

Human Rights and Indigenous Reconciliation in Australia

Garth Nettheim*

Introduction

I begin by acknowledging the Kaurna people, the traditional owners of the land where we meet this evening.

I thank Flinders University – particularly the Law School and the Yung-gorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research – for the invitation to Adelaide. Various connections and coincidences made the invitation irresistible.

In the first place there are family connections. My mother was born and brought up in South Australia. Her grandfather had come out as part of the Cornish immigration, not long after the colony was established. He was a teacher, as was his son, my grandfather. My mother, too, became a teacher – as did I. She moved to Sydney and married there. But connections remain. In particular, my younger son, Matt, lives in Adelaide with his family. So I can claim a continuing relationship with this city.

In the second place are my Flinders connections. Law Dean Gary Davis was formerly a colleague of mine at the University of New South Wales. Another member of the Law School, Heather McRae, is my principal co-author for a teaching book: *Indigenous Peoples and the Law*. Indeed, we are about to start work on a fourth edition, and were able to have a useful planning meeting yesterday. And, from the Yung-gorendi First Nations Centre, Lester-Irabinna Rigney and I have served together for several years as members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). I ceased to be a member last year, and I welcomed this visit as an opportunity to catch up with him – until he emailed me last week to say that he is on leave in Canada!

In addition, I find some interesting coincidences in the careers of Elliott Johnston and of the Foundation Professor and Dean of my own Law School, the Hon JH (Hal) Wootten AC, QC:

- Hal Wootten led the University of New South Wales Law School during its first four years, 1969-1973. Elliott Johnston joined the Flinders Law School during its first four years, 1992-1995.

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This is a preview. Not all pages are shown.