

A Declaration of Recognition

*We gather at the place where our shared history began – Kamay Botany Bay.
Though we speak of untold loss and grief,
Yet also we are filled with gratitude – for what we have found in each other.*

*We see the many fair minded people who live on all these lands.
We see First Nations people who have generously shown love and forgiveness.
We see later Australians who, seeing truth, labour to make wrong things right.*

*And yet, we know that the heart of our nation is disturbed.
At the heart of our nation there lies a profound injustice – and a deep divide.
It is a divide between descendants of those who were here and those who came.*

*First Nations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, became oppressed.
On our first day of shared history, an armed attack was launched against them.
Tall ships came from the sea – and other people overran Country.*

*Belonging to Country, First Peoples were dispossessed of their homelands.
Elders looked and saw – old people displaced, no Place of belonging.
They looked and saw – language forbidden, culture, identity – all lost.
Young lives broken by inter-generational trauma - lives over before they began.*

*The time has come to recognize the truth about European arrival in this land.
The voice of First Peoples must be heard,
And the voice of all people of goodwill heard with them.*

*With this Declaration of Recognition we enter the Truth Telling space together.
We declare that at this place we recognize the truth – the stains on our past.*

*We publicly reject, and strongly condemn these colonising actions.
They are not acceptable to us – they were not done in our name.*

*We celebrate a truth that binds us together, the truth of our common humanity.
We commit to walking together – in our resolve to making wrong things right.*