INTRODUCTION

In March 1996 an Australian government came to power with a rhetoric about indigenous peoples which it mistook for a policy. At least, that was the mistake of its main author, Prime Minister John Howard, some of his followers, media friends, and some in a credulous public. Because this rhetoric lacked goodwill toward the peoples concerned and was not connected to indigenous socio-political realities, it achieved little if anything as policy. It has now failed as rhetoric as well. In these pages I will not mourn scorched earth but consider opportunities to start talking, and to start again.

Like most governments back in 1945, the Howard Coalition (of Liberal and National parties) government today has a view of indigenous ‘problems’ as material disadvantage created by lack of education in the White Man’s language, economy, and political culture, coupled with some unnameable or unstated exotic factor of genes or culture. Assimilation would be best, in this view, and the moving of remote or rural people to job centres in cities, but while there are increasing voices in some circles urging the latter, most ‘realists’ recognise that to advocate the former today would not be politically smart.

But unlike most governments in 1945, Howard has had to face an indigenous political movement several generations old, one accepted by the political mainstream; a great

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1 Polonius: What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet: Words, words, words.

Polonius: What is the matter, my lord?

Hamlet: Between who?

Polonius: I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Hamlet: Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be as old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward. [from Act II, Scene 2, HAMLET]
many non-indigenous Australians of all ages and social backgrounds who respect indigenous cultural, social, and some degree of political autonomy; internationally respected and sophisticated Australian research output in many areas of indigenous life past and present; and a modern political convention of bi-partisanship, tact, and restraint in indigenous policy. Howard has also had to face indigenous life conditions and statistics which have failed to catch up with the non-indigenous population on anything like the measure of similar countries such as USA, New Zealand, and Canada. Furthermore, world indigenous experience since 1945 has had its own course and momentum, generating its own national and international expectations and standards (see below).

In general Howard and his government have avoided too precise policy statements. Some comments are revealing in the official stream of words, and requires observers to draw their own conclusions rather than rely on official feints and denial (e.g., Jull 1999/2000). For instance, Howard has wished away facts and claimed success for his view of reconciliation (see Appendix).

It is widely agreed by commentators and researchers that Howard government indigenous rhetoric and related tactics as earlier used in Northern Territory elections use anti-indigenous prejudice and racism as an electoral asset to exploit – ‘to play the race card’ as the saying goes in Australia. Indeed, John Howard’s Australian ‘Election wizards…’ are now helping Tory leader Michael Howard do this vis-à-vis ‘Gypsies’ (Roma) and immigrants in Britain, as The Weekend Australian reports (26-27/3/05), although there are signs that these “‘dodgy diggers’” dismay a sophisticated British public. Meanwhile, in Australia itself, the Howard government, like a weary and increasingly deaf old-timer, just shuffles out of the room when people start to talk, preferring to mess around out back with a bit of ‘practical’ ‘hands-on’ hammering and sawing. This is Howard’s ‘practical reconciliation’. Not only have Howard and his government reduced their own verbiage, but they have abolished representative national and regional indigenous bodies elected by indigenous peoples to represent them.

Unwilling or unable to talk about policy or the deep political issues of indigenous ethno-politics, governments have massed their top talents and political priority onto very small, manageable, and limited targets, i.e., community conditions in a number of remote communities around the country. See, for instance, http://www.icc.gov.au/ This may be an unconscious admission of failure. Are they afraid to risk being seen to fail at more significant issues? The danger is that they forget that important as are concrete blocks for toilet and shower facilities in dusty hinterland settlements, these are a rather self-deluding ‘solution’ to the depth, variety, and causes of Aboriginal and Islander needs and aspirations. How many Australian prime ministers, premiers, ministers, and officials earning over $100,000 are needed to flush a toilet?

**Post-1945 Indigenous Policy**

Since 1945 a similar pattern has emerged in ‘first world’ countries in their official relations with indigenous or aboriginal peoples. In the shadow of the brutal racial policies of Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan, and with a newly optimistic spirit of decolonisation and United Nations ideals, no less than the daily news of the de-
colonisation of the British Empire/Commonwealth, many officials, scholars, and others in national majority populations concerned for indigenous peoples recognised that these minorities

- could no longer be marginalised socially, politically, or educationally, in post-war society without attracting justified criticism at home and abroad; and
- might require special official efforts to assist them to assimilate or integrate into ‘mainstream’ national society.

Somewhat later these same national authorities also recognised that

- indigenous culture and language should not simply be treated as an obstacle to modernisation but must be accepted and valued;
- assimilation was not acceptable, or, worse, was seen as ethnocide by indigenous people; and
- indigenous peoples must become part of the administrative and decision-making process in order to achieve real social improvements.

Finally, through trial and error, noisy public debate, and general official befuddlement, it became clear that for policy-making success

- indigenous peoples must be recognised to have, or must be given, real policy-making autonomy for social improvements to succeed; and
- must ultimately be recognised as a distinct form of political community within nation-states requiring \textit{de facto} or \textit{de jure} constitutional status as such.

Nowhere has this process been smooth; everywhere it has been a stop-start affair, accompanied by stalling or confusion with major changes of government (e.g., post-Trudeau Canada from 1984, post-Soviet Russia from \textit{c.} 1989, post-Labor Australia from 1996). Nevertheless, the ideals and movement of reform were constant and progressing in the directions highlighted above. The account of his years in office by Australian Labor’s last indigenous affairs minister, Robert Tickner (2001), is an excellent example of the ‘real world’ of indigenous policy internationally in a contemporary nation-state. That is, we see ‘good ideas’ taking strange courses in practice, things not always working out, unforeseen and unforeseeable uproars, the best intentions leading to new problems, and the gradual recognition among the governing class that indigenous peoples are permanent dissidents and prickly at the best of times.

The Howard government since 1996 has been involved in major national debates over some indigenous policy issues, notably native title (following the \textit{Wik} court decision), removed children (Stolen Generations), ‘self-determination’, a national treaty, regional agreements or treaties, Australia’s relationship to international rights standards and processes, the meaning of Reconciliation, the content of a Reconciliation document (and, separately, wording of a possible Constitutional preamble), indigenous social disadvantage, and domestic and community violence. The Prime Minister himself often intervened in debate, sometimes in provocative terms, although he told \textit{The Australian} three years ago that the indigenous policy issues had been decided in his favour by the Australian public and were now
quiescent (‘PM’s reconciliation hopes’ by G. Megalogenis, 6-5-2002, see full text as Appendix). This supposed end of indigenous history did not convince us all.

But until June 2001 the Australian indigenous political and policy terrain looked normal enough, apart from hostile Howard government rhetoric. (Heads of national government are usually publicly respectful towards disadvantaged and displaced ethno-cultural minorities within their borders, especially an original population in its traditional homeland, regardless of their personal feelings.) On the one hand was a scattered indigenous movement which could come together quite effectively at critical moments, e.g., in the face of native title legislative amendments post-Wik court decision of late 1996. Despite some problem areas it looked not greatly unlike the indigenous political scene at various times since 1945 elsewhere. Knowable and predictable indigenous opinions battled for public, media, élite, and political credibility and support, while the particularly unhelpful conservative national government opposed almost anything proposed by anyone but itself. But in mid-June 2001 sensational press accusations followed by clumsy or unhelpful comments by a variety of national indigenous notables created a furore (Jull 2002). The Howard government could now stand back while media and loud commentators portrayed indigenous peoples as lazy self-indulgent layabouts abusing women and children or else impudent assertive sorts who claimed to have special moral status and rights to hardworking whites’ tax dollars. When Howard chose to speak or act now, he could gently condescend to a discredited people and touch on their apparently hopeless dysfunction: they were now where he wanted them, all their cultural and political assertions seemingly ridiculous, while they were also right where many of his voters wanted to believe them to belong. No-hopers, no-goodniks! Some usually serious media commentators even wanted to bring back razor wire and set up general incarceration facilities, the very measures which had failed a century earlier and set up the very dysfunctions of today.

CASES AND PLACES

The most successful indigenous reforms internationally have seen activity proceeding on several levels simultaneously – local, regional, state or province, national, and even international, as well as in courts, political assemblies, development and environmental panels, media, etc. It is also necessary to have a psychological breakthrough – e.g., new forums, constitutional change – to dispel old habits and mindsets and their frustrations, both among indigenous people and the non-indigenous community. The focus in recent Australia has been on

- administrative initiative and
- incremental local change.

No less important are

- recognition of indigenous cultural and political imperatives, and
- national and regional policy frameworks.

Indigenous people are not random groups or individuals insufficiently assimilated to the national social, economic, and cultural norms of national majorities. They are not
immigrant communities struggling to re-establish themselves in a new land. Rather, the land is or was theirs alone, and they have unique imperatives and rights within it. These are widely recognised in international law and standards to which Australian actively contributed in decades past. Australian domestic law revealed in court decisions in *Mabo* and *Wik* is not aberrant but is a belated rejoining of the rich current of indigenous rights law and policy in the former British Empire (notably USA, New Zealand, and Canada). Unfortunately these rights and imperatives are often forgotten or unknown by those working in official agencies on what amount to mere adjustments to local government policy, e.g., provision of basic services in remote locales. Awareness of wider contexts can be helpful even here, but indigenous communities are also full or residual nations with their own laws, territory, and rights.

The post-1945 developments in European-peopled or European-settled developed countries Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, together with the recently emerging trend in Russia, have been remarkably alike. Nevertheless, only in the latter part of this post-war period has wide similarity been recognised by indigenous peoples and national governments, or led to any real synergy, experience-sharing, or cooperation.

World War 2 played an important role in itself, bringing men and high technology into hitherto isolated indigenous regions, from Torres Strait and Top End Australia to Greenland and Alaska. The technology available, and ideals of the Allies during and after the war *vis-à-vis* democratic values and racism confirmed indigenous aspirations and opened non-indigenous society to them.

In Canada, for example, war brought air bases and personnel to remote north-eastern and north-western regions of a huge country, leading soon to demands – not least by foreign personnel posted or visiting there – for positive action in aid of Inuit and Indian (First Nations) well-being and education. Soon an entire welfare state system had been superimposed on a hunter-gatherer and fur trade society. The well-meant but often destructive activity of governments, and impatience and frustration of indigenous peoples, eventually generated strong ‘self-determination’ movements centred on (1) land and sea rights and (2) regional and local self-government. One such region, Nunavut, is now a self-governing Inuit northern territory covering 20% of Canada, despite its small population (c. 27,000 today), 85% of them Inuit. All of this has had a large and intangible impact on Canadians’ thinking. The ‘empty’ North has suddenly emerged as a patchwork of vibrant indigenous societies with their own strong ideas about development and cultural well-being, notions not unappealing to a national society ambivalent about its industrial heritage and the angst and anomie of modern living (Jull 2001a; 2001b; 2003).

In Southern Canada, i.e., the ten provinces, some similar developments have occurred in northern regions while the reserve-centred Indian political movement has demanded and won better conditions, more legal and political autonomy and power, and a newly negotiated national indigenous-white relations order amid white cities and farmlands.

These Northern and Southern ‘native movements’ have joined and *re-negotiated*, in effect, the status and relations of Indigenous and Settler Canada, most notably through televised face-to-face conferences of Inuit, Indian, Métis and indigenous women’s
leaders with premiers and prime minister (Jull 2001a), even amending central aspects of the Constitution. An expanded sense of Canadian identity has resulted, assisted by legal and historical researches required by land rights and other processes. The old Canada of the ‘garrison mentality’, where redcoats with a siege outlook peered over their Eurocentric mental walls on the dark forests with their dangerous and exotic inhabitants, has given way to one where natives and newcomers are genuinely at home and able to work together gradually to reconcile and accommodate their differences in a new spirit of optimism.2

Despite the bleak history of indigenous-white relations in the contiguous 48 states of the mainland USA, ‘the Lower 48’ (Wilson 1998), post-1945 Alaska has followed a rather different path, one more like Northern Australia and Northern Canada (McBeath & Morehouse 1980; 1994). The collision of indigenous land/sea rights and self-government aspirations with white development interests, as well as the machinations of Big Oil and Big Government, have seen a free-wheeling war of many campaigns in which the federal Congress and the Executive Branch have had to play active roles, and the Supreme Court no less. Indigenous autonomy, especially in the vast areas of Alaska outside the three major cities, has shared with Australia’s north, west, and centre familiar issues and rhetoric – management and ownership of resources, and benefits from their exploitation, protection and enhancement of culture, society, and language, and local and regional self-government, etc. Without the sort of equalisation principles in administration common to Australia and Canada, the native movement in Alaska has had to take on roles in health, education, and welfare. The North Slope Borough, an Inuit government for an area the size of Australia’s State of Victoria serving fewer than 10,000 Inuit and a like number of non-indigenous transients, has made spectacular and creative use of its taxation of offshore oil development and related facilities, essentially retraining and rehousing a whole region while providing the first comprehensive public infrastructure, and of the highest quality.

The Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia have had remarkably similar 20th century policy history in some respects to the West (Forsyth 1992; Pika et al. 1996). The history of Siberia from c. 1500 has seemed a sort of ‘Wild East’ not unlike the Wild West of America – indeed, the very large continent-nations of Australia, Russia, USA, and Canada have many historical similarities, and much tragedy when each has gone about assimilating indigenous peoples and territories. Often whole peoples, and their reindeer herds, would simply move away from brutish robber barons or grim commissars and establish themselves in a new patch of ‘wilderness’. Since the Gorbachev opening of Russia and Siberia, indigenous peoples and their friends in Russia have been studying experience in the West, especially North America, but also including Australia, as they try to devise workable new policies. The Russians have surprisingly little anxiety in principle about creating autonomous homelands for indigenous cultures, provided that these stay within the federation as a whole. Nevertheless, administrative breakdown and desperate material conditions make their situation very challenging today. Privately some remote indigenous people in the Siberian Arctic say they think the environmental messes of the Soviet era were the real reason for ‘closing’ their regions – official embarrassment, not national security.

2 The ‘garrison mentality’ is a coinage of the late Northrop Frye, literature professor at the University of Toronto, explained in various of his writings. His essays on Canada have been collected in a recent volume of his complete works published by U of Toronto Press.
All the same, in some locales the Soviets developed strong programs in education and indigenous language, and even intelligent support for indigenous reindeer herding to provide a regional source of protein for the newcomer no less than indigenous population. The big picture remained grim, and even before the Gorbachev opening of October 1987, officials from Moscow were quietly talking to counterparts in the West about comparative socio-economic and cultural problems in northern communities. Canada and the Canadian Inuit in particular have been working with Russian indigenous peoples for many years now with the encouragement and support of both Kremlin and Canadian prime ministers.

Sápmi, the indigenous name for Lapp-land, includes the Kola Peninsula of Russia, as well as Northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland which cooperate in their northlands for various Sami and other policy purposes. Sami also predominated in much more southerly areas in the past. Perhaps 100,000 Sami now live in the four countries, most of them in Norway, and now share some significant educational, language, broadcasting, publishing, and research institutions – indeed, cultural rights are the main political focus for many Sami. In each of the three Scandinavian countries they elect a national Sami Parliament which has an advisory role to national governments and various other functions, making it the key to further policy development. Considerable action on Sami language, schooling, media, art, and cultural has been assisted by governments. The Sami reindeer herding industry and organisations provide a central politico-cultural entity. Although Sami living standards and those of other northern residents are now very high and approximately equal, the vexed issues of sea, land, and freshwater rights, including protection of traditional economies, move forward very slowly when they move at all. With infrastructure building, defence projects, hydro-electric power, etc., Sami are in a race against time and mulish governments to retain any real control of their ancient territories (Bjørklund et al. 2000; Brantenberg et al. 1995; Jentoft et al 2003).

Kalaallit Nunaat, the proper Inuit name for Greenland, is the largest island in the world but 85% is covered with thick glaciers. The Inuit population, most with some Danish blood in the family mix, number c. 55,000 in an ebullient outward-looking new country which looks like a bit of European high-tech perched on some rocky outcrops by an iceberg strewn sea. Since 1979 the Greenlanders have used their Inuit language and Danish to govern all aspects of their lives except currency, foreign policy, and defence, and even on the latter two have found increasing influence. Resource ownership and development are generously shared by the Danish realm with the local authorities. The Greenland story since 1945 may be the most encouraging and well-managed case of indigenous self-determination in the world, thanks to Danish social justice and far-sightedness. (See Jull 1986; 1999a; Harhoff 1994/95; Greenland 1997; Nuttall 1994)

Aotearoa or New Zealand was peopled by Maori Polynesians in the 14th Century after being found uninhabited by them earlier. It was later visited by Europeans from Tasman in 1642 before the British began visits/use after Captain Cook’s 1770 ‘discovery’. In 1840 the British-Maori Treaty of Waitangi provided a political framework for the future (Walker 1990; Orange 1992). The Treaty, like treaties in North America, was intended to protect the lives of the Europeans in exchange for protection of basic rights and interests of the indigenous people. As usual, European land hunger and weaponry stole a march on events. Despite the usual dismal
Victorian era and aftermath in indigenous-white relations, New Zealand did not see the disasters or genocidal frontier march of Australia (Kidd 1997; Roberts 2005). The modern era is extremely interesting and important, however, as a bi-national, bi-cultural society creates or re-creates itself by cross-cultural discussion and negotiation. Indeed, New Zealand, Norway, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia all show similar well-advanced signs of becoming genuine bi-national indigenous-European entities.

Sometime around the mid 1980s the various ‘first world’ countries and their emerging new friend Russia began to lose their shame at discussing their common difficulties in the indigenous policy and political field. Much of the initiative, however, came from indigenous peoples themselves, notably Inuit and Sami, and non-indigenous support groups like IWGIA (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs). A new era of international cooperation and awareness became central to problem-solving and standard-setting. This indigenous internationalism began properly when IWGIA and Greenland sponsored the Arctic Peoples’ Conference in Copenhagen in late 1973 (Jull 1999b).

**POPULISM: THE ACT OF PUBLIC FORGETTING**

Populism is a form of studied naïveté, or false innocence. It involves oral voices of a moment, mood, or situation, not consideration or literacy. With television one can create a steady stream of ‘moments’. The Australian populism of John Howard and his government is most evident in relation to indigenous peoples and many other policy areas (e.g., many aspects of foreign relations, boat people and refugee policy, terrorism, the invasion and occupation of Iraq, domestic social issues, etc.). Such populism in Australia requires the public as audience not to remember that it is now reliving early post-war indigenous policy. More importantly, it requires that people forget that the policy failed and that the now much reviled ‘indigenous rights’ approach was a response by indigenous people, human rights advocates, research scholars, the informed public and governments to that failure. Such intellectual audacity or risk-taking is typical of the Howard era, the most daring example being the October 2004 national election campaign. In that case the Prime Minister took accusations by media and opposition parties of his manifold untruths in office, claiming that he was campaigning on ‘trust’ in the sense that the voting public could ‘trust’ him to continue standing for the economic conservatism, low taxation, and low interest rates which, he said, were his well-known governing principles.

There has been excellent material written on the populist era of Howard and his early shadow, Pauline Hanson, e.g., Leach et al. 2000; Manne 2004. What concerns us here is not the cause but the course of this phenomenon in policy. It involves a falling back on the known, the conventional wisdom, the easy prejudices of the population majority. It is typified by the ‘ain’t it awful!’ one-liner over the back fence between neighbours, or the talk in the sports club or RSL on a Tuesday evening when ‘the boys’ are getting into their beer. It disdains expert or élite advice, not to mention scholarship and research. It is essentially s distillation of the past, rather than a coping with new realities (against which it is often directed) or emerging prospects. It is a form of collective comfort-seeking in ‘home truths’. Howard cabinet ministers would more likely consult neurosurgeons than well-oiled boys in the pub if their
daughters had brain haemorrhages, on the other hand. Their Christmas holiday reading might usefully include the founding work of Angle, Saxon, and Jutishness, or Englishness, being Bede’s Dark Age illumination on how we moved from brutish violence and fear of the dark to high culture, peoplehood, and thought thanks to Gregory the Great passing along to us some internationalist and universalist ideas, not to mention the Roman alphabet (Bede AD731; Brown 2003).

This populist nationalism or nationalist populism followed a period in Australia when national pride and identity were inclusive and outward-looking, built on welcoming migrants from all the world and building on Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture as foundation stones. It is useful that we are now reminded of the dark sides of nationalism and populism – ignorance, xenophobia, spitefulness, begrudgery. But they are not materials from which one can build a contemporary society, or a workable policy towards national minorities such as indigenous peoples.

We have even been told that the Gallipoli ‘generation’ and the history of that 1915 campaign must be valued by all, regardless of our background, while the bitter history of the Aboriginal ‘stolen generations’ is of little account and or importance. For oral cultures such as Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, as for the Irish, such historical memories are, if anything, stronger and richer than for the ‘mainstream’ school-learned prime ministers.

**Possibilities and Prospects**

_We make a desert and call it peace_, or in our case, _reconciliation_, as Tacitus said of the brutal Roman Empire impact on peoples in the way of its ambitions (Jull 2005). Certainly the Prime Minister has indicated, repeatedly, that his idea of successful indigenous policy is to have indigenous peoples forgotten, absorbed, lost in a greater Australian assimilation. He has prematurely willed that outcome to be true and insisted to the news media that it is so, as in the 2002 Megalogenis article cited above. Recently Megalogenis has written that ‘on reconciliation Howard seems to equate leadership with waiting for his opponents to give up… The worry is that he, like most white Australians, still can’t grasp the idea that we should treat black Australia as an equal as a first step to improving the national dialogue’ (*The Australian*, 24/26-12-04). Even *The Australian*’s senior political editor Paul Kelly, usually admiring of Howard’s achievements, comments that one must assume ‘that Howard, as a realist, knows that these [i.e., indigenous] issues aren’t settled’ (11/12-12-04).

Howard government indigenous affairs rhetoric/policy is aimed at those who do not know, and do not want to know; what has been lacking is something for those who do know – and who care about results. Four steps towards a workable policy may be:

- bypassing policy populism;
- encouraging and sponsoring intelligent discussion;
- replacing point-scoring among non-indigenous peoples by dialogue with indigenous peoples; and
- developing a process for official interaction and agreement on new political and policy arrangements.
1. Bypassing Populism

The exchange of dismissive one-liners and the hectoring and evasions of non-indigenous media and the Australian establishment vis-à-vis indigenous people, especially since June 2001, are pointless and lead nowhere. They may delude the non-indigenous public that something is happening, but it is not. There is no answer to many of the voices we hear and which have emerged and grown bold under the Howard political hegemony. They are cries of faith, or cults of the faithful, and it would serve no more purpose to argue with them than to visit someone else’s church and stand up and shout that God doesn’t exist. It would increase rather than diminish hostility. Quadrant, Institute of Public Affairs, or Bennelong Society conferences may be interesting, but they are not forums in which one would expect to achieve anything useful in indigenous policy.

It may be no more possible to identify the sources of the governing populist belief in Australian indigenous affairs, than to attempt to identify all the sources of a poet’s imagination in the writing of a particular work. Over the past decades one has heard vestigial archaic theories that Aborigines as a ‘race’ are not equipped for the modern world, various notions or lore of romantic or eccentric mining magnates or geologists about Aboriginal belief and conduct, racial purity and ‘tribals’ vs. mixed-blood and supposedly non-legitimate mixed-blood people, and now we have a policy statement implying that unlike the rest of the human race indigenous peoples can only achieve social change at the most elementary local level while government tries to discredit other spokes-persons and leaders (Vanstone speech, 23-2-2005). Such opinions exist in other countries, too, but fortunately they have long been discarded as credible knowledge or basis for policy.

2. Encouraging Intelligent Discussion

*The Australian* newspaper probably publishes more editorials on indigenous issues than any other general press outlet. Nevertheless the recurrence of terms like ‘real rights’, implying that the indigenous rights agenda is spurious, and dismissal of ‘symbolic’ issues as anything but physical services, and talk of ‘real reconciliation’ – as if editorial writers or government had any evident idea what that might be! – are not very helpful. Debate is too often reduced to an assumed opposition between empty political symbolism (which means the basic indigenous agenda among leaders here and abroad) vs. practical solution of material disadvantage which, it is implied, is the only real issue. Without arguing this case right now, both halves of this assumption are quite wrong.

On the other hand, the commitment of *The Australian* and other newspapers to indigenous well-being, and for instance their focus on full obituaries of important men and women within the indigenous community, and coverage of indigenous performance and visual art, are a most valuable resource. Better informed, and less gratuitously aggressive toward other viewpoints real or imagined, these contributions might even be decisive in bringing Australia to the point of what I shall call, archly, ‘real reconciliation’ in my own meaning of the term. My working definition of the minimum or threshold reconciliation goes like this:
A work in progress, being serious action on programs to improve socio-economic conditions, and actual official commitment in word and deed to indigenous cultural enhancement and the reaching of enforceable agreement(s) with indigenous peoples on their political status and territorial rights within or in association with the Australian federation, through processes and political commitment which have reached a sufficient point to assure both indigenous and non-indigenous communities that momentum and direction are irreversible.

There are many forums for research and discussion of indigenous and indigenous-related issues in Australia. The time has come for more opportunities and outlets where concerned lay persons and specialists may exchange ideas with indigenous counterparts through basic accessible language. The basic English essay may be as useful as the most deeply researched expert study, and good journalism more valuable than the strident declarations of ministers. I believe that the new Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) can play a valuable role here.

3. Dialogue with Indigenous People, Peoples

Before embarking on its Australian adventure at the end of the 18th century, the British Empire had learned the hard way, in North America and elsewhere, that newcomers could not simply choose one or two friendly ‘natives’ and designate them leaders with whom to negotiate peace, agreements, etc. Mistakes could see whole territories or imperial armies lost. Cross-cultural dialogue is not easy, even with the best will in the world, as Clendinnen (2003), Reynolds (2004), and others have shown in Australian history. Equally, a large country living by its laissez-faire wits provides too many opportunities for the worst in human nature (e.g., Roberts 2005; Day 2001). The encouragement of historical denialism, even something like Holocaust denial in Tasmania, by the Howard government and its friends may be one of the worst features of its social policy (Manne 2001; 2004; Strakosch & Jull 2005).

Having come to power rejecting the idea of dealing with indigenous peoples as political entities, the last step was the 2004-announced abolition of the national and regional elected indigenous bodies making up ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission). This was a fateful step. The arguments in support of it make no sense in political culture or political science. But they signal that under Howard the voices of indigenous people will not be sought or heard except in limited matters at the most basic level, e.g., Where would you like a shower and toilet block built in your settlement?

Despite the federal signal that indigenous people are to be considered as no more than quirky local groups, indigenous ethno-politics is far too advanced for fiction to be maintained. Furthermore, through the Howard years eminent persons on both sides of politics in places like Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, and Adelaide have been thinking and talking, and talking with indigenous notables. The Tacitus-like desertification of discussion is superficial only. New life will spring up quickly.
There are many possible forums for dialogue, not excluding *ad hoc* conferences of eminent persons black and white, (e.g., Jull 1999c).

4. Cooperative Political and Policy Processes

Australia’s national government has unilaterally abolished regional and national representative indigenous political bodies. Contrary to the Prime Minister’s wish for quiet and assimilation on the indigenous front, those familiar with indigenous ethno-politics and especially with national minorities in liberal democratic nation-state know that far from quiet they will be a constant source of dissidence and friction, even social unrest, unless and until there are intelligent accommodations – or reconciliation – made with their historical identity and contemporary aspirations and needs. Working through these issues will strengthen and enrich Australia for everyone. As for rejoicing in apparent quiet, well, ‘Things are too quiet out here, Tex!’ They will not be quiet for long.

Perhaps the wisest and clearest proposal bubbled out of a June 1993 conference (CAR-CCF 1993a; 1993b), at the very time when the *Mabo* decision a year earlier had forced Canberra to produce a white paper on future indigenous policy options. Discussing indigenous peoples and national constitutions, a wide assortment of indigenous and non-indigenous notables and experts reached the consensus, in my words, that:

- *indigenous peoples are distinct political communities in Australia with unique needs; and*
- *processes should be established as soon as possible for them to work out the nature and details of their constitutional place in Australia.*

National negotiations were occasioned in 1993 and in 1997-98 by the *Mabo* and *Wik* court decisions before Canberra finally legislated native title laws, thanks to indigenous leaders forming *ad hoc* groupings and forums, supported and assisted by the former ATSIC. Well-though through indigenous ideas have not been lacking, e.g., Behrendt 2003; M Dodson 1995; P Dodson 1999; Nettheim et al 2002; As Peter Russell (2005) has noted in various places, the fundamental national historical issue on which the future nature and shape of Australian society and politics depends is relations with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Other countries have their own – Canada with Anglophone-Francophone relations, Ulster with Catholic and Protestant, etc. There are many ways to approach these issues peacefully and intelligently, and many formats and forums for working through, with many contemporary or recent precedents available from other countries (e.g., Jull 1998; 1999c; 2001).

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**Note:** This paper is drawn from a work in progress, or rather two – a framework for indigenous policy in Australia, and the problems of language and discussion in indigenous-white relations.
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The anger in the dialogue between the Government and Aboriginal leaders has disappeared, raising fresh hope for progress towards reconciliation, John Howard believes.

While careful not to claim vindication, the Prime Minister told The Australian that "the widespread rejection of welfare, and a lesser emphasis on the rights approach" by indigenous activists such as Noel Pearson showed the debate was shifting towards the Coalition's viewpoint.

"A year or 18 months ago, people said we were going nowhere on Aboriginal policy," Mr Howard said. "Paradoxically, I think we are going somewhere on it now."

However, he said the state of Aboriginal communities remained disgraceful and the experience of indigenous people compared poorly with the nation's success in absorbing migrants.

"I think it is still one of the hardest things we have. There are plenty of Aborigines, indigenous Australians, who are fully integrated. But there are still quite a lot who aren't," Mr Howard said.

He said part of the problem was that many Aborigines were physically separated from the rest of society.

"One of the accepted cornerstones of our immigration policy has always been that you shouldn't allow ghettos or enclaves to develop. Yet in a way . . . that is exactly what has happened and it is one of the difficulties we have."

Mr Howard is encouraged by statements from Mr Pearson, who has called for a new approach to address the dependency, dysfunction and disadvantage in Aboriginal communities. The Prime Minister sees this as an endorsement of his practical reconciliation ethos.

"The widespread rejection of welfare, and a lesser emphasis on the rights approach – I find quite interesting that many of the views that would have been expressed by John Herron when he became the minister (in 1996), that were derided and criticised, are now embraced."

Mr Howard said the heat had gone out of the debate.

"I hesitate to say it, but the anger in the previous dialogue has disappeared. It's not that I'm suggesting that my critics are embracing me on it, but I think there has been quite a change," he said. "I hope it means we are inching towards a more sensible and harmonious outcome."

Mr Howard said he had learned the lesson of the 1998 election when he committed to achieving reconciliation by the Centenary of Federation [January 2001] – a target he subsequently dropped.

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Appendix

‘PM's reconciliation hopes’, The Australian, 6-May-2002, by George Megalogenis

The anger in the dialogue between the Government and Aboriginal leaders has disappeared, raising fresh hope for progress towards reconciliation, John Howard believes.

While careful not to claim vindication, the Prime Minister told The Australian that "the widespread rejection of welfare, and a lesser emphasis on the rights approach" by indigenous activists such as Noel Pearson showed the debate was shifting towards the Coalition's viewpoint.

"A year or 18 months ago, people said we were going nowhere on Aboriginal policy," Mr Howard said. "Paradoxically, I think we are going somewhere on it now."

However, he said the state of Aboriginal communities remained disgraceful and the experience of indigenous people compared poorly with the nation's success in absorbing migrants.

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Mrs. Zack is the chairman of the association Nations in Action and in an audio file leaked two days ago she explains how the fraud would have occurred. According to Mrs. Zack, the operation center which coordinated the attack was effectively the US embassy in Rome. This version completely matches Mr. Johnson’s story, but Mrs. Zack gives more important details about it. The operation would have been coordinated by the Italian General Claudio Graziano on the second floor of the embassy, assisted by an Italian secret service agent, Stefano Serafini. General Graziano is a very important character. The policy was first announced by Ronald Reagan in 1984, and it has been repeatedly reversed by Democratic presidents and reinstated by Republican presidents in the decades since. The memo additionally directs agencies to review the Trump administration’s changes to the Title X family planning program, which provides contraception and other health services to low-income women and men. Order setting climate change goals. One of three executive orders Biden signed Jan. 27 on climate change asserts that “climate considerations shall be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security,” a sharp departure from the Trump administration. I think honesty is the best policy because being honest will give you mental peace. You don’t have to live with guilt because you lied. If you are always honest with people you don’t have to remember the lie you told them. Honesty is always important to have at any circumstance it will make you and the people that you have associations with feel alot better. No one likes to keep secrets and lies yet it is natural to try benefit yourself by simply lying but in the end it always make the issue worse. It was typical political dirty trick. But the repercussions led to him breaking down on national TV and facing impeachment from his office of power. He became an object of ridicule. Richard Nixon will never be remembered for all the good things he did for his country. Noteworthy, Germany and France had supported the idea of making the yuan a reserve currency of the IMF. Even IMF managing director Christine Lagarde said that such a decision was only a matter of time. Presently, the IMF has four currencies: the US dollar, the euro, the pound sterling and the Japanese yen. Therefore, the use of the dollar has thus become tighter. This means that a smaller number of banks around the world will support the dollar. All banks support the US dollar as a reserve currency. They are forced to do it, because they keep dollar reserves. They do not want the dollar to lose its value. If the yuan starts to displace the dollar, the dollar sphere will diminish, and dollar supplies will turn out to be excessive.