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LAND RIGHTS

How can you own the sky? Is not the smell of wattle blossoms free for all? The birds of the air live with the wind. The sun is the creation of God and the giver of life. The land bears the ashes of our fathers' fathers. Creation is the essence of our living, sharing is our life long task. When all of these things are gone we have to die.

The Aboriginal standing in the forests sees his brothers, the trees. He hears the talk of the river and he sees his grandfather the mountain.

The wind in his face is a caress of his mother; the earth upon which he stands is eternal. He belongs to this land.

The Dingo mother fed his Spirit Forbears with milk from her tits. The Rainbow Serpent made the rivers. The Spirits of the Dreamtime came from the darkness behind the sun to make this land and then they created the Aboriginal from the earth's own creation. They made the sacred places for the councils of the Aboriginal, they gave him wisdom and knowledge. They made him the keeper of the old, the protector of the weak, the teacher of the innocents.

The Dreamtime is the beginning; the beginning is eternal and timeless, for when he is born again and again it is always the beginning. Only the wind and the sun and the warm red earth are eternal life.

To take the power from the earth is to cause great danger to us the Aboriginal; to invade our sacred places violates the wishes of the Creator Spirits and despoils our Dreaming.

We respect the white man's Dreaming. We won't invade his sacred places. We don't mind his God sharing this land with our God.

We only want our lands to remain timeless, we only want the purity of the air we first breathe to remain pure for our last breath, and when we return from our Dreaming we want to breathe that same pure air again and again.

We the Aboriginals love our land, our country and the water and sky around us. We bore arms alongside white brothers to defend it in two terrible conflicts; we volunteered although we owe no loyalty to the foreign kings. Our loyalties and love lie within the boundaries of our timeless land and are tied to our ancient cultures.

We have lived in this land for many thousands of years, we have obeyed its laws and bent to its will. We have no right to destroy the purity of its blood in the streams because it is our blood. To spit upon and ravage the land is to spit upon and ravage our fathers and our mothers, because it is both our father and our mother. How can we sell or barter that which we do not own? Our sacred Spirit Fathers must sleep in uneasy peace as we the mere children stand in silence.

The Aboriginal speaks in many languages and like all people will disagree on many things material.

Today when we speak of Land Rights we do so with one voice, because Land Rights is both spiritual and material. It is material because I can put my "home" there, and spiritual because it is where I shall want to rest my ashes.

I cannot believe that my soul will be lost because my Spiritual Forbears have been dis-possessed.

This land bears the ashes of our Fathers.

It bears the will and titles of Spiritual Ancestors.

It is our Peace and Love.

It is our Lore.

DJAMBI
REG SAUNDERS

OUR LAND

This is our land.
You cannot dispute it,
Nor can you refute it.
You can gouge at our heart,
You can tear us apart.
Kill forest and grasses,
But, through life as it passes
In pain or in splendour,
We will never surrender
The claim to our land.

J. DAVIS