

Progress 2019

- Australia's biggest and boldest social change 2-day conference
1,700 leading activists, thinkers and change-makers at Melbourne Town Hall.
- **Louise Redmond** (*Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group*) and **Jan Govett** (*Australian Refugee Action Network and Rural Australians for Refugees, Bendigo*) attended. We shared ideas, built relationships.

Links

- [Progress 2019 website](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Speakers](#)

Just some of the **Takeaway Messages:**

- Without First Nations' Justice, there is no justice
- Rod Little, National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
Persist, Insist, Resist.
- Ruby Wharton, Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance
Want change? We are the change. Listen.
If you are doing it for the ego, you need to get out of the way.
This is about people's lives.
- Jan Vadiveloo, Children's Ground
Be inspired and encouraged, but **do not be comfortable.**
- Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International
We need to
 - **Have a vision.**
 - **Talk in accessible ways**
 - Tackle the **cause**, not the symptoms
 Access to government does not automatically influence government
 - **Need thousands of people behind us**
 - Civil disobedience – it is time
 - Moral courageClimate change: The planet will be fine. We will be gone. The planet will recover.
- Lee Carnie, Human Rights Law Centre
 - **Need for a Charter of Human Rights**
- Nicola Paris, CounterAct
 - Protest and activism are central to democracy
- Owen Jones, Guardian UK, Ellie Mae O'Hagan (UK) & Adam Luna (USA)
 - **The voices that are dangerous are those who would compromise**
 - New solutions from people impacted
 - Inspiring vision
 - be **bold**
 - be **unapologetic**
- Shen Narayanasamy, GetUp
 - Mobilise those who agree and those who might. Don't waste time and energy of those who will never agree



Louise Redmond
BMMSG



Jan Govett, ARAN
RAR Bendigo

Day 1 – 20 June 2019

Welcome – Indigenous Elder

Yassmin Abdel-Magied - MC

Kirsty Albion, Deputy Director of Australian Progress: “Hope is the best form of resistance.”

First Nations Panel

Ruby Wharton, Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance: “Rally the Warriors”

Unite, work behind the scene.

Want the change. We are the change.

Show up, and **Listen**.

If you are doing it for the ego, you need to get out of the way.

This is about people’s lives.

Rod Little, National Congress: 70+ suicides (2018-19)

Diminishing services; shutting down the voices.

“Do to us” OR “Do with us”

Persist, Insist, Resist.

Lara Watson, Indigenous Officer, ACTU:

CDPⁱ workers have no rights, no safety

Bruce Pascoe, author of Dark Emu

If you begin with a lie, you end with a lie.

Incredible panel, engaging and thought provoking.

Must buy Bruce Pascoe’s Dark Emu.

Keynote Speaker: Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International

Once upon a time, MLK said: “I have a dream.”

But today we tend to say: “I have a nightmare.”

This won’t work. We need a vision.

Challenge the “Business as usual” model.

- Increasing demonization – “us” v “them”
- Rise of populism
- Deepening poverty, inequality
- Today’s disease is “affluentism”
- Technological change
- Climate change

The planet will be fine. We will be gone. The planet will recover.

Is western civilization the problem?

Look at the root causes

- Ideological frameworks
- “Politics is driven by culture”: Steve Bannon

Talk in accessible ways

- Far too often we talk to ourselves in ways only we can understand
- Break out of the silos
- Intersectionality – across the social justice and progressive issues

Young people

- Don’t wait to be the leaders of tomorrow
- There may be no tomorrow

Will engaging with government work?

- Access does not necessarily influence
- Need thousands of people behind us
- Civil disobedience – it is time
- Moral courage

Northern Territory – Bush Mobs & Grandmothers 4 Justice

- Indefensible pre-trial detention – children as young as 10 locked up
- In China the age limit is 14. In Australia the age limit is 10
- Let's push the Aust Govt to 16 years of age, or even 18 years of age

First they ignore you

Then they laugh at you

Then they fight you

Then you win.

Every week 4 human rights defenders are killed.

Don't let "them" convince you that your contribution is not worthwhile

Are we addressing the symptoms or the cause?

Be adaptive

Challenge structural power

Big Ideas to Strengthen our Democracy

SPEAKERS: Emily Howie, Hannah Aulby, Lee Carnie, Tim Dunlop, Nicola Paris & Danielle Wood

Emily Howie, Human Rights Law Centre

- Lack of trust in government
- 2019 - 40% are satisfied with democracy (compare with: 2012 – 80%)
- Demand more of government
- Defend the rights of the vulnerable

Danielle Wood, Grattan Institute

- Who's in the room? – "grey corruption"
 - Runs interference on good policy
 - Deep pockets – private money
 - No visibility of access to government
 - Need for level playing field – donors meeting with MPs
 - Impact on political Parties, Govt, Opposition
- Restrict donations – cap expenditure by Parties
- Impact on civil society – activism, etc.

Lee Carnie, HRLC

- ABC raids were done under an old law – attacks on charities, protestors, etc.
- Need for unification & collaboration
- Need a **Charter of Human Rights**
 - Victoria charter is limited – not effect in courts
 - We have continual Royal Commissions because we do not have a Charter of HR
 - Tool for change
 - Transparency
 - Accountability
 - Independent umpire
 - Protects values
 - Rights and responsibilities are protected
 - Underpin Govt policies and laws
 - "Front of Mind" threats
 - Join the campaigning
 - Build the roof – don't put buckets under the leaks
 - This time we need a strong grassroots movement
 - It's hard to convince a govt to pass a law to limit their own power
 - Don't sell this as a human rights issue
 - It is an issue for all Australians – basic protections for all
 - Do we want what is popular or what is right?

Tim Dunlap, author, UniMelb

- “Reality has a progressive bias”
- “Voting is not working.” - [Sortition](#) is better for democracy
 - Govts don’t look like “us” – don’t represent us.
 - Voting entrenches elite rule
 - Need for random selection (the People’s House)
 - Similar to Citizen Juries, Citizen Assemblies (e.g. SA waste review)
 - It’s about participation
 - People would need to be given resources – experts, interest groups, both sides of an issue
 - Getting Govts to try this would be like asking turkeys to vote for Xmas

Nicola Paris, CounterAct

- Protest and activism are central to democracy
- Voices are not equal
- Activism – use it or lose it
- Intimidation, Fines, Infiltration
- Existential rebellion (e.g. climate change)
- In the public interest
- Spend time in local communities – not just an invasion by outsiders
- Map legislative changes - Data is helpful for Accountability
 - Police over-stepping, over-reacting
 - Misapplication of laws

Hannah Aulby, Accountability Roundtable

- Need for Anti-corruption watchdog – ICAC – with the powers of a Royal Commission
- Currently No transparency, No oversight of govt
- Needs bi-partisan support
- State bodies have various but not uniform powers
- How to build a Social Movement – need to manage collaboration
- Centre for Public Integrity –
 - [Launch](#) – 10am Wed, July 17, 2019 Jubilee Room, Parliament of New South Wales
 - A new think tank dedicated to preventing corruption, protecting our integrity institutions and eliminating the undue influence of money in politics.
 - The Centre for Public Integrity will lead a network of experts that collaborate to design and advocate for benchmarks in integrity policy reforms. Board members include The Hon Tony Fitzgerald AC QC, The Hon David Ipp AO QC, The Hon Stephen Charles AO QC, The Hon Anthony Whealy QC, Professor George Williams AO, Geoffrey Watson SC and Professor Joo Cheong Tham.

The New Political Context

SPEAKERS: Emma Dawson, Lenore Taylor, Peter Lewis, Shen Narayanasamy & Amanda McKenzie

Why the election result?

Lenore Taylor, Guardian Australia

- Coalition gains were in areas with lower education, high unemployment
- Need to focus on facts to reach the broadest audiences
- Tell stories in a human way – hearing from people rather than about them – e.g. “Fair Go” series
- Need to keep to our own agenda – e.g. Sky’s business model is to piss-off the Guardian so the Guardian talks about them, not the issues
- Looking for writers from around Aust with lived experience

Peter Lewis, Essential Media

- People said, “We are doing ok” - Risk of change was too great
- With the more noise we made, the fear of change got higher
- 8% of people were still undecided a week prior to the election
- This was a figure that was discounted and therefore distorted the polling expectations

- Labor needs to take the right lesson from defeat, and hold the govt to account
- Election was loss doesn't mean what we did and what we are doing is wrong
- Generate faith for change
- Hold social media platforms to account
- Govt flat tax problem – this would reduce the role of govt and therefore reduce services – heading for user pay as the govt will say it has no money for services
- New Start is a disaster
- “Lefties are elitists” – let's agree
- But let's not make harsh assumptions about why people voted as they did – the divide is between people with capital and those without

Amanda McKenzie, Climate Council

- Channel the rage
- Argue for change
- We need to be able to trust the govt to implement changes
- Keep climate on top of the agenda
- Systems that support human life are in crisis
- As this progresses the ability to support the most vulnerable will become impossible

Shen Narayanasamy, GetUp

- GetUp targeted 7 electorates
- Problems: Fake news, People were talking in silos, Spending (Palmer),
- Face to Face conversations worked best
- Issues – Manus/Nauru; Medevac –
- If the govt claims our successes as their win that's ok – e.g. #KidsOffNauru
- Build an MP coalition of support
- Refugee campaign is a **racist campaign**
- **Don't mention Human Rights**
- Mobilise those who agree and those who might. Don't waste time and energy of those who will never agree

Emma Dawson, Per Capita

- It wasn't a thumping win, but delivered a more conservative govt

Live exports- Leading the way on divestment

Lisa Chalk, Animal Rights, and Victoria McKenzie, Bank Australia

- Labor was planning to phase out live exports
- Evidence led to public outrage
- Build allies – media, politics, industry
- Collaboration – beyond this issue
- Treat everyone as a potential ally
- “How is YOUR money being used?”
- Food animals have different rights to pets
- Ethical lending

Defending the Lgbtiq+ Community Against Religious Discrimination and Far Right Attacks

SPEAKERS: Lee Carnie, HRLC; Isreal ?, student, & Aram Hosie, Equality Australia

- There is division because the media and social media like drama
- Currently you can be either a person of faith or a LGBTIQ+ person
- To fit in you need to act in a certain way
- Impact of messages on people – research re the Marriage Equality debate showed it had a negative impact on mental health
- The effect of negative messages is not countered by positive messages
- There are some protections for LGBTIQ+ people, but not so for people of faith
- The law should protect people from discrimination, not divide people
- Protection from discrimination does not give anyone the right to discriminate against others

Day 2 – 21 June 2019

A Bold Vision for the Future of Politics

SPEAKERS: Owen Jones, Guardian UK, Ellie Mae O'Hagan & Adam Luna

- New solutions from people impacted
- Inspiring vision – bold, unapologetic

Owen Jones, Guardian UK columnist, author, activist, one of Britain's most prominent political commentators

- Britain is a “burning skip”
- Why?
 - Massive anger at a broken system
 - Are you happy with your lives? NO
 - Drives people to look for protection and also for scapegoats
- Neo-liberalism is a rigged economic system- Profit ahead of people’s needs
- On the Left – a sustainable economy is just
- Gains we have made have been won not given
- Courage, determination, resilience

Adam Luna – USA

- Don't compromise with the Far Right
- The **voices that are dangerous are those who would compromise**
- People closest to the pain have the solution – make spaces that they can develop the policies, the solutions
- “Joyous Rebellion” – this hard work can be empowering and even fun
- Being a victim is exhausting

Elle Mae O'Hagan – UK

- People romanticize the past yet it is what lead us to where we are – what happened before Trump set the ground work for now. Let's go back? To what? It wasn't really so good.
- Get political – Conservative parties want to destroy what we do. **Get Political with a Capital P**
- Funding – problematic – can be withdrawn, good causes can be dropped. Challenge these people to be braver, to achieve justice
- Beware of attacking the personality of people (Trump, Dutton, etc.)
- Fight the bad policies – even in the Labor Party
- Help people without hurting people
- We believe in justice, equality – what does this mean in practice?

Jane Vadiveloo & Lorraine Gorey, - Children's Ground - First Nations initiative

- We have tried western style education system and it has failed us
- Need to teach our children our way
- The land is a member of our family
- “Be inspired and encouraged, but do not be comfortable.” Jan Vadiveloo

Campaign Clinic: Solve Your Challenge

FACILITATORS: Anita Tang, Sam Blake, Beth Koch, Victor Komarovsky, Nina Atkinson & Madeleine Holme

People at this clinic suggested a campaign or challenge they were having trouble tackling.

This lightning approach used the brains trust of people in the room to develop new ideas, approaches and strategies to implement.

Method:

1. 5 minutes ... Host (person with the problem) to explain the context/issue
2. 5 minutes ... Group asks the Host for clarification
3. 15 minutes ... Group Brainstorm

- NB Host cannot speak during this time – takes note of ideas/suggestions
 - This prevents “going down the rabbit hole of “but I’ve tried this”, etc.
4. 5 minutes ... Host questions/explores ideas presented
 5. 5 minutes ... Host summarises their takeaway and next steps

Louise and I took part in a group that explored how to shift **TPVs and SHEVs to permanent protection**
Our host was Denise from UCA. There were 10 people in our group

Outline & Clarification:

- Uniting Church has available people to work on this issue – just need to be mobilised
- Uniting Church has available buildings
- 15,000 TPV and SHEV holders – Legacy caseload
 - Allowed no family reunion
 - Denial of tertiary education because no HEC fees – international student fees are charged – impossible cost
 - Depression is common, suicide
 - Govt doesn’t want to be seen to reward people who came by boat
 - Risk of being exploited in workforce – lack of workers’ rights
 - Messaging?
 - Mobilising Australians?
 - Focus has been offshore
 - Against International Law
 - Another 15,000 came by plane and are on Bridging Visas

Brainstorm:

- Good research is essential
- Messaging
 - Find a “hook”
 - Simple message
 - Hard to refute e.g. #KidsOffNauru campaign
 - Use Social Media
 - Marketing Campaign
 - Use the voices of the people with lived experience
 - Use images and video where possible
- Strong Partnerships across the sector
 - Begin with RCOA, ASRC, ARAN, HRLC, RAR, ACTF, etc.
 - Work with State and Local Governments
 - Find the sympathetic Coalition MPs and Senators
 - Engage with Uni Students, unions around the unfair fees and prevention of study
 - Co-ordinated approach
 - Link to Christian values – especially within UCA and other church groups
 - Link across faith groups
 - Link to the importance of families
- Concerns
 - Community fatigue
 - Compassion fatigue
 - Govt won’t want to change its message – i.e. that any policy changes would weaken our borders

i Community Development Program (CDP) is the remote employment and community development service.

ii Speaking with: [Cameron Murray on grey corruption and the 'Game of Mates'](#) July 28, 2017