably about six or seven years ago now. And she was one of the first youth development officers in there and was driving this very same project. And I remember the phone calls now, and, in the minutes I apologised for the first meeting, and quite a few others. But the point is, she was trying to drive it then, and I asked her, 'So what happened?', and unfortunately back then State Rail, now we're not shaming anyone here, but that was one of the key stakeholders in the conversation, and that position is not there anymore. So the momentum gained by Sara then, it lost its momentum. And what I see now in this forum, on paper, but more importantly in person, is that the foundations are here for people to pick up and support this project, to actually see it through to fruition. So that's why it's amazing to have Sydney University, College of Fine Arts.

Audience40: That's the other art school. Sydney College of the Arts.

DB: Sydney College of the Arts, I'm silly.

[laughter]

DB: But you are fine. The Redfern mural, Desley, you see my point. We've all come together, we see this vision, we know it's got to be done. Personally I reckon, is there no better time now, because of the Redfern All Blacks winning. What a beautiful deadline to give us, to get this sorted. So what we want to really do now is drill down to that and have some outcomes. We totally get the input from everybody in other opportunities that exist, and we've already looked at how we can assist that from a City of Sydney perspective, programing pathways. So that's already happened. But with this one, we need to move it. So what do we feel about that last panel, in what will be represented up there? The options, there was a meeting the other day, there was the whole map of Australia which has all of the Aboriginal nations. That might be a little bit complex for that little space. There's the other option of the sacred tracks of the Gadigal from Brett [Leedy – unsure of correct spelling], and I spoke to him today. Totally happy if that is transformed into that space, again knowing that it's temporary because it's going to chopped off. And then it could also be complemented with 'Always was, always will be.' What I will say in that conversation too, that artwork out there, by Reko Rennie, stencil artist, kids worked on it, building hasn't been tagged, that went viral, the imagery, because he is in many different galleries around the world. His other artwork, which is a pure coincidence, so that was City of Sydney Eora Journey, his other artwork

which came through different platforms, and this is something you were talking about there sis, how do you get involved? Well there's also this city's public art projects, and I might just get Glenn to possibly say a few words about that, is that alright? Just in how that presents itself publically. Is it okay to talk about Reko's work in that respect? With the 'Always Was, Always Will Be.'

Glenn Wallace: What we need to say is that there are seven projects in the Eora Journey, and you can find out about all of that online. And for each project we sought to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in that, from all over the country, to do exhibitions. There's a big project closing on Monday for a monument for the Eora, down on Sydney Harbour, so that's just seven projects that the city's got going. There's also been the Street Wear project in the city, about, you know, younger street artists kind of getting involved, so there's been those programs that have happened. And there is the whole, you can apply for grants to do your own murals around. So in terms of all those, what Jason was saying earlier, you just need to get permission on a wall, from the owner of the wall to paint on it. That's pretty straightforward. But I guess what we've tried to do with the City is pay artists to be part of projects, so you know, you can apply for a grant, and if you've got consent to paint on the wall, go for it. So the City is trying to make it easier, and trying to encourage artists to be part of, and you know, participate in what's on offer there.

DB: So Reko, when he did that work up at Taylor Square, 'Always Was, Always Will Be', I've seen that on the ABC news [inaudible] show, so you know. I also when this mural gets finished, or completed, that that is going to be, go viral around the world in the very same way as these amazing artworks.

Audience41: Just on another subject [inaudible] series done my Hannah Gadsby, have you seen any of those series done by Hannah Gadsby, on the ABC? Oh, just how she tears apart the whole history of white art in this country, and the Aboriginal art, and it was just [inaudible] observation. And just the construct of what [inaudible], I just want to know, because you're an art man [inaudible].

DB: Well I was saying offline that the only art I've ever done is the BS art, I'm calling it. I'm a bullshit artist. You didn't hear that. But look, there are, I don't know about that one. Yeah.

Audience41: [inaudible]

DB: Yeah, right. So what do we think about that last panel, I mean that's what we need.

Audience42: When you say, 'that last panel', what do you mean?

DB: That brown panel that we're talking about.

Audience42: [inaudible]

CR: Yep, and it's not permanent.

DB: Yep, where it's painted brown.

Audience43: Is that something that can be changed on a regular basis?

DB: No, no, no. So what I'm asking, if that's going to be changed, what's going to happen with the development on The block is if Micky Mundine is arguing to chop that part off, to create a better viewpoint, and his argument is around security, in the sense of, it's also a bit of a hiding place, you know back when things were a little bit different, but I'm thinking, I'm not paraphrasing him or quoting him, but it's basically to open it up.

Audience43: So there's a section of wall there that will not be there…

DB: Yeah, so that bit there, which has been painted over is what we're talking about. That's going to be chopped off. But right now…

Audience44: Are they going to minimise it?

DB: Right now, what we can do is restore. And, what are we going to put on that brown bit now?

Audience43: Just for the time…

DB: Just for the time being, for that for that brown bit, yeah.

Audience43: Just my own personal view, would be that we could run, maybe a competition in the school or community for something like that. That's just my view…

Audience45: [inaudible]

DB: So did everybody hear that? Running a competition. To me that's quite laborious and time consuming.

Audience/Taressa Mongta: I don't want to be a dampener or anything like that, but if this is how this is going to be, that's the majority of everything that's been done here, that everyone is going to resurge Pemulwuy over and over again, and I know of one person who I call my brother, and I've got an artwork that depicts his grandfather. That could go on there, and he is the descendant of Pemulwuy, and he's out at La Pa.

DB: So maybe we can, Raymond, can you get us that image or something? How do we get that image here?

Taressa Mongta: I think that would be a nice, you know what I mean, like do more to have the spot even if it's only temporary. To acknowledge that Pemulwuy is their ancestor, that they've got connection to this country. I don't know if you understand how I feel.

Audience46: I do.

DB: [name – inaudible] also did a stencil of Pemulwuy on this building.

Taressa Mongta: I'm talking about his descendant. Okay?

DB: Okay.

Taressa Mongta: [inaudible]. I'll ask him if you want me to, and he'll talk quietly [inaudible]. I think you should at least consider that, I don't [inaudible] some sort of genocide, some sort of silence that's there. [inaudible] you're keeping them out. I'm here speaking for them [inaudible].

DB: Yeah, no one's arguing with you. That's what we're doing, we're asking everybody for an input.

Audience47: If something like that was to happen, is the artist going to get acknowledged? Say, if the council's interested in the artwork.

DB: It's not the council.

Audience47: Not council?

DB: No, no, no, no.

Taressa Mongta: It's going to go viral, [inaudible] going to go viral. [inaudible] which way do we want to do it? [inaudible] painting with a paint brush, what do you want them to see? He's got beautiful work. I don't know if he would, but I know, in his family, they've given them the prominent part of that whole community.

Audience48: [inaudible] Pemulwuy project.

Taressa Mongta: And people are using that without being people that are connected to it. I'm sure they don't want, and they can't undo the history that's been done, but to validate the [inaudible] and I'm [inaudible] because I've got to try and speak about it. I feel like I am trying to convert people that aren't [inaudible] that I know that this is the truth that I'm trying to explain to people.

Audience47: My question is that when somebody's offering something like that, is that they're sort of validated with having negotiations about payment. I want to be practical here, because there are artists who struggle bank accounts, you know? It's simple.

DH: As I explained before. [inaudible]. The problem is coming up with the right design that people are happy with, right? So there's $4,500 for the feasibility study, and there's $4000 [inaudible] to do the brown paint panel. So that's what that money is for. To pay the artist, and the people who are going to be working on it.

Audience48: I want to say thank you for your transparency, because this is one place I've been where there's been beautiful transparency and I just wanted to say thank you, because I haven't seen that everywhere.

Audience49: How big is it dimension-wise?

DH: I think it's 25?

Audience49: 25 what?

DH: 25 metres.

Audience49: The whole mural?

DH: No, no, the brown paint panel.

Audience (group): [inaudible]

DH: 2.5 metres, sorry.

Audience (group): [inaudible]

Bianca Hester: It's about a bank of chairs, isn't it?

[CM?]: Yeah, like 3 metres?

Audience (group): [inaudible]

Audience50: I was just going to say [inaudible] being raised for that mural, for that panel, but also. [inaudible] in charge of a mural project [inaudible], but I think that everyone should be paid.

[Taressa Mongta?]: Processes so say if someone doesn't want to let go of the artwork, then digitally made into some sort of panel, through those, and that costs money of course, but then artists can lease work, or an image, for a fee, and many artists aren't aware of that. Many artists who are not, I wasn't aware until I started reading copyright stuff, but yeah, can lease their image and get paid.

[CM?]: That's a, you know, that's, again I'll just mention Arts Law, because they run workshops with councils and maybe they could do something that happened here at the community centre.

[Taressa Mongta?]: Because that really empowers people about their rights as artists.

[CM?]: We've been talking about that today.

[MC?]: Can we get Taressa's so we can contact, because once again, my whole argument before about coming from blackfella's perspective with art, in my country, my brothers are the bloodline for art up there, for [name – unsure of correct spelling] art. This bloody person just sort of [inaudible], got filthy rich out of it. So, that's what I'm talking about here. It's always from a white perspective. We've got bloodline here, and I think that's the most appropriate thing to do from a blackfella art, bloodline [inaudible] how important is our ancestral wisdom, and our belief systems, and value judgments? When it comes to women's places, and contributing in decision making, and [inaudible] why we just got to

come from this white society? Why [inaudible] their academic approach, we're adopting their ways. I'm very aware of [inaudible] because his bloodline, if that's Pemulwuy [inaudible] his descendant is still alive. And it just goes without saying, from an Aboriginal perspective, our perspective, [inaudible] what is Aboriginal art, that he be given the privilege and opportunity to do it. Otherwise, that's what I'm saying. I didn't think the blackfella [inaudible] and we should be doing that, we should be concentrating on doing things appropriately. And if Pemulwuy's bloodline is still here, we give them the [inaudible] what came first.

DB: That's exactly what this wall's about.

[MC?]: Thank you.

DB: To extract that information. All respect and fully acknowledge that, and that's what this is about.

[MC?]: So I think that's the most important [inaudible]

DB: Alright.

[MC?]: That's my opinion. [inaudible] respect. Out of respect. Thank you.

DB: I've just got to give [name – inaudible]

[RF?]: Just we are, we're talking about the snake or whatever, and that's there. Well I'm from around Lake Eyre and [inaudible] there's a snake in there, in that place. We call that [name – unsure of spelling]. That means 'that lake', 'Lake Eyre' means 'snake's head'. It's a little down, the south of the lake is, there's a little place, a spring, and the water continues to come up, it bubbles. You go there and it actually bubbles up. And it's not muddy water, it's clear [inaudible] and not far from there is a hill that looks like [inaudible] you go down, and you can look at it in a certain way and you can actually see the snake's head there, coming out of the ground. That's [name – unsure of spelling] and I was just thinking that, you know, just an idea, to look at that story in a [inaudible] way, or what we call a [name – unsure of spelling], where does it start here? And then the language of the Gadigal, that it's there, and the snake's head. [name – unsure of spelling] actually comes from our way, and that snake's there, and he's journeys, every which way, and there would be a story here somewhere. So if it's the Gadigal, that's what I'm just thinking, that little blank space would have something in Gadigal language, talking about that snake. Or what do you call [name – unsure of spelling].

DB: Lovely input. So on that note, I've just been asked by Desley, if anyone else wants to contribute into this, please go and connect with Desley and she can help give you, keep you in the loop with then other meetings that are going to be coming up. Because all this stuff is what they're looking for. So when all these stakeholders come together it's not to tell blackfellas what they're going to put up there, it's asking you what has to go up there. And I think another beautiful thing that we've seen coming out of this today, is how many other opportunities have transpired in assisting community groups to also empower themselves to embrace all these new technologies and processes, and different styles of art, I mean spray paint and everything else. So connect with Desley. The information for those of you who contributed to the interviews downstairs in the studio, it's on the program again, so downcitystreets.com…

BH: May I just say something? I authorised that website, so give me a couple of days to set up something. Hello, my name's Bianca, I'm from the College of the Arts, Sydney College of the Arts. I'll put up a forum on that site, so it can really receive response, because at the moment I think it's really just, it's a blog, so you can make comments, but it would be better if I could set up a forum, so that can really be where the dialogue can be captured or happen.

Audience: [inaudible]

DB: But what we also might set up here, is some forum feedback at the community centre here, so now that people have been at this all day, Aunty Marlene, you might celebrate it with people? You can come down here, and you can make comment if you wanted to, but there's other opportunities for that, so what we're basically saying is that we want to listen, we want to hear people's input. We've got a lot of that today. If you want more information you can go to that downcitystreets.com, but I think we've had some really good discussion today.

[MC?]: You know for yourself, anybody who's not from here, you're going to have that thing, where you don't use someone who comes from this area, you don't use someone who comes from here, from this tribal boundary, you have to take that into consideration. You can't be getting anybody, I'm just putting it out there, you know. Yeah, yeah, that's protocol. Hey, they got someone from up Queensland to do it, you know? I like, or South Australia or wherever, and this is our country, and they weren't even here, and blah, blah, blah, you know. Once again, it's protocol. It's got to be somewhere from down here who's got that direct linkage, and that's why I thought Tess's, what's-her-name needs to be seriously considered, because you know.

DB: So, in actually transferring Taressa's relative into the artwork.

[MC?]: [inaudible] Pemulwuy project.

DB: Yeah, yeah. I mean, in that temporary wall that we're talking about…

[MC?]: I reckon it's just better, if he wants to do it, and he does it, nothing more beautiful about a footnote saying, 'blahdy-blah, descendant of the mighty warrior Pemulwuy'. And it's the Pemulwuy project! Duh.

DB: Is he an artist? Did you say sis?

[Taressa Mongta?]: [inaudible]

DB: Right, and Desley's got your information. Yeah, perfect. Alright.

Audience51: It being a temporary thing, being considered, you know, if it's a temporary space, could it be considered that if something like that was going to be put onto something, could it be something that could then be moved to somewhere else, when the wall gets knocked.

DB: Yeah, yep.

Audience52: [inaudible]

DB: Yep. Yeah, we've got to join the dots, and in respect of the Pemulwuy project, again I'll just be clear that that is the Aboriginal Housing Company, as a developer, developing that block of land, it's not the City of Sydney. That wall is actually State Rail's wall, but, us all as stakeholders, community, City of Sydney, all the other stakeholders, we're all here because we want to see something magnificent up on that wall. And I also just want to say this, in closing, if there's nothing else, I thought 'wow' the defining moment for me was hearing the State Rail are going to take down those fences. Because when I came out of that station today, I saw this artwork, and it looked like prison cells. And I cannot wait for that to be the city backdrop, that artwork, and move away from those fences, because that's what it looks like.

DH: I'm not absolutely sure it's both sides.

DB: Fences, because that's what it looks like.

DH: I'm not absolutely sure it's both sides. It's definitely the northern side, but I think that the pedestrian crossing gets moved, that they're putting in a pedestrian crossing in from the railway station to the northern side, a little bit closer to Eveleigh Street, and that means they will definitely have to modify, but they're extending, taking that wall side out, because they're putting a divided bike path on the northern side.

DB: Right, so, let's maybe, if we, if, Desley, can say that the symbolism of moving that fence, when Djon Mundine mentioned the incarceration rates I'll tell you what they are. For every female in the criminal justice system in this country 33% of them are [Aboriginal] women. Disgraceful. For every male in the criminal justice system in this country, as Djon Mundine mentioned, I think he said a quarter, I think it's about 23-4%. Women are in jail for petty crimes. Men are in jail for more serious crimes. But they're all in jail because of prejudice in this country. And for me, as a blackfella, whose mum was judged, I was judged, who I was taught didn't exist, I left school in year ten, I think moving that fence

will be a brilliant thing in the symbolism of moving away from that jail-looking on this beautiful artwork. It is a part of the artwork. It cannot be covered up in that sense. We also know in Western Australia there is the highest rate of incarceration on the planet, on the planet, and let me tell you this one, I've got to now think of something positive to finish on, but the youth incarceration rate is the highest trajectory in the world, and it is upwards now of 65%. That is a disgrace. So again, in my little role, in my humble little role in the City of Sydney, damn straight I don't forget about those things, because in this very room we ran a program around that. So rather than me talk about it, I try to do something about it. So in this project, coming back to what art in the community means, that's what this represents. It is the contract two cultures coming together and working together, but more importantly, it is something so significant in what defining community art really means I think. And I'm holding that up, as I said, against galleries or museums. So on that note, I just want to thank you all for enduring with my bad comedy, my bad MCing, and I want to wish you all, and thank our ancestors for their inclusion, and thank all the stakeholders for coming into this. Yes there's some work to still do, but I think we've, what's that saying earlier? Nothing's ever in the way, it's only ever on the way. I think we have progressed, and we've got some action, and we've created some meaningful relationships in this, and we've heard from some amazing experts who have led the way in so many different ways from around the world. So thank you everybody for coming. Watch this space. And you have the connection now with Desley if you want to continue to contribute into this amazing project, which will be the blueprint, can be the blueprint, and possibly should be the blueprint for other community projects out there. So thank you.

[applause]

Community Responses

Shirley Lomas: My name is Shirley Lomas, I'm a member of the Redfern Aboriginal community and today I attended the workshop of the mural, and the Redfern Railway Station, and it was an interesting morning, listening to the speakers and that. I think one of the questions that I wanted to ask was about the mural that was put there by Narcotics, or Drugs Anonymous people, and it was about saying 'no' to drugs, and to me, like when I see that it automatically sends out a negative stereotype about Aboriginal people. And you know, like, people look at us and think that we're all doing drugs and alcohol, which is not the case. And another aspect that interested me was about how Aboriginal art imitates life in a contemporary aspect of life, you know. Sometimes when I look at it, like we're getting all these murals and rock art and whatever, and for people to look at, but do they really sort of understand, and appreciate Aboriginal art and culture and its people in the urban environment. That's right, those were just some of the questions that I had and I hope would be answered. And I think the other side is a great mural. It really reflects Aboriginal elders and Mum Shirl, and the other people that have been well known in Redfern area, so I would like them to sort of still be there. Just to know what they did and achieved years ago, still stands the test of time, and a testament to our people that they can achieve anything. And that's all I've got to say, thus far. Is that okay?

Christine Blakeney: Hi, my name's Christine Blakeney, and I would love to see the '40,000 Years', mural opposite Redfern Station, redone. I think it's a beautiful mural, but the most beautiful part is those feet that are standing on the ground. They belong to my father, and my children have seen those feet. My grandchildren, I've got fifteen of them, most of them have seen it. The rest are going to come and see it. And I take photos of them kids, and tell them that that's their great-great-grandad. And I'd love for him to be here to see them. With the feet, the mural is timeless. They look like they belong, they look like they've been there for 40,000 years, and they could go another 40,000. Okay, thanks.

Carol Ruff & Marlene Cummins

CR: Okay, my name is Carol Ruff, and I was the person who put this whole mural in Redfern together. It was my idea, and I found the funding, and I found the artists, and we got it there. And we're here today to try and work out how to put history back.

MC: I'm Marlene Cummins. I've known Carol Ruff for many years, even before the mural wasn't it?

CR: A long time, yep.

MC: It gets away, as we say. But Joe Geia is a countryman of my Guguyelandji, a lot of Queenslanders, whether they're musicians, artists, etc. or whether you just plain want to get away from the policies and be allowed to under the Queensland Act at the time, we all gravitated down here. And Sydney is a place of blackfellas getting away from those sort of oppressive situations, to get work or to make it, so to speak, whether you're an artist, singer or anything else. So we all connected on that level, and at the time with the song with Joey Geia, a Guguyelandji man, called '40,000 years is a long, long time' which resonates in all our soul today. It's such an emotional thing, along with his other song 'Yil Lull'. And at this point Carol can further add to that thing that was happening.

CR: Yeah, because Joe was part of it. The mural was designed to be an Aboriginal history of South Sydney, and to be a gateway to Aboriginal Redfern and The Block, and as Marlene said, with the song, '40,000 Years' we had used a line from Joe Geia's song, because it seems to sum up, at that stage everybody said, '40,000 years is a long, long time', and we were quite amazed, don't forget that this is a historic piece, so what we're putting back is a piece of history. People didn't know then about Aboriginal people and it hadn't really come out. People are saying now, '50,000 years, 60,000 years', 40,000 years is what we knew in 1984, and we thought that was significant. And the mural does have a lot of stories of Redfern in it, and the feet at the beginning representing those first footsteps on this land 40,000 years ago, going right through the institutionalisation of Aboriginal kids in the missionaries, and at the end of the mural, guess what, we've got the Redfern All Blacks footy team who won that year, and that was probably the most, we had a lot community involvement, people saying what they wanted on this mural. People were coming into our workshop, we had a little empty shop there, and were writing down. We'd say, 'What do you want to see in this mural?' and the thing that came up again, and again, and again, was the Redfern All Blacks, so we painted that. Avril Quaill put that on, I remember that distinctly.

MC: My niece is actually there too, Leona McGrath. She was very young and she's doing a fist salute.

CR: A cheerleader.

MC: Yeah, and she's now well into her 40s I think now. She's an established artist. There's so much spiritual, emotional connection to that. And it's actually, you know, it's contrasted against the, I love the contrast of all the city and that contrast is so there, in your face. You get out of the station, you come out of the station, whether you're used to being here, or you're a visitor, or you're from overseas, or from the outer-suburbs, you know? And that is a reminder that, of the First Nations people of this country. You know, you're not going to kind of, although there's the city buildings and everything are there, this is there too, you know, and maybe not traditionally from a landscape point of view, but the elements that go into it remind people that we are the sovereign owners of this country and it's a very educative tool, because I've taken a very, as a broadcaster for Koori Radio for over 20 years, I've taken a lot of people down there, and that is a very strong component, as to why they're taking photos in front of it is because of the context of the panoramic view of the city, but here, hello, this is the First Nation, this comes first before the city. It's a wonderful visual, if you like, education. You know, no matter what background you come from in Redfern, and those who have made us, some of us, they've got this rich emotional kinship to that's Redfern All Blacks, whether it's Joe Geia's song that is still played on the Indigenous media airways all around this country. The messages in his music. And someone said, who was once at the stage of, it was her feet or her grandfathers, or someone that was used to draw, and what can I say, I don't think I have enough time for this to say, the connection with that beautiful mural, our mural, and how important it is to, not just the Redfern community, but artists alike, worldwide and everything.

CR: It turned up in a few things. It was used in a Midnight Oil clip I remember.

MC: That's right.

CR: They shot one of their clips. It was around the time they were doing 'The Beds Are Burning' I think. It was behind on the news every night, during the famous Redfern riots. It must have been 85 or something. It turned up. It's been around, this mural, and it's got a little bit bashed over the years, and let's hope we get it back.

MC: I would hate to see that sort of Western approach of what is beauty, and everything, but now as we're evolving as a society art plays an integral part in a shared past, a present reality and our future intentions. But through the art, you should never forget your history and where you come from, and I think that's also what that piece is all about.

CR: And that's what murals do. I think that's why people love murals. It's art for the people. And very much the philosophy then, and kind of, they're coming back in fashion I see, they were very big, and I did a lot of murals all over the country in the 70s and 80s, it's like it's, you don't have to go into a gallery to look at a mural. It's there, it's on the wall for everyone to see. And the point of these murals too, was that they weren't abstract, or highly conceptual, they were social and political murals, and they had a message. That's what this mural's about.

MC: From the ground level too.

Taressa Mongta: My name's Taressa Mongta. I'm from La Perouse, Aboriginal community. My family, and the community has long connections to Sydney. Their cultural connections extend across the legal boundaries, the local government boundaries, because of the way our culture is. We're a living thing. Regarding the '40,000 Years' mural that's across from the Redfern Train Station, I agree that it should be protected, and that we should look for further representations in, within maybe that mural, or without, you know, mucking up the integrity of it. Or looking at other representations all over the city of Sydney. I want to put on notice the pre-existing project called [name – unsure of correct spelling] which was created by myself on the community of La Perouse, and along the East Coast in the 90s. It's still existing and we want to look at protecting the integrity of it, getting support to finish it. It focuses on 1988, the Koori Lockout, the Great Depression, the church and the sea. There were eight youth suicides, because we weren't able to get funding, or, you know, the skills and expertise that we needed, but hopefully this will, in the broader context of the consultation that's happening, that's why I'm asserting that this project exists so we can hopefully get people to be mindful or be sensitive of our connections, and help us to finish it. In recognition of our connection, that goes across those boundaries right into Sydney Harbour.

And that will empower, and attain self-determination for our community out at La Perouse, but also for the kinship groups that come from the first contact peoples in Sydney and along the coast. For La Perouse to finally complete the project, which really is completion of a play around those themes, the Koori Lockout the Great Depression, 1988, the sea and the church, and the research project, because we can actually have an evidence base there to show, you know, the trends that are happening, and whether or not we access what we need to get what we want. So we want leverage, and finally finish this. We think it's going to be helpful to the grassroots cultural community, and the wider Aboriginal community. That's authentic. So it was recently recognised, because I had no funding, no help, it was very stressful. But I wrote down to the roundtable meeting with Nigel Scully and had convened on mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and suicide prevention, and he wrote back acknowledging the cultural expression, and cultural mateness is very important to building resilience in communities and curtailing the suicide statistics that are getting out of hand. So we hope we've done enough to lobby for it to stand in its own right and to be recognised as an issue, finishing this further. I'm glad that they are doing something about the mural, the '40,000' mural, because it is, and also in terms of the other mural that's also on the other side, I believe it's the two issues that we dealt with are thinking about what other people think, and what we need that validates us as Aboriginal people, and we need those other, I think, need those other bits across the road from the '40,000' mural which is showing, you know, the drug use and things like that, because we still cope with that and it's there in reinforcing a positive message, you know, to try and find a way to sobriety or get out of that, you know, that's why we're trying to do this, so that it'll inspire other people. Even though we're only a small minority, there's a lot of power when people all come together. So thank you for your time.