

Welcoming Australia Symposium 2023

Notes and conversation highlights

Day 1

Wednesday 10 May

Session	Highlights
<p>First Nations keynote and Q&A: <i>Another day in the colony</i> Prof. Chelsea Watego, Executive Director, Carumba Institute, QUT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Keynote interrogated our relationships to place; calling out the ‘white-and-very-worried-about-the -nation’ attitudes that invoke the loss of territory to both migrants & Indigenous peoples.▪ Asks us to reconsider who is welcoming who, and to where, and to consider our complicity in dispossession.▪ Provided us with an excerpt of her book & shared her experiences of dual heightened identity salience and erasure.▪ Asks us to envision and engage in conversations that challenges us to strive for what solidarity can look like between settlers of colour and Indigenous peoples.▪ The importance of explicit anti-racism in the discussion between indigenous and migrant peoples▪ Prof. Watego reminds us of the importance of “race” in conversations regarding privilege, power, identity, culture. She says, “So much of our labour has been in defining our identity - instead of race.”▪ Culture v Race - Although there is an overlap and these terms may be interchanged, there are key differences. “Culture” is a term often used by “white people” to dilute the “importance of race” and its implications, regarding the transfer of power, power imbalances and privilege.▪ The power of place is “the gift of knowing of locating oneself even in light of settler colonisation.”▪ “We (First Nations people) exist fully here and are fully human - this is the power of place and our relationship to it.”
<p><i>What’s the story, and who’s telling it?</i> <i>Stories of people and places are powerful, who is telling them and what are they saying?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncle Andrew spoke on the importance of place names and the role that has been played by “purposeful dispossession”.• "I celebrate the city of (now) Merri-bek They made a brave decision and I applaud them for their sensitivity and the true respect they afforded us in that process."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Chelsea Watego, Executive Director, Carumba Institute, QUT • Uncle Andrew Gardiner, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder • Wintana Kidane, Co-founder & host, Bittersweet Podcast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wintana — being voice of own story; podcast inspired by thriving Black African culture in UK and relatively lack of representation of African culture in Australia; the blog talks careers, relationships, race, and identity and aims to centre the voices of often marginalised African Australians. • Wintana — her identity as an African Australian, not person of colour because people of colour are not a monolith. • Prof. Watego on leadership and “being the change you can’t see” - “Be your own. Stand in your own power rather than being indoctrinated in someone else’s representation.”
<p>Community of Sport <i>Are sporting clubs reflective of, and creating, community?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatima Yousufi, Member, Afghanistan Women’s Football Team • Adiba Ganji, Member, Afghanistan Women’s Football Team • Kate Thomas, Lead Trainer, The Centre for Healing Justice through Sport • Maia Tua-Davidson, Manager, Welcoming Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maia — how sport was traditionally designed for and by white men; this can be seen in the example given re: women’s uniforms (mandated white shorts until recently) and athletic patriarchy; illuminated the unfortunate reality re: lack of resources for welcoming clubs. • Abiba — shared her experiences subverting gender traditions and expectations as an athlete. • Both Abiba and Fatima shared how soccer has fostered belong for them and a means of safety; they also discuss the complex emotions that come with shouldering their new responsibilities and lives here in Australia. • "We didn't have our parents and family here when we first arrived in Australia. Now I have a lot of parents, a lot of family. We are not alone." • Kate — reiterates the importance of sport for healing: building positive relationships (“unconditional positive regard,” sharing power, and the healing power of the act of sport (repetitive, rhythmic activity); importance of becoming healing centred and recognising the ‘safety’ is feels different for different people. • Organisations that *think* they're inclusive end up faring badly in inclusion readiness surveys, but organisations that are actually inclusive don't think they are, because that's just what they do, and are always trying to do better. • "Sport is drastically under-utilised as a strategy to support healing"
<p><i>What does it look like to settle in a new community?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noushin Barghi, Advisory Committee Member, Forcibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Without putting me in a box of "CALD", someone sat with me, asked what I wanted to do & achieve and what I needed to do that?"

<p>Displaced People Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighted the importance of recognising lived experience and co-design, asking migrants / newcomers of “what do they need?” • Support services and networks must be strategically planned and placed, to help people settle in Australia. Meaningful networks address isolation, belonging and fulfilment. Tailored communications can improve health and access to services. These are not individual needs. They are collective needs.
<p>International Keynote & Q&A <i>How do migrants find their place?</i> Prof. Susanne Wessendorf, Professor of Social Anthropology at the Centre for Trust, Peace, and Social Relations at Coventry University (UK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the silver linings of the pandemic is that it increased the feeling of social cohesion in our community. • “When we experience a sense of belonging, we feel valued and supported, develop a positive sense of community, we feel understood and validated and develop a more clear sense of purpose.” • Social cohesion is complex but can be achieved when familiarity, connection, understanding, and empathy exist. • Particularly interesting, was Sussanne Wessendorf’s (Professor of Anthropology at Coventry University UK) presentation around arrival infrastructure, and how places of worship, barbers, or fried chicken shops in Newham East London, can increase social mobility and boost connections for newly arrived migrants to access essential health, education, or government services and support. The thinking is, established migrants have, over the years, built up physical arrival infrastructures (shops, churches, nail salons, places of learning) and as a result these places and spaces allow newer migrants to access resources. <p>Ultimately, where someone arrives matters, it will influence how they are able to access, connect, and use necessary social and government support.</p>
<p>Aleem Ali</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Learn when to pass the mic. Instead of speaking for others, consider delegating or suggesting someone else to deliver an idea, experience, or story. We all need a seat at the table, but the table excludes. So, make sure you include”.

Day 2
Thursday 11 May

Session	Highlights
<p>Opening Provocation <i>Sporting a Community and National Identity</i> Rana Hussain, Inclusion and Belonging Leader</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I harbour a vision of Australianess that is plural in & of itself. Founded on thousands of years of diversity w/in Aboriginal cultures, subsequently evolved through more recent migration. We are a tapestry; a living thing to be tended to". ▪ Talking about 'my hyphen' – Muslim/Indian/migrant - Australian ▪ Talking about my migrant hyphen isolates me from being Australian. ▪ 'Australianness' – plural in and of itself, a tapestry/mosaic that draws on the tapestry of Aboriginal identities. ▪ We don't need one Australian story. ▪ Mateship across cultural-background aisles ▪ Move beyond 'new' and 'old'. ▪ A collective self beyond a homogenous one ▪ Imagine an Australia without 'hyphens.
<p>National Keynote and Q&A <i>How do we strengthen neighbourhoods?</i> Prof Kate Reynolds, Professor of Psychology at the Australian National University (ANU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highlights the role of place and the role of long-established residents in supporting newcomers. ▪ Moving beyond the assumption that "newcomers need to integrate into mainstream society." - how can we create more welcoming neighbourhoods? ▪ Collaboration between academia, business and community can foster true co-design and lead to belonging for all.
<p>Getting on with it: by community for community <i>Community groups starting their own organisations and making communities better.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belle Lim, Founder, Future Forte - Abdulmalik Abdurahman, Founder and President, Fitzroy Lions Soccer Club - Tharini Rouwette, Founder, Centre of Multicultural Political 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To deliver meaningful programs and avoid funding and support hurdles we must get creative, and consider asking for forgiveness, instead of permission. ▪ There is so much that large organisations and instaurations can learn from grass-roots organisations. ▪ We are a majority migrant country represented by a federal parliament with only 8% diversity, we need to improve this so that diversity can run through the decisions they make about our lives.

<p>Engagement, Literacy and Leadership (COMPELL)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belle – stop centralising services for international students, people with cultural understanding / awareness need to be there to deliver the services. ▪ Employment – universities need to play a role in connecting international students to employers, universities can play an important facilitation role. ▪ Culture change to truly welcome international students. “International students feel when they walk into a room or a tutorial and none wants to be in their group because English is not their first language”
<p>Stories of Welcome panel discussion <i>The role of council in creating welcoming places</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary Lee, Manager, International Education, City of Melbourne • Sarah Janali, Community Strategist, Churchill Fellow • Zaki Haidari, Refugee Rights Campaigner, Amnesty International Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gary Lee – on “turning advocacy into action”; involving international students in the solution design process can help to empower them and give them a sense of ownership over the solution; crucial for creating real change and involving international students in co-designing solutions is essential for developing effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate solutions. ▪ Sarah Janali – creating pathways for participation; discussed her change of language from differentiating based on <i>how</i> people arrive here (which can be based on deficit constructions) to language that normalises the processes and toward belonging: “newcomers”. ▪ Zaki – for refugees, who have fled their homes due to persecution or conflict, survival mode can be a constant state of being. However, being in survival mode can also drive incredible and important and effective advocacy work.
<p>Places of Welcome <i>How to create welcoming environments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Ritchie, CEO Regional Australia Institute • Ken Dachi, Multicultural Program Coordinator, Leeton Shire Council • Lisa Button, CEO Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) • Alison McClure - Group coordinator, Rural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liz -- Looking to create a more balanced and socially-just nation, the Regionalisation Ambition 2032 framework is calling for collaborative action to empower regional Australia. The framework seeks to unlock the opportunities of regional Australia and build stronger regions, already gaining support from organizations nationwide. Individuals are invited to join the movement and contribute to shaping a better future for regional Australia, helping to rebalance the nation for generations to come. ▪ Ken – acknowledging self-in-community; his work focuses on 1) intentional programming, 2) advocacy and sharing of experiences, 3) research.

<p>Australians for Refugees - Bendigo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zia Alami - group member, Rural Australians for Refugees - Bendigo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read the report “Learning from Leeton” report - https://learningfromleeton.lpage.com.au/ ▪ Lisa -- CRISP offers a more sustainable, empowered and community-led approach to refugee resettlement in Australia and a pathway for communities to play an active role in supporting refugees and helping them to integrate into Australian society. ▪ Zia (and Alison) – Zia briefly touched on his personal experiences as a refugee and his journey to Australia and his involvement in the Hazara community (via Alison and the RAR CRISP team. He touched on the importance of community support for refugees and the need for a more compassionate and sustainable approach to refugee resettlement.
<p>Over the fence: an invitation to generous conversations <i>Engaging in difficult/daring/complex/fierce conversations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kara Keys, Deputy Campaign Director, Yes23 • Rana Ebrahimi, National Manager, Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) • Mel Morton, Inclusion Coordinator, Footscray Hockey Club • Peter Morris, General Manager, Reconciliation Action Plan Program, Reconciliation Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kara – on voting yes for an ambitious future; when Aboriginal people have agency, the outcomes are positive. ▪ Rana – significance of promoting a collective responsibility to promote understanding and support to the national voice; her perspective is unpinned by her experiences as a former citizen of a totalitarian society. ▪ <i>"It is our duty to ensure First Nations Peoples are heard."</i> ▪ Between Kara and Rana there was coherence on the importance of recognising others’ voices and because Indigenous peoples are not homogenous and because we live in a democratic society, it’s important to recognise that there are voices that may not agree, it would probably be concerning if not; they encouraged to engage respectfully. ▪ Mel - challenges and successes of implementing inclusive practices at the FC hockey club; VU review and resultant changes. ▪ Joelle -- Collaboration, partnerships and respect are key to successful outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities.