

Speaker notes from Wednesday 5th April 2023

Kindly written by Marlene Miller

The speaker for tonight is Kankawa Nagarra (also known by the name the mission gave her, Olive Knight) and is from the lands of the Walmatjarri, Gooniyandi and Bunaba tribes in the Kimberley region of WA.

Kankawa is one of the remaining Elders in the Kimberley who continues the fight to be heard and understood about the effects of Colonization upon the First peoples in Australia.

Kankawa is a desert Blues musician who writes songs in her Walmatjarri, Creole and English and will sing 3 songs with a story for each along with their links to the Project she initiated and continues to guide.

“Ears of the Heart” emerged through many hours of yarning about the difficulty Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have understanding each other.

Kankawa believes this is related in part to the different way non-Indigenous people listen to her people and believes there are two types of listening. One is listening with our ears in our heads, the other is when we listen with our ears on our hearts. This is called the “Munta” in Walmatjarri language.

Kankawa was welcomed to the meeting, introduced to members by Peter Fahl and invited to speak.

Kankawa thanked members for the invitation to speak and wants to tell us about listening with our ears on our heart. There is also a story about mental health which is a problem and there is an issue with humanity law.

Our work is in our culture, and we need to listen from the heart. Have a lot of stories to tell and lots of stories are about respect for our elders and being human is kind of simple. Stories come from time past.

Welcome opportunity to tell people what is going on and Kankawa has brought her guitar and will play for us (she plays beautifully)

No. 1 song is: ‘Coming down the River, throw me a life line’

No. 2 song is: ‘Baby don’t cry for Muma, don’t cry for me’

No. 3 song is: ‘ a beautiful melody in her language Walmajarri

Kankawa then showed 2 of her original paintings and explained the meaning in each, one of which was several groups of people all coming together.

President Brian thanked Kankawa for her beautiful presentation and closed the meeting.

