

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Great summary of ANU study and its findings on why the voice to parliament failed. [Detailed analysis of the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum and related social and political attitudes](#) | ANU Centre for Social Research & Methods

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From: APO <admin@apo.org.au>
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NEW RESOURCES

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Detailed analysis of the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum and related social and political attitudes

Centre for Social Research and Methods

28 Nov 2023 | Report | First Peoples, Government

In order to support an informed discussion about the Voice referendum and its aftermath, the Australian National University collected a detailed survey immediately following the referendum (the October 2023 Australian Constitutional Referendum Study (ACRS)/ANUpoll) from a broadly representative sample of over 4,000 adult Australians. This research report outlines the findings.

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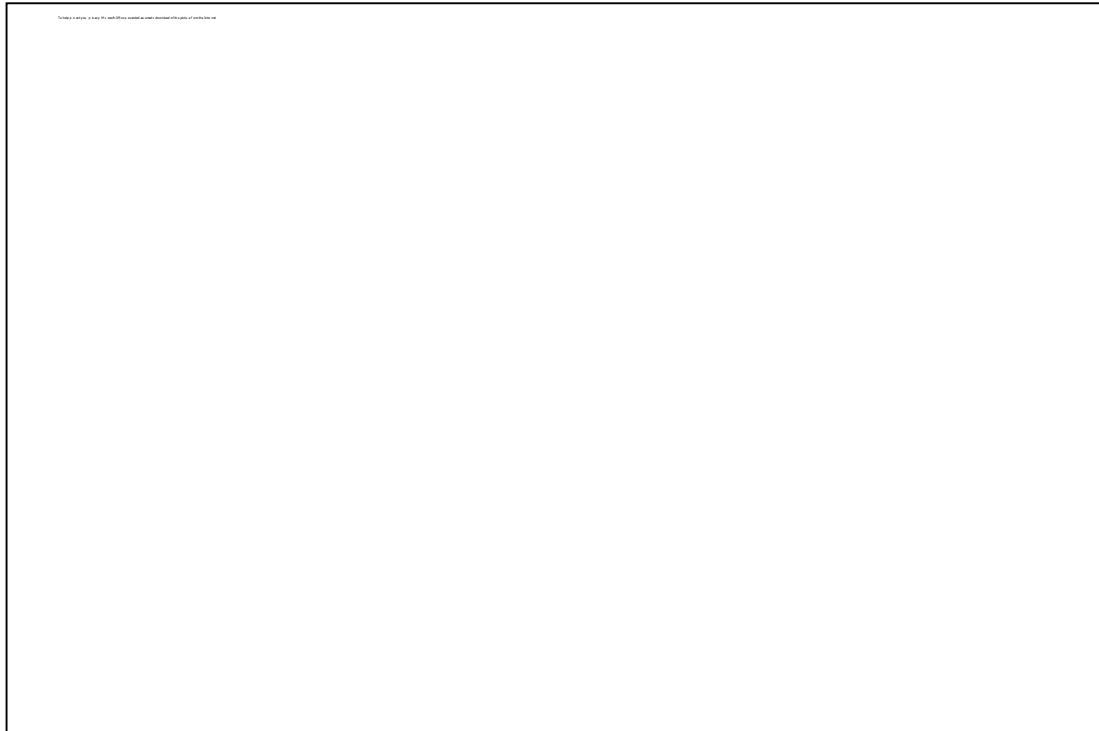
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Subject: [EXTERNAL] The economics Nobel and academic monocultures

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Dean Ashenden on Makarrata



Longreach's Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame

I recall Germaine Greer making fun of the word 'reconciliation'. Couldn't agree more. In my opinion it's an adman's word. Sounds good, and part of the reason it sounds good is that it's so abstract. So empty, so devoid of detail about the terms on which it reconciliation takes place. Then there was 'Voice'. Another nice word. So long as it remained abstract it was highly popular. But for it to something more than word work, it had to be institutionalised — and that meant it had to be specified. I voted for the voice with a heavy heart. I read a Henry Ergas column which argued that its institutional logic would be *necessarily* adversarial and antagonistic.

Now it happens that I've spent a lot of time thinking about the very different logics of representation by election versus representation by sampling (as we do in juries). And the fact is that our system of representation is reflexively competitive. It's all-purpose MO is to arrange people into competing tribes 'for' and 'against' and have have them yell at each other. So I couldn't fault Henry's logic. Anyway, here we are with Makarrata a word no-one understands. Anyway, it's all about truth telling. Thing is, anyone who cares has a fair idea about the truth — aboriginal dispossession was a brutal, horrible fact, still rolling on as child removal when I was in my teens.

And as Dean Ashenden shows us, the Great Australian Forgetting is alive and well in Australia's rural museums — I suspect particularly nearest those parts of Northern Australia in much of the most recent frontier was. So they don't really want to know — or tell. So what to do? Somehow people with university degrees turning up and regulating or shaming them into submission sounds unpromising to me — and it will be unpromising to our politicians. So I agree with Dean. Get people working together.

[Exploring history museums in Barcaldine, Longreach and Winton in Queensland Ashenden writes] a total of [140-odd](#) monuments, memorials, museums and the like range from The Drovers, a group of life-sized figures on Longreach's main street, to Barcaldine's 125th Anniversary of the Great Shearers' Strikes monument to the Waltzing Matilda Centre in Winton.

This ubiquitous public history is, however, less than comprehensive and very much less than candid. ... [N]one ... records or even acknowledges, except in the most oblique way, that that there was a world before "settlement" or that it was swept away in the 1860s and 1870s when "explorers" and "pioneers" roamed around and across the country looking for "good land"; that the Queensland frontier was moving west at an [estimated](#) 300-plus kilometres a year; that this extraordinary movement was made possible by the efforts of the notorious [Queensland Native Police](#) and the "Queensland method" (pre-emptive eradication and intimidation as well as the more familiar reprisals); that these efforts were routinely supported and supplemented by squatters and station workers; that two of the many hundreds of massacres (the deliberate killing of five or more non-combatants) committed in Queensland were in the region, one of them, the infamous [Skull Hole](#) Massacre of 1870 costing 200 Aboriginal lives. ...

If a "[detailed analysis](#) of the 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum and related social and political attitudes" is to be believed, truth-telling will be a lay down *misère*. The referendum vote, this ANU study finds, "did not signal a lack of support for reconciliation, for the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders having a say in matters that affect them, for truth-telling processes, or for a lack of pride in First Nations cultures"; in fact "all of these notions were supported by around eight-in-ten Australians, or even more." The "vast majority," we are assured, "think that the federal government should help reconciliation and roughly the same number (80.5 per cent) think that

Australia should undertake formal truth-telling processes to acknowledge *the reality of Australia's shared history*". ...

[T]he fact remains that decades of truth-telling have had little or no impact at all in an entire realm of story-telling and history production. What is the point of more truth-telling? It's not more *telling* that we need. It's more listening, learning, thinking, discussing and acting upon. We can hope that those "formal truth-telling processes" now under way in several capital cities will deliver long-denied reparations and treaties, which would be no small thing, but as vehicles of a substantial shift in our default view of ourselves and our story they will be water off the proverbial duck's back.

What would or might work? Certainly not telling the recalcitrants that this time they "must listen to the historical truths told by First Nations people" as two academics [recently demanded](#). In my book [Telling Tennant's Story](#) I suggested a national project to encourage and support towns and communities to work with Indigenous people and local and professional historians to audit the public telling of their story and decide whether and how it might be more fully and truthfully told. Such grassroots work would not be an alternative to revamping peak institutions such as the [Australian War Memorial](#) (now [entrusted](#) to that amiable temporiser Kim Beazley); it would be a crucial complement to it.

That idea still seems to be worth considering, but with Longreach, Barcaldine and Winton freshly in mind, here are some suggestions about rules of engagement.

First: remember that the story is not simply or only one of violence, conflict and destruction, although it certainly includes all of those. Somewhere in the vicinity of even the worst moments will almost always be found white support, kindness, even resistance to what was being done to the Aboriginal peoples. Don't demonise.

But don't sentimentalise either, as Stanner reminded his comrade-in-arms Nugget Coombs. Those brutal killers of the Queensland Native Police (for example) were *Aboriginal* men, coopted, often coerced, always led, paid and supplied by the Europeans and their government, engaged to kill those who were to them "foreigners," but brutal killers of tens of thousands of people nonetheless.

Third rule: don't diminish the Man from Snowy River and its myriad equivalents, but do as Russell Ward did, in his time and in his way: expand and complicate the story, and distinguish between mythology and history.

Fourth: no holier-than-thou history! No enlightened present [condescending](#) (as E.P. Thomson put it) to the benighted past — a certain route to the misrepresentation of both.

And perhaps most important of all: listen to anyone who wants to have a say about the story and its telling. An honourable exception to the rule of public history: graffiti on the [back of the dunny door](#) at Attack Creek in the Northern Territory, contesting the whitefellas' version, given on a nearby monument, of that celebrated moment in 1860 when John McDouall Stuart's epic trek across the continent was stopped by "hostile natives."

All this is work for a Makaratta Commission — in fact it's hard to see it being done otherwise — and it's important work. Public history comes from the past; it is the past's preferred version of itself. But it is active in the present; it is the history curriculum of everyday life. What will it teach? Answering that question comes with added benefits: it could generate listening, thinking and learning in ways that mere telling cannot hope to match. ...

It would not be a small undertaking, of course. It would big, long and expensive. What might it cost? Perhaps the bidding could start at the half a billion spent on [extensions](#) at the Australian War Memorial? Better: why not aim at the [total spent](#) by Howard and subsequent Coalition governments on public history installations telling the story we'd already heard over and over again?

[More Here](#)

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Canberra: NACCHO, 2023

Detailed analysis of the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum and related social and political attitudes

Biddle, N., Gray, M., McAllister, I., Qvortrup, M.

Canberra: ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods, 2023

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