

**STILL HERE** is a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations in conversation about our sovereign past, present and future.



**WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE,** WORKING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS KNOWING THAT WE MAY NOT LIVE TO SEE THE CHANGE WE BRING.

**THERE IS FUTURE AS FAR AHEAD OF US AS THE PAST BEHIND US,** WE DREAM AHEAD, CREATING FUTURES, ALWAYS.

**SOVEREIGNTY IS THE FIRE IN OUR HEARTS,** GIVING US LIGHT AND WARMTH. SOVEREIGN FIRE IS THE CENTRE OF OUR YARNING, IT REMINDS US TO KEEP CHILDREN AT THE HEART OF OUR DECISION-MAKING.

**WE MAKE SPACE FOR OTHERS TO GROW,** PASSING STRENGTH FROM ANCESTORS TO DESCENDANTS AS EACH GENERATION TAKES UP THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.

**AUTHORITY IS LIVING ON OUR TERMS,** IT IS CONTROLLING OUR DESTINIES, TAKING WHAT'S OURS, AND TEACHING OUR NEXT GENERATION TO DO THE SAME.

**WE YARN,** GATHERING IN A CIRCLE TO REACH CONSENSUS, EVEN WHEN THE PROCESS IS HARD.

**WE HAVE SHARED RESPECT FOR THE AUTONOMY OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONS,** KNOWING THAT 500 NATIONS LIVED ON THIS CONTINENT FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS WITH DISPUTES, BUT WITHOUT TAKING ANOTHER'S LAND, NEVER ENSLAVING, INSTEAD, USING SOVEREIGN PROCESSES TO COEXIST.

**WE WORK IN COLLECTIVES,** ASSERTING SOVEREIGN WAYS OF GOVERNING THAT BRING US TOGETHER WITHOUT HIERARCHY, TRUSTING IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO EACH OTHER.

**OUR SOVEREIGNTY IS OURS TO LIVE-OUT EVERY DAY,** IT CANNOT BE GIVEN OR TAKEN BY THE 'CROWN'.

**WE RESIST WESTERN WAYS OF GOVERNING** THAT EXCLUDE AND DOMINATE. SOVEREIGNTY IS COMING TOGETHER DESPITE THE GOVERNMENTS THAT SEEK TO MANIPULATE AND DIVIDE US.

**WE PUT OUR WORLD AND SYSTEMS FIRST,** KNOWING WHAT'S BEST FOR OUR LANDS, OUR WATERS AND OURSELVES, DESPITE THE VIOLENCE OF THE ASSIMILATIONIST COLONY.

**WE REJECT A WHITE FRAME OF REFERENCE,** A 'SOVEREIGNTY' BUILT ON MONARCHS, VIOLENCE AND DOMINION OVER LAND AND PEOPLE. THIS KIND OF POWER CONTROLS, DESTROYS AND COLONISES IN A RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF LINEAR 'PROGRESS'.

**OUR BELONGING TO THE LAND AND EACH OTHER FUELS OUR FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE, OUR STRATEGIES FOR RESISTANCE AND CELEBRATIONS OF WHO WE ARE.**

**OUR SOVEREIGNTY IS CIRCULAR,** IT STANDS STILL AND CONSTANT IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE UNIQUE RIGHTS, THAT WE ARE CONNECTED AND CONTINUOUS, PART OF AN UNBROKEN TIE BETWEEN PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

**WE ARE GUIDED BY COMPLETE AND CONTINUED PRACTICE OF THE LAWS, CUSTOMS, TOTEMS AND SONGLINES** WE HAVE HELD FOR TIME IMMEMORIAL. **LORE AND DREAMTIME STORIES** ARE SOVEREIGN TEACHINGS THAT GUIDE US IN OUR CULTURE OF RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY.

**WE KNOW OUR WORTH, OUR VALUES AND IDENTITIES,** THEY FULFIL OUR SPIRIT, KNOWING AND BALANCE.

**WE EMBODY THIS LAND AND ITS STORIES.** WE ARE COUNTRY AND COUNTRY IS US.

**OUR CONNECTION WITH THIS PLACE AND EACH OTHER REMINDS US** OF OUR STRONG FOUNDATION AS FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE AND OUR RIGHT TO GOVERN OUR WAY.