

HERE TO HEAL, NOT HARM

In an interview for the Australian Women Writers Challenge (AWW) Melissa Lucashenko, an acclaimed Aboriginal writer of Goorie and European heritage, was asked the following question:

"In your Griffith Review essay, 'How Green is my Valley?', you describe Indigenous people's sensitivity towards and connection with Country. In a world that is increasingly threatened by climate change, do you think that white Australians might start listening to the land the way Indigenous people do?"

Lucashenko's response:

Well one can always hope. Maybe when the rising floodwaters reach the ears of white politicians, bureaucrats, businesspeople and media, they might get cleaned out, and be able to hear the planet screaming....

Brooke Prentis, Waka Waka woman, Aboriginal Christian Leader, Aboriginal Spokesperson for Common Grace and Coordinator of the Grasstree Gathering. During the Season of Creation 2018 wrote,

"As Aboriginal peoples we hear our land screaming, weeping, and crying out. We hear it in

the Torres Strait Islands watching the seas rise. We hear it in Walpiri country sitting in the hot desert sun. We hear it in Wurundjeri country from the winds on the mountains. It is the voice of Great Creator Spirit, Almighty God, Papa Jesus."

Prentis issues an invitation for us to "come alongside..., learn from God's appointed caretakers, and together ... act and protect God's wondrous creation in this land we now call Australia..."

In Lucashenko's essay, she draws a connection between First Nations people and non-indigenous Australians suggesting our love of the land has common threads.

"If you've ever done 'hard yakka' (rather than simply worked up a sweat), if you've retreated to the same beach each summer for a month of barefoot fishing and swimming or have diligently looked after your own little patch of Australia, then you have walked in Aboriginal footsteps whether you know it or not... Would that this influence had been greater. More Australians might have learned not just to love the place (as some indisputably do) but to listen to the land more seriously."

NAIDOC Week is fast approaching (4-11 July 2021) and this year's theme is *Heal Country, Heal Our Nation*. Through ancient indigenous wisdom, deep listening and unity, we can heal the pain and address the cries of the land and its people.



HEAL COUNTRY!

4-11 JULY 2021

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live.

REFLECTION: How can we all learn from indigenous wisdom and work together to heal the Earth?

REFERENCES: 1. <https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/how-green-is-my-valley/>; 2. <https://australianwomenwriters.com/2016/07/celebration-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-womens-writing-interview-with-melissa-lucashenko/>; 3. https://www.commongrace.org.au/listening_to_gods_beautiful_earth