



The Hon Linda Burney MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

Reference: MC23-001411

Mr David Stephens
admin@honesthistory.net.au

Dear Mr Stephens *David*

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 February 2023 regarding Honest History's take on Kim Beazley's remarks on Frontier Wars at the Australian War Memorial, sharing your perspective that the Australian War Memorial should properly recognise and commemorate the frontier wars. I apologise for the delay in responding.

On 29 September 2022 the Australian War Memorial's governing council announced its decision to provide a 'much deeper depiction and presentation of the violence committed against Indigenous people, initially by British, then by pastoralists, then by police and then by Aboriginal militia.'

On 6 February 2023, the War Memorial's new chair, Kim Beazley, agreed that the Australian War Memorial has to have 'proper recognition of the frontier conflict.' Mr Beazley conceded that the details of what such recognition will look like will not be determined before the curating committee will be formed in 2024. However, he also pointed out that the institution cannot 'have a history of Australian wars without that [recognition].'

The Australian Government welcomes the commitment of the Australian War Memorial and Mr Beazley to adequately recognise and commemorate frontier conflict. It is consistent with our commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, which includes truth-telling as a key element and will give all Australians an opportunity to contribute their stories to the history of our nation. I am confident that the difficult stories of the frontier wars will be told and depicted in a way that is respectful, culturally informed and values all of the experiences and truths behind them.

Coming together to have a mature and respectful discussion, to listen to and understand the stories and histories of First Nations peoples, will support Australia's journey to reconciliation.

The frontier wars are a painful, but important part of our nation's history. Including them in the Australian War Memorial will play an integral role in truth-telling about Australia's history and will help us forge a stronger future together.

There is widespread public acknowledgement that European settlement of Australia was not a peaceful process and that there was conflict between colonists and First Nations groups. State and territory governments and local community groups have erected memorials, monuments and plaques acknowledging settler violence and local resistance actions.

However, the role and responsibility of the Australian War Memorial in recognising and reflecting on Australia's frontier conflicts remain a matter for coordination between the Australian War Memorial and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Portfolio responsibility for these matters sits with the Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs. I have copied Minister Keogh into this correspondence.

I appreciate that you share the Australian Government's commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full and encourage you to walk with us towards our common goals of truth-telling about our nation's history and advancing true reconciliation.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Burney', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Hon LINDA BURNEY MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

cc: The Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

26 APR 2023