

FACING UP

Truth Telling Theatre

Australian policy and Indigenous protest since Federation



A play by Lynden Nicholls

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FACING UP

A TRUTH TELLING PERFORMANCE

By Lynden Nicholls



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Facing Up

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Preamble

Note to directors and teachers:

Long before the Voice referendum, the Australian Government has spoken about and to Indigenous Australians and they've been talking back.

But what were they saying to each other?

Drawing on published sources, *Facing Up* re-creates an imaginary 'dialogue' between Australia's Prime Ministers since federation, and our First Nations people.

Facing Up offers schools and theatre companies an accessible summary of the last 120 years of Government-Indigenous relations in Australia.

It creates space for thinking about the merits of a Voice, before we vote later this year.

Easy to stage, with a cast of three actors, we encourage you to read this script and consider holding a reading or staging a performance before October 2023, or after.

*A comprehensive Education Resource Package is available for schools. Class lessons and ideas for many secondary schools subject areas are included.

* A professionally made film of Facing Up is also available on request.

Reviews:

-Samsara Dunston, Blogspot, What did She Think?

"Very occasionally a piece of theatre comes along which is greater than the sum of its parts and has a clarity of purpose and message brighter than the purest diamond. [Facing Up](#), currently playing at Theatre Works, is a show of that calibre. 4 Stars"

- Michael Cathcart, ABC Radio National on FACING UP

"you've shown how Indigenous political action has gradually shifted the thinking of prime ministers. It shows how activism can lead to real change."

- Dr. Fred Cahir, Associate Professor in Aboriginal History at Federation University

"FACING UP stimulates deep reflection on and prompts research into Australia's identity as a nation which espouses a fair go for everyone."

-David Griffiths, Theatre Review, Theatre Works

"I don't think I have ever watched a piece of theatre that personally spoke to me on the level of Facing Up."

"Not only do I recommend people go to see Facing Up I feel that this is a production that every young Australian should have to watch. No one has ever presented this part of Australian history in the way that Nicholls has – it is all laid out in such a simple fashion that even younger audience members will be able to take something away from it."

Introduction

Previous Productions

Facing Up was originally conceived and presented by Lynden Nicholls as both a sound installation and live performance as part of the Biennale of Australian Art, in Ballarat, 2018. It was held outdoors along the Prime Ministers' Walk in Ballarat's Botanic Gardens. The audience moved from statue to statue and witnessed the performance by eleven actors as prime ministers, and six local Indigenous people.

Facing Up was then remounted in 2021 as a touring show with the same script but a different set, stage directions and number of actors. Lynden Nicholls was the director. Actors: Zerene Jaadwa, Trudy Fatnowna Edgeley and Martin van de Wouw. Successive prime ministers have been Andre Prenc and Shannon Nicholls. Adam (Gus) Powers was the designer, Tammy Gilson made the props, Nina Blackcockatoo made the costumes.

This script is a living document with both Morrison and Albanese having been added since the first production.

To view video highlights of previous productions please follow this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sdcjc1y9VcQ&t=28s>



Photos by Lynden Nicholls and Peter Sparkman

Facing Up

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Background to the Material

Some of the statements are direct quotes or legislation, other statements are a summary of the federal government's position or attitude towards the First Nations people of our country, Australia. Similarly with the First Nations content. Some of the material is direct quotes by people involved in the Indigenous protest movement whilst other content is a precis of a longer statement or a summary of actions and opinions of the day.

The "No comment" statements are included where no mention of First Nations people by that particular government in Hansard or other reference material could be found.

Casting & Roles

There are 30 prime ministers and 25 statements made by First Nations people, as well as 5 aside comments that could be made by another person, such as a person in the role of a journalist.

It is preferable for Indigenous Australians to play the roles of the First Nations people.

This performance can be performed by as few as three performers, or as many actors as there are statements. Casting is at the director's discretion.

This script is formatted for the minimum casting, as follows.

Actor One - A First Nations person

Actor Two - A First Nations person

Actor Three - Prime ministers, male actor

Welcome to Country

It is recommended that a Welcome to Country be presented before the play by an Indigenous person from your area. If this is not possible, someone must address the audience with an Acknowledgement of Country.

Set & Blocking

Set design and stage directions are open to the director's interpretation. In this version as directed by Lynden Nicholls there are two large terracotta pots full of slightly wet sand on diagonal corners of the stage. These are covered by hessian sacks. Actors 1 and 2 each has an Indigenous made ceramic bowl which they use to fill with sand and then distribute in small piles as they make a landscape on the stage floor. Creating the landscape continues throughout the play.

Attached to the lectern is a large book with the names of the prime ministers written in order. Just prior to making each statement Actor 3 makes the appropriate prime minister's name visible to the audience.

Notes on Delivery

Each statement is said directly to the audience.

Each prime minister's name and the year they commenced their prime ministership are announced. (Many prime ministers served on more than one occasion. It is unnecessarily wordy to verbally list all their years of service in the performance. This information is however informative so I have left it in the script.)

The prime ministerial statements should be made in a formal manner respecting the era of the comments. Many of the statements could be read, somewhat like in a true press conference or speech to parliament. The extended direct quotes are indented to differentiate them from other statements. This should make no difference to their delivery.

The First Nation statements are more personal, and their presentation can vary from matter of fact to emotional.

The script is designed to work as two parallel histories with little or no direct interaction between the prime minister and the First Nations actors. The exceptions are Whitlam, Rudd, Morrison and Albanese.

Script

Actors 1 and 2 are already onstage when the audience gathers or is admitted. They are symbolically creating country using sand.

Once the audience is settled Actor 1 or Actor 2 stands facing the audience and speaks a “Welcome to country” appropriate to the performance venue.

They continue creating country by placing piles of sand carefully on the floor and occasionally hum as they squat, stand, and walk around the space. This process is not hurried. They have been there for over 60,000 years. Actors 1 and 2 continue to create country throughout the play.

Actor 3, as a Prime Minister, enters from the left with a lectern, messing up the sand arrangement as he passes. He establishes a position for the lectern at centre upstage. Throughout the performance, the Prime Minister makes no acknowledgement of the Indigenous people or their statements. The scenes with Gough Whitlam and Kevin Rudd are exceptions as is Scott Morrison’s action and Anthony Albanese joining in singing in the final scene.

Most actor 3 statements are given from behind the lectern.

Actor 3: EDMUND BARTON. 1901 – 1903

Actor 3 folds over the printed name Edmund Barton 1901 to make it visible to the audience. He repeats this process for each pm respectively.

(As Barton) According to our new Australian Constitution:

In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth aboriginal natives shall not be counted. The Commonwealth can make laws with respect to the people of any race, other than the aboriginal race.

Actor 3 takes a few steps back and stands impassively still as the First nations actor speaks. He repeats this after every statement.

Actor 1: The conditions of settlement have scattered my people far and wide, and separated fathers, mothers, children, and relatives in hundreds of cases beyond all prospect of ever reuniting while alive.... The same is told all over the Australian continent.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand.

Actor 3: ALFRED DEAKIN. 1903 – 1904, 1905 - 1908, 1909 - 1910

(As Deakin)

Judging from what occurred last century the races that inhabited Australia were gradually passing away. If we had any regrets for this early disappearance of the blacks, we had much to be thankful for in thus early getting rid of what might have turned out to be a great nightmare.

Actor 2: I look forward to discussions with the black sailors who arrive frequently on the docks where I work. They are

discriminated against in their country just like us. It is good to hear their ideas. I am joining the new Australian branch of the Coloured Progressive Association. We'll be there to meet the black boxer and world champion Jack Johnson when he arrives. Fancy being world champion!

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand.

Actor 3: JOHN WATSON. 1904

(As Watson) No comment.

(Pause between the two prime ministers but do not step back.)

Actor 3: GEORGE REID. 1904 - 1905

(As Reid) No comment.

Actor 1: We have walked far from our homes to this mission and now so many of us are

starving, sick and dying. Some people I know have gone, walked off home.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand.

Actor 3: ANDREW FISHER. 1908 – 1909, 1910 - - 1913, 1914 - 1915

(As Fisher) Federal government passes the Northern Territory Aboriginals Ordinance. The Chief Protector is made the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child under 18. Any Aboriginal person can be forced onto a mission or settlement and children can be removed by force.

Actor 2: I've been farming for ten years, doing well with my own horse and buggy too. Now they tell me to move on, just like that, with nothing. They're giving my land to those white soldiers.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 1: *(aside, direct to audience once the footprint has been made)*

Yes, and the government won't give me the five pounds they are giving the white mothers.

Actor 3: JOSEPH COOK. 1913 - 1914

(As Cook) No comment. War is on the horizon.

Actor 1: They made my sister work for a family where she got sick so they sent her to Yarrabah Mission. Men still hang around her and the other girls. She and the others just want to get away.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand.

Actor 3: WILLIAM HUGHES. 1915 - 1923

(As Hughes) Under the new Act, and as Prime Minister of this country, I declare that aboriginal people cannot drink alcohol or marry non-Aboriginal people. The Government remains the legal guardian of every aboriginal child

and can take possession of their personal property, and may retain, dispose of or sell it.

Actor 2: We, the Ngarrindjeri elders present a petition to the Governor of South Australia calling upon the Governor not to sign into law the Aborigines (Training of Children) Act 1923 (SA) which provides for the removal of children.
(pause)

Our call was not heeded.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: STANLEY BRUCE. 1923 - 1929

(As Bruce) As Prime Minister I present the results of the Bleakly report. It recommends better living conditions and minimum wages for Aboriginal workers - and increased protection for Aboriginal women harassed by white men.

Actor 2: *(As Journalist)* The Bruce government failed to implement any reforms for Aboriginal workers and their families.

Actor 1: My friends have decided we need to act so we formed the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association. Many of the newspapers are on our side, supporting our cause of aboriginal rights. We are a political organisation. We hold conferences and we go directly to the top with petitions at all political levels. Our membership in New South Wales is 10,000.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand.

Actor 3: JAMES SCULLIN. 1929 - 1932

(As Scullin) My government proclaims Arnhem Land an aboriginal reserve. It covers an area of 60,000 square miles and is made to provide adequate land to meet the requirements of Indigenous people in 'preserving their race'

Actor 2: As a Yorta Yorta man I, together with more than 900 others, petition the

King for improved conditions for aborigines, the prevention of our extinction and representation in federal parliament.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 1: *(As Journalist)* Chief Protector of the Territory denied the passage of Cooper's petition saying that "the vast majority of Aborigines were incapable of comprehending the tenor and purpose of the petition itself."

Actor 3: JOSEPH LYONS. 1932 - 1939

(As Lyons) Our recent conference with the states concluded that the "destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and we therefore recommend that all efforts be directed to that end."

Actor 1: As the first inhabitants of this country we have declared January 26th a Day of Mourning. We want full citizen status for all Aboriginals and civil equality with white Australians, including equality in education, labour laws, workers compensation, pensions, land ownership and wages.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand.

Actor 3: EARLE PAGE. 1939.

(As Page) No comment

(pause between the two prime ministers but do not step back.)

ROBERT MENZIES. 1939 – 1941, 1949 - 1966 *

(As Menzies) As prime minister I support my Minister for Supply in saying that there will be no natives near Maralinga for the upcoming atomic tests starting this year in 1956. We ensure complete safety for the native

population and have a duty to support our motherland, Great Britain.

Actor 1: *(As journalist)* During the tests there were aboriginal populations scattered in the area. People got sick, went blind, died of cancers. Community suffering has never been properly recognized or compensated.

Actor 2: It is 1965 and we're on the Freedom ride bus with Charlie Perkins. We wanted to see the discrimination against our people in country New South Wales. Well, the trip came up with the goods. We got stared at in pubs, if we were even served, we were banned from the RSL, were run off the road at Walgett and Moree turned into a riot. And we couldn't sit with our mates in the cinema either, or swim in the pool!

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

*These statements are from Menzies' second term in office so they break the timeline continuity up to this point. The script follows prime ministerial contributions.

Actor 3: ARTHUR FADDEN. 1941

(As Fadden) No Comment

(pause between the two prime ministers. Do not step back.)

JOHN CURTIN. 1941 - 1945

(As Curtin) As Prime Minister I am aware the world is watching. Few will deny that the care and welfare of the Australian aborigines should, in principle, be a national responsibility.

Actor 1: I wanted to fight for my country in the war. They said “no, only white fellas” but I found a way. I was proud to fight with my mates, white and black, all the same. But we only got half the money and the RSL slams the door to us.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: FRANCIS FORDE. 1945.

(As Forde) No comment

(Pause between the two prime ministers but do not step back.)

BEN CHIFLEY. 1945 - 1949

(As Chifley) My government has passed the Commonwealth Electoral Act and in so doing, aboriginal people now have the right to enrol and vote at federal elections, provided they are entitled to enrol for state elections or have served in the defence forces.

Actor 2: We work on a station in the Pilbara, W.A.. None of us are paid, we are frequently bashed or chained up, there are no kitchens, latrines or washing facilities. White men force their attention on our women and nothing is done by the owners. We have had enough and are joining others to walk off together in protest.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: HAROLD HOLT. 1966 - 1967.

(As Holt) This is my media release, today 31st May 1967.

On the aborigine question, I was delighted with the overwhelming vote in every State of the Commonwealth favouring the elimination of those references in the Constitution which smack of discrimination. The grant of power to the Commonwealth in relation to aborigines which follows from the vote will enable it to play a useful part in ensuring justice and social acceptance for people of the aboriginal race.

The vote will not only help the aborigine, it will contribute to Australia's international standing by demonstrating to the outside world our overwhelming desire to give full acceptance to the aboriginal people within our community.

Actor 1: We didn't know it then, but we began what was a seven-year fight for our people, the Gurindji people. Our stockmen and women walked off Wave Hill cattle station in protest. We got no real pay, all we got was sugar, bully beef and flour. We wanted proper wages and we wanted our traditional land back. We camped waiting at Wattie Creek.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: JOHN McEWAN. 1967 - 1968.

(As McEwan) No Comment

(Pause between the two prime ministers but do not step back.)

JOHN GORTON. 1968 to 1971.

(As Gorton) Our ultimate objective is the assimilation of Aboriginal Australians as fully effective members of a single Australian society. Without destroying Aboriginal culture, we want to help our aboriginals to become an

integral part of the rest of the Australian people, and we want the aboriginals themselves to have a voice in the pace at which this process occurs.

Actor 2: We are taking an aboriginal delegation to the United Nations in New York.

What we hope to do is at least make people aware internationally of the extent of racial discrimination that occurs only against aboriginal people in Australia and that continues despite changes of government. Despite decades of supposed reforms in Australia, it's still the most discriminatory place in the world.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: WILLIAM McMAHON. 1971 - 1972.

(As McMahon) Indigenous land laws are incapable of recognition by the Australian common law. Native title does not form part of the law of any part of Australia. We have decided to

create a new form of lease rather than attempt simply to translate the aboriginal affinity with the land into some form of legal right under the Australian system.

Actor 1: In the words of Michael Anderson:

We are here on the lawns of parliament house on Australia Day as the Aboriginal Embassy. As soon as they start tearing up Arnhem Land we're going to start tearing up bits of Australia.... The land was taken from us by force.....we shouldn't have to lease it.....our spiritual beliefs are connected with the land.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: GOUGH WHITLAM. 1972 - 1975.

(As Whitlam. Said directly to Actor 1 and coming out from behind the lectern. During the speech the prime minister pours sand into the hands of Actor 1 symbolically re-enacting Whitlam's gesture.)

Vincent Lingiari, and men and women of the Gurindji people.

On this great day, I, Prime Minister of Australia, speak to you on behalf of the Australian people... all those who honour and love this land we live in.

For them I want to say to you: First, that we congratulate you and those who shared your struggle, on the victory you have achieved nine years after you walked off Wave Hill Station in protest.

I want to acknowledge that we Australians have still much to do to redress the injustice and oppression that has for so long been the loss of Black Australians.

I want to promise you that this act of restitution which we perform today will not stand alone... your fight was not for yourselves alone and we are determined that Aboriginal Australians everywhere will be helped by it.

I want to promise that, through their government, the people of Australia will help you in your plans to use this land fruitfully for the Gurindji.

And I want to give back to you formally in Aboriginal and Australian Law ownership of this land of your fathers.

Vincent Lingiari, I solemnly hand to you these deeds as proof, in Australian law, that these lands belong to the Gurindji people, and I put into your hands part of the earth itself as a sign that this land will be the possession of you and your children forever.

Actor 3 returns to behind the lectern

Actor 1 kneels down and lets the sand run through their hands onto the ground. They then make a handprint.

Actor 2: I, Senator Neville Bonner, an aboriginal man, move: That the Senate accepts that the Indigenous people of Australia were in possession of this entire nation prior to the 1788 First Fleet landing. I urge the Australian Government to admit prior ownership and to introduce legislation to compensate the people for dispossession of their land.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 1: *(As Journalist)* The motion was passed unanimously in the senate, but no action was taken.

Actor 3: MALCOLM FRASER. 1975 - 1983.

(As Fraser) My government passes the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. It allows for a claim of title if claimants can provide

evidence of their traditional association with land.

Actor 1: They've passed the Racial Discrimination Act. Finally, there is a law saying discrimination is wrong. We aboriginal people are supposed to get equal access to land and houses for example. We'll see.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: ROBERT HAWKE. 1983-1991

(As Hawke) My government accepts the Barunga statement calling for a treaty and gives in principle support to a framework for advancing a process of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the wider community. We will establish a Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation with an aim of creating a Treaty by 1990.

Actor 1: *(As journalist)* The Hawke Government reneged on its pledge to the Aboriginal people in the face of political pressure.

Actor 2: At last, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody has been released. Maybe we will find the truth about Uncle Eddie. And all the others. After all this time someone is taking our complaints seriously.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: PAUL KEATING. 1991 - 1996

(As Keating. Actor 3 steps out from behind the lectern and takes a few steps towards the audience. This speech could be read.)

The starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with that act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the

traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask - how would I feel if this were done to me?

As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us. The message should be that there is nothing to fear or to lose in the recognition of historical truth, or the extension of social justice, or the deepening of Australian social democracy to include indigenous Australians. There is everything to gain.

Actor 1: After 10 years, a decision on Mabo. The courts have decided we have rights to the land, rights that existed before the

British came. So, terra nullius is not true. We have been here for centuries. Our traditional laws and customs give us rights to the land.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: JOHN HOWARD. 1996 - 2007.

(As Howard) My government has to act to protect Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory from sexual abuse and family violence.

We introduce the Northern Territory Emergency Response. It will abolish Community Development Employment Projects, acquire aboriginal land, quarantine half of each welfare payment, teach aboriginal children in English rather than their own language, and enforce compulsory health checks without parental consent.

We have to suspend the Racial Discrimination Act to put this into place.

Actor 2: This is what a friend of mine, a Gurindji man, says:

Under the discriminatory laws of the Intervention our communities are collapsing, we are prevented from being self-sufficient, from developing our community programmes and supporting our families. Our jobs on CDEP that we have been dependent on for the last 30 years, helped us to build our community, have been cut-off and everything has come to a halt. Our rights have been blocked.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: KEVIN RUDD. 2007 - 2010, 2012 - 2014.

(As Rudd and looking directly at Actors 1 & 2 when appropriate. This speech could be read. Actors 1 & 2 stand close together)

We have come together to deal with the past so that we might fully embrace the future.

The nation is demanding of its political leadership to take us forward. Decency, human decency, universal human decency, demands that the nation now step forward to right an historical wrong.

The uncomfortable truth for us all is that the parliaments of the nation, individually and collectively, enacted statutes and delegated authority under those statutes that made the forced removal of children on racial grounds fully lawful.

It is time to reconcile. It is time to recognise the injustices of the past. It is time to say sorry. It is time to move forward together.

To the stolen generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the government of Australia, I am

sorry. On behalf of the parliament of Australia, I am sorry. I offer you this apology without qualification.

We apologise for the hurt, the pain and suffering that we, the parliament, have caused you by the laws that previous parliaments have enacted. We apologise for the indignity, the degradation and the humiliation these laws embodied.

We offer this apology to the mothers, the fathers, the brothers, the sisters, the families and the communities whose lives were ripped apart by the actions of successive governments under successive parliaments.

Actor 1: In Federation Square, singer-songwriter Archie Roach, one of the best-known members of the stolen generations, dedicates his performance to the mother he was separated from, and to his own children. "This brings a new start in life for us, the way it should have been," he says.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: JULIA GILLARD. 2010 - 2012.

(As Gillard) Closing the Gap is a practical and empirical project. It aims to make a measurable difference in the areas of mortality rates, early childhood education, literacy and numeracy, year 12 attainment, employment outcomes, life expectancy, services and infrastructure provision.

Closing the Gap targets are designed to hold us accountable to our ambitions. It provides the foundations for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

Actor 2: It is with deep and mixed emotion that I, Ken Wyatt, as an Aboriginal man with Noongar, Yamitji and Wongi heritage, stand before you as an equal. It is an honour to be the first indigenous Australian in the House of Representatives in the federal parliament.

Actor 2 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: TONY ABBOTT. 2014 - 2015.

(as Abbott) In our budget we will rationalise our services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by a cut of half a billion dollars. The government's current 150 programs, grants and activities will be streamlined into 5 under the new Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Actor 1: As an elder I am warning that the planned closure of 150 remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia will only increase the existing social problems that those residents face. It will make more people homeless and despair. The way we choose to live should be our choice and we shouldn't have domination of Government people telling us how to live or where to live.

Actor 1 makes either a footprint or a handprint in the sand

Actor 3: MALCOLM TURNBULL. 2015 - 2018.

(As Turnbull, unintelligible formal-sounding mumbling, then interrupted)

Actor 2: After years of consultation we presented The Uluru Statement From The Heart to the Federal Government. The statement rejects a tokenistic re-wording of the Constitution, instead requesting meaningful, actionable change — a voice to Parliament.

Actor 1: Makarrata (or treaty) is the culmination of our agenda. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

Actor 2: In 1967 we were counted

Actor 1: In 2017 we seek to be heard

Actor 1 & 2: We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Actor 3: *(as Turnbull)*

We, the government, refuse to entertain or consider the Uluru statement regarding constitutional change.

Actor 3: SCOTT MORRISON. 2018 - 2022

(as Morrison) As Prime Minister, I change the words in Australia's National Anthem to reflect the nature of our society. – "We are one and free."

(Actor 3 comes out from behind the lectern and tries to shake the hand of either Actor 1 or 2. They resist. Actor 3 then wheels the lectern off the floor of the set to the edge of the stage leaving it crooked and in a clumsy fashion again messing up the sand landscape created by Actors 1 & 2.

Actor 3 then steps back two paces as usual.)

Actor 1: It took the terrible death of a man in the U.S. for us here in our country to come together in outrage against racism.

Black Lives Matter here

Actor 2: There

Actor1 & 2: And everywhere.

Actor 3: *Steps forward to the lectern, turns over the signage as normal but the lectern is still crooked. Do not correct it.*

ANTHONY ALBANESE. 2022 –
(As Albanese)

Actor 3 walks to join Actors 1 and 2, standing between them to give the speech.

Here in Garma, feeling the breeze;
your ancestors' presence in these
lands and waters makes real your
60,000 years custodianship of this
land. Land that is, was, and always will
be Aboriginal land.

For 121 years Commonwealth
governments have arrogantly believed
they know enough to impose their own
solutions on Aboriginal people. I re-affirm
my government's promise to implement

the Statement from the Heart at Uluru in full.

The Uluru Statement is a gracious and patient call for respect and truth and unity. It is a hand outstretched, a moving show of faith in Australian decency and Australian fairness from people who have been given every reason to forsake their hope in both.

My government will work with a new spirit of partnership with First Nations people in working on Makarrata, treaty-making and truth-telling and by enshrining a Voice to parliament in the Constitution.

The voice of the Australian people will create a Voice to parliament. It will be above politics, a national achievement, and a unifying Australian moment.

*Actors 1 & 2 together make a footprint
in the sand towards the front of the
stage as they say*

Actor 1 & 2: Always was... Always will be

At this point the show could end with a bow to the audience thus making the following song an encore.

The show finally finishes with a song based on the sentiment of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, truth telling, treaty, reconciliation and moving forwards together. Write one yourselves. All three actors join in and the audience is invited to sing along. Use Indigenous hitting sticks to keep the rhythm.

Either Actor 1 or Actor 2 cuts off the audience singing and ends the show with

Actor 1 or 2: Aboriginal land.

(Or a simple statement arising from the song you have written)

THE END.

Acknowledgements

In addition to the cast members these people and organisations have supported Facing Up in its development. There have been continual consultations and discussions along the way especially with First Nations people and organisations.

Julie Collins, Dr. Fred Cahir, Paul Lambeth, Michael Westlake, Tammy Gilson, Deb Clark Lowah, Peter Sparkman, Rebecca Famlonga, Nina Blackcockatoo, Malcolm Sanders, Alice Barnes, Sarah Van de Wouw, Hermione Higgins, Peter Sharpe, Al Wunder, Peter Lovett, Rick Chew, Nikki Foy, Megan Riedl, Adam (Gus) Powers, Mitch Nivalis, David Mackay

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My sincere gratitude for their valuable contribution to Facing Up.



Peter Sparkman



Al Wunder

Lynden Nicholls was born in Melbourne in 1953 and moved to Central Victoria in 1989. She currently lives in Ballarat with her husband Al Wunder.

Lynden has had a long career in movement and dance as a performer, choreographer, lecturer, and director. Over the past decade she has created and directed several theatre performances including a vocal trio sung at midnight from Ballarat's towers and a story telling event projected to the street from a heritage balcony at dusk.

She has a long standing interest in social justice stemming from political discussions around the dining table when she was a child. Lynden is proud of her recent work, *Facing Up*, in its melding of the social and theatrical aspects of herself.

Lynden is honoured to have researched, written and directed *Facing Up* on Wadawurrung country and has received a lot of support from the local First Nations community.

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This script is a powerhouse!

....you've dramatised the unrelenting activism of the past 120 years and.....shown how Indigenous political action has gradually shifted the thinking of prime ministers.

Michael Cathcart, The Stage Show, ABC Radio National