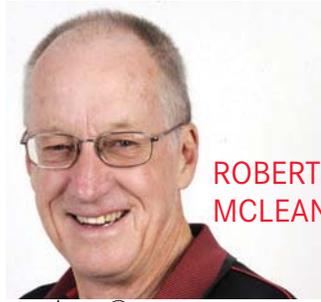


Recognition is long overdue



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Democracy and decency demand we recognise those who lived in this country before the English arrived in 1788.

Many here believe they enjoy the privileges of a democracy, and some do, but it is slanted to favour just a few, those who by birth and social class fall in with the machinations of the moneyed minority.

Democracy in its truest sense will not exist in Australia until we have, initially at least, recognised in our constitution that other people lived in this country before Europeans set up camp in Botany Bay.

Australians are inherently easy going and tolerant to a fault, and so have stood back in quietist fashion allowing the more aggressive to supplant democracy with other processes that favour a minority and disenfranchise most.

We now live in a militarised plutocracy; we have been duped into endorsing governance processes that protect the affairs of the elite, while we are rewarded with crumbs from the main table and garrulous distracting entertainments.

The progeny of those who have lived here for 40 000 years mostly make-up the disenfranchised;

democracy has failed them, racism has railed against them and forever seeking refuge in claims of innocence, our ignorance has reigned during two centuries of missed opportunities, brought about by our arrogance and our failure to acknowledge through our ways we were unable to accommodate the needs of others.

Suggestions we wait until 2017 to even vote upon the idea of recognising those original inhabitants is an indefensible delay; the white man's ways have disrupted and in many cases destroyed the lives of Indigenous people and all they seek now is recognition.

Humans, irrespective of where they are from or their affiliations and what their interests might be, need to be recognised.

Recognition is a fundamental human need and right with research clearly illustrating that people emotionally prosper when they are embraced and welcomed into the group or community.

Democracy is about recognising your fellows and, with that, allowing them to be an integral and useful part of our community.

Indigenous people traditionally enjoyed a powerful tribal culture in which the expectations of individuals were defined and adherence to those values was demanded, but within

and around that was a freedom that most today would consider anarchy.

The perverse tolerance and liberty introduced by the invading Englishers,

along with their foreign ways, destroyed existing inherent tribal culture and through the application of a militaristic and authoritarian colonialism built around those who had survived here successfully for 40 000 years a way of life they didn't understand, and mostly still don't.

Democracy in its truest sense, as opposed to the present plutocracy, is what all Australians need, or maybe even the genuine exploration and understanding of anarchy.

● **Rob McLean is a former News editor.**