

We go back to the beginning, and our law was given to us in the beginning. It wasn't made by man or woman. This law came with the land. We're the caretakers, the guardians and the custodians of that. We hand that on to our children.

- Uncle Robbie Thorpe, 'Our Land, Our Law' Panel, 1 December 2025.

In the early evening light of Monday the 1st of December over 120 people crowded in to the undercover area at Dardi Munworro, Aunty Alma Thorpe's Gathering Place, to listen and learn as Uncle Robbie Thorpe, Oongi Barb Flick, Professor Irene Watson, Senator Lidia Thorpe, Aunty Sue Haseldine, Aunty Alma Thorpe herself and facilitator Keiran Stewart-Assheton discussed Aboriginal Law and Sovereignty.

The rain paused for Uncle Wayne Thorpe to deliver a welcome to Country and smoking ceremony before we returned to our seats and Keiran introduced the panel. He acknowledged that the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung land upon which we were gathered has never been ceded, neither by our law, nor colonial law, nor international law; that the wealth of the current illegal occupation was built by stolen land and labour including our Kanaky brethren of the South Sea Islands; and that it is the spilling of blood throughout the global south that continues to build colonial wealth. As Professor Irene Watson pointed out during the panel discussion, it is up to us to 'do the decolonial work of rethinking how we think,' to recognise where consent is being manufactured and bring our awareness to the true cost of the occupation. She posits that in order to assert sovereign justice the founding colonial principle of terra nullius 'must be realised as a lie, travesty, sham, juricide, crime,' that all peoples who come to this place should know and honour these facts. We held a moment of silence to pay our respects to the victims of genocide, colonialism and imperialism.



Professor Irene Watson addresses the panel. From left to right: Keiran Stewart-Assheton, Aunty Sue Haseldine, Oongi Barb Flick, Uncle Robbie Thorpe, Senator Lidia Thorpe, Professor Irene Watson.

With full awareness that each one of the laws against genocide laid out in the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide have been broken in the colonisation of so-called Australia, Uncle Robbie has dedicated much of his life to pursuing the prosecution of these crimes. The [genocide case](#) that he brought alongside Wadjularbinna Nulyarimma, Isobel Coe, Billy Craigie and Kevin Buzzacott against members of the Commonwealth Government in 1999 was unsuccessful, with the court holding that genocide was not an offence recognised in Australian law; it was not until 2002 that the Rome Statute came into force creating the International Criminal Court, and the laws of the 1948 Convention were enshrined in Australian domestic law.

Today Uncle Robbie attempts to prosecute King Charles III ('Chuck the Turd'), having lodged a charge sheet at Melbourne Magistrates Court on October 20 2023 for violation of Aboriginal Law, the Australian Criminal Code, and International Law. Whilst the magistrates court in December 2023 decided not to issue proceedings, describing the case as 'frivolous and vexatious,' Uncle Robbie has sought judicial review and the next court date, at the Supreme Court of Victoria, will be in May 2026. We can all support Uncle Robbie's tireless work by showing up at court as this creates public interest and compels the presiding judges to

hear and act on the case. As Irene notes, the stories of the old people who have come before are all the same story, of never giving up, over and over again. Their lives' works give us the opportunity to build upon rich histories of resistance and self-determination, facing what seems to be an impossible global situation. Additionally on 23 January 2026 there will be a hearing of charges for trespassing brought against the Governor of Victoria Margaret Gardner.. Follow [Crime Scene Australia](#) for updates. Here you can also find copies of the documents filed for the genocide case. Although the court has now struck out the intervenors in this case, Oongi Barb Flick, Senator Lidia Thorpe and Keiran Stewart-Assheton spoke to the evidence of genocide that they submitted to the court.

Oongi Barb Flick told stories of invasion, massacre, police brutality, state sanctioned abduction, and through it all, resistance. Her Bigambul Great Granny Susan was born 66 years after Phillip sailed off Yarra Bay with the first settlers. She lived with a group of people who kept settlers off their lands for fourteen years through economic warfare; they killed stock, engaged in hand to hand combat, and burned the graze that was brought to feed stock. In 1848 there was a select committee meeting in Brisbane which resulted in the establishment of the Native Police Force who were commanded along with military forces to go to Bigambul Country. They left only 300 out of the 3000 people there alive. Just outside of Brewarrina where Barb grew up with her grannies, there is a creek where people used to camp. One morning in 1870, as men, women and children were waking up and making breakfast, armed settlers raided their camp, raping, slashing, shooting - killing 400 people. They left many laying there injured and bleeding, resulting in the name it is now known by; Hospital Creek. On Gamilaraay country, settlers had changed their tactics from shooting to poisoning waterholes, after seven men were convicted and sentenced to death for the Myall Creek massacre of 1838, in which settlers killed at least 28 Wirraayaraay Gamilaraay people camped at the creek. They raided the camp with guns, and during the slaughter made a big fire which they threw everybody onto, burning any survivors alive. Barb's grandmother was taken as a child. Her mother was taken at fourteen years old to work on a station. She was only released when her mother found a job for her at the local hospital. In 1981, Barb's second cousin Eddie Murray was arrested and found dead in his cell at 21 years old. When she and her father went to the police cells they found that the bars on the window were far too high for him to have hanged himself from as the police claimed he had, with a strip from a blanket that not even the much bigger and stronger officers could tear. They studied the officers' notebooks from the time of the arrest and found significant sections whited out. With all this evidence available still the court found only that Eddie's life was taken by a person or persons unknown. These are the stories that the court continues to deny. There have been at least 609 deaths in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission, and [the other day](#) was the very first time that a police officer has been found guilty - though not of murder, but dangerous driving occasioning death. Now we see the laws of the colony subject children [as young as ten](#) to this violent carceral system. As Oongi Barb said:

Whitefellas' law is only written on paper. You can tear it into scraps, chuck it on the fire, amend it over and over. Like they did with the Land Rights Act in New South Wales in the 80s. They change it every time that parliament sits down in that colonial headquarters. Our law you can't change it. We'll fight on until we get justice.



Oongi Barb Flick speaks, with Auntie Sue Haseldine at her left and Uncle Robbie Thorpe at her right.

She went on later to explain some of the sources from which she draws the strength to continue fighting, finding role models and mentors from among the networks of proud Aboriginal activists throughout this continent. Oongi Barb only met Auntie Alma for the first time at this very event, yet since the 70s has been inspired by 'this wonderful woman' and the work she's been doing. Stories of resistance are passed from generation to generation, and Oongi Barb now feels deeply her responsibility to pass those stories down to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, raising happy and healthy children, who no matter what they do, will be proud Gamilaraay warriors.

Senator Lidia Thorpe acknowledged the complicity of both Labour and the Coalition in ongoing genocide, upholding unjust laws. For example attempts to prosecute genocide in the Australian legal system are curtailed by the Attorney-General's fiat, which gives them the power to block certain cases from proceeding in the courts. [The Bill](#) that Lidia brought to Parliament in

March 2025 was developed in order to strip this veto power. However it was not passed, and consequently many genocide cases, for the Aboriginal peoples of this continent, as well as for the people of Kanaky, Palestine, Sudan and West Papua, are still not being heard. You can [contact](#) the current Attorney-General, Michelle Rowland, to advise her of her complicity in this ongoing injustice. As Professor Irene Warson put it, the injustice of not being able to have our stories of genocide heard because of positivism and 'black-letter law' is in itself an act of genocide, multiplying trauma as people are given nowhere to put these stories, to have them heard. Yet we will continue to pressure domestic and international courts to hear the truth, and in the process assert and affirm Aboriginal sovereignty and jurisdiction. Further holding Australian institutions to account for ongoing genocides around the world, Lidia will bring a 'Red Lines' package of bills to the Senate in February 2026 (see here the [previous package](#) presented in November 2024). We can urge our local MPs to support these bills, influencing Australian Law to uphold justice, not genocide.



Senator Lidia Thorpe addresses the audience. To her left is Uncle Robbie Thorpe and to her right Professor Irene Watson.

Keiran Stewart-Assheton provided further evidence of genocide on this continent with reference to his Yuin ancestors. When the Dharuwal Yuin people first saw the white sails of the Endeavour coming along the south coast, they called him Gurang-Gubba, the big greedy white pelican who in dreaming stories snatches everything up for himself. Cook and his landing party

came ashore and shot at the two warrior men who were there to meet him, evidenced by a bullet hole in the shield that they stole from them. In order to snatch up all the lands, resources, people, culture, history, and heritage, they first spread sickness across the land. Keiran's mob have yarns about it, how it killed around 90% of their people. Coincidentally the life cycle of a smallpox plague is eighteen years; the interval between this first landing in 1770 and their return in 1788 belies an intentionality tantamount to biological warfare. The devastation of the smallpox plague is paralleled on Yuin Country today, where [per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#) used in exercises at the HMAS Creswell navy training facility have since the 1980s run into local creeks and streams, contaminating the nearby (2-3km away) Wreck Bay community water supply and the sea where food is harvested from. This small community now has some of the highest recorded per capita rates of cancer in Australia, with tumours developing in children and young people, as well as high rates of sterility, birth defects, asthma and other respiratory complications. There has been little accountability for harms caused; conversations with the navy have been circuitous if not outright dishonest, as when they claimed to have stopped using PFAS in the 90s only for whistleblowers to reveal that it was ongoing until 2011, well after the possible health impacts were known. Keiran's current harsh reality of many family members having died too young of cancers, with many more currently diagnosed or in the process of being diagnosed, is the direct result of an occupying force's use of dangerous chemicals; it is chemical warfare. Mob at Wreck Bay have won a class action against the navy, but only in relation to the devaluation of lands and loss of culture. There is still no justice for the health impacts and deaths in the community. In the face of this injustice Keiran asks, what could a sovereign people's justice system look like?

Professor Irene Watson doesn't have all the answers, but she spoke clearly on what is needed to develop strong foundations for this justice system. It is firstly important to recognise the limitations of current international jurisprudence around genocide. She outlined how the harms caused are not only about the murder of human beings, but the destruction of country - ecocide, of systems of law - juricide, of language - linguicide, and of ontologies and philosophies - epistemicide. It is only through ongoing care for people, country, law, language, ontologies and philosophies that we can imagine and create a justice system that doesn't merely seek equality with the western jurisprudential system of ownership, control and enslavement of country, but reflects the ancient legal model that Aboriginal people come from. Irene reflected that First Peoples here demonstrate deep ontological and philosophical understandings that underpin the respectful relationships between nations maintained over more than 65,000 years, where people of hundreds of different language groups can still look at each other, greet each other and share songlines with no invasions or stealing of land. To deny the level of governance required to live peacefully for so long is unquestionably an act of juricide. Native Title legislation transforms high level connection to country into a capitalist property system providing corporate powers with manufactured consent to commit ecocide, whereas true Aboriginal sovereignty and jurisdiction models a completely different way of

relating to country and to each other. First Peoples know that people cannot consent to the destruction of Country; that is the authority of Country. Country itself has a voice which has been taken away under the epistemicide. Therefore communities must be supported to teach the next generations to take responsibility as Aboriginal people to care for Country and to live healthy lives, so that we can keep those ancient systems of governance alive. One way that we can all contribute is by supporting ongoing truth-telling in domestic and international courts; an application to the International Court of Justice, with the support of a friendly state, could provide that space to honour Aboriginal voices with integrity, asserting and affirming sovereignty and jurisdiction independently of the genocidal colonising state.



Dinner is served during a break in the panel discussion.

After a short break for the dinner that was provided by volunteers to all attendees, Uncle Robbie spoke further to the need for independence whilst establishing sovereignty in the face of the colonial occupation, this 'nightmare in our Dreamtime.' He emphasised that it is his strong family and Aboriginal community that has allowed him to stay independent of the state, calling out the acts of genocide that it is built upon ever since Cook failed to obtain consent from First Peoples as he was specifically instructed to do, and falsely declared 'terra nullius,' an act described even by the court of the United Kingdom as 'an act of unutterable shame.' Robbie reaffirmed his commitment to community control, self-determination and sovereignty, explaining how the need for those three things led him away from the Aboriginal Health Service

once it became incorporated in 1986. He instead became part of an organisation they called the Aboriginal Government, functioning under the [Pay the Rent](#) model whereby settlers independently of the government provided the material support they needed to take genocide cases to the courts. This material support includes the ongoing work of lawyer Len Lindon who was present at the panel discussion. Len spoke up from the back of the audience to encourage everyone in attendance to [get writing](#); to urge United Nations member states to endorse the referral of Australia's genocide to the [International Criminal Court](#), and to seek a ruling in the [International Court of Justice](#) at the Hague that the lack of Treaty means that Australia is an illegal occupation on Aboriginal Land, governed by Aboriginal Law. Robbie noted that the recently signed 'Treaty' in Victoria does not constitute a legitimate treaty as it does not follow the Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties and [can be repealed](#) at the whim of the presiding state government. So the fight for real sovereignty continues, establishing the rights of the land itself - of the rivers and of the mountains - because that is where the law comes from:

We've got an amazing beautiful law that goes with this country. It didn't come to us; it's there in spirit. It's the spirit of this land. And you know, you sit on this land long enough, it'll come to you... I'm pretty sure we've done some stupid things back in our past, but we learned about this land. That's the real law, the law of this land. The land has its own authority. If we don't look after it, we'll pay a penalty...

Aunty Alma echoed this sentiment, recalling Uncle Ned talking about the gecko creator spirits running wild in this country, bringing fires and flooding, fighting back against what's being done to the land. Whilst, Robbie observed, 'the colonisers mightn't give a damn about our genocide... what affects them is ecocide - and their children.' As we begin to experience the effects of just 200 years of the ecocidal rule of the occupation, the need to hold that system to account is clear. We can work instead to create systems of justice that come from the authority of Country, and from the learnings of people who had managed to live in harmony with each other and with the land for over [120,000 years](#).



Aunty Alma addresses the panel from the audience.

Aunty Sue Haseldine brings those learnings tangibly into the present day and to future generations, caring for Googatha Country along with ‘four generations who follow me on foot... looking after country, learning language.’ The work that they do is a direct act of resistance against the occupation, as they make their stand on the land exploited by mining companies and aerospace company Southern Launch, who with the support of state and federal governments use sacred Googatha Country as a rocket testing range for not only the Australian Defence Force but also US, Japanese and South Korean militaries. Aunty Sue explained how she has seen Irene’s description of Native Title, ‘transform[ing] high level connection to country into a capitalist property system providing corporate powers with manufactured consent to commit ecocide,’ play out on Googatha Country as a few so-called traditional owners get ‘megabucks’ to sell their country. But, as Sue put it, ‘if you sell land for money, you’ll look around and realise you’ve got nothing - no country, no family...’ She embodies sovereign justice, calling herself ‘a bit of a rebel,’ who has said to police, ‘if I break your law, I’m just upholding mine.’ It is this upholding of family, country, language, law, ontologies and philosophies that allows First Peoples to survive the attempted genocide, ecocide, linguicide, juricide and epistemicide that are ongoing in Australia. Aunty Sue expressed the fundamental need for material support which has made her work possible up to this point; you can contribute to the [West Mallee Protection Fund](#) to ensure that we can continue to protect sacred

land and the life it holds. Yet still, she added, 'if you've got nothing to give, you've always got yourself. You're more important than any money ever made.'

Into a rain slick streetlight lit High Street, over 120 people trickled out from Aunty Alma Thorpe's Gathering Place, holding deepened understandings of Country and the systems of law that it gives rise to, of the harms caused by the illegitimate system of law that have been imposed in the formation of Australia, and of what we can do in order to uphold Aboriginal Law and Sovereignty. It is with immense gratitude for the time and energy of Uncle Robbie Thorpe, Oongi Barb Flick, Professor Irene Watson, Senator Lidia Thorpe, Aunty Sue Haseldine, Aunty Alma Thorpe, Keiran Stewart-Assheton, and all those volunteers who ran this event, that we share some of the insights and discussions that came of it. [The full audio recording is available here.](#)

Please see below for a summary of some actions you can take for Aboriginal Law and Sovereignty.

Support Uncle Robbie's Genocide Cases:

- **Write** to UN member states to enlist their support. Some member states have already been addressed - see documentation [here](#) and [here](#). A working group is currently undertaking this project: please [sign up to volunteer](#) if you are interested in joining. List 'writing' under the 'Skills/Interests' section
- **Show up** for the hearing of charges for trespassing against Governor of Victoria Margaret Gardner, 23rd January 2026 at Melbourne Magistrates Court
- **Show up** for the judicial review of the trial judge's dismissal of [the case](#) for the prosecution of King Charles III for violation of Aboriginal Law, the Australian Criminal Code and International Law, May 2026 at the Supreme Court of Victoria.
- [Donate](#) to Crime Scene Australia
- **Follow** Crime Scene Australia on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)

Support Senator Lidia Thorpe's Work in Parliament:

- [Write](#) to Attorney-General Michelle Rowland to hold her accountable for the use of the Attorney-General's Fiat in deciding who is allowed to have genocide cases heard in the courts
- **Write** to your local MP to urge their support of the Red Lines Package of Bills, to be brought to Parliament in February 2026
- [Donate](#) to Federal Independent Senator for Victoria, Lidia Thorpe
- **Follow** Senator Lidia Thorpe on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X

Support Aunty Sue Haseldine Caring for Country:

- [Donate](#) to the West Mallee Protection Fund
- **Run** for mutual aid! The West Mallee Protection Fund is one of three recipients of funds raised in the [Fun Run 4 Mutual Aid](#), 1st February 2026
- **Follow** West Mallee Protection on [Instagram](#)

[Pay the Rent!](#)