

Among the Hostiles

Our DreamRaiser project was initiated by the Those-Who-Know, or Wanjinias (Aboriginal spiritual forefathers, the DreamTimeKeepers), to raise awareness about two matters:

- **the dreadful social and spiritual condition the Aboriginal communities live in today, and urgency of a radical change in general approach;**
- **the fact that I responded to the Wanjinias requests and am formulating and implementing projects as requested by the Sky-God [Head Wanjina]. With help of DreamRaiser project participants such as Gina Sinozich [the painter], Goomblar Wylo [the musician] and Ben Osvath [the sculptor], I pass on the messages from the Sky-God and convey What Wanjinias Want.**

During the last twelve months, our activities within the DreamRaisers project have highlighted some important issues, the main being:

1. **freedom of artistic expression, freedom of thought and speech and, most importantly, freedom to explore the divine;**
2. **the local council's immense powers, which they can use to censor artists, deciding what people can and cannot see;**
3. **cross-cultural dividing lines and how far political correctness can be stretched;**
4. **vandalism and death threats as an effective way for any small group to get their way, aided by the powerless police and community inability to respond.**

Anyone looking objectively at our work would clearly see that the book and our art projects are a tribute to Aboriginal people, developed to promote and celebrate Aboriginal culture, inspired by ancient tradition. It is not a copy of anything and it is not disrespectful in any way.

Another remarkable thing is that those who object seem to keep missing the point and ignoring the fact that our project was initiated by Wanjinias [the highest authority, Aboriginal spiritual forefathers] and I act on their request. Therefore, our art comes from the same source as the Dreamtime, and I do not need any permission from any Aboriginal person. Legally, no one does, it is not the law.

Among the Hostiles is a research document, detailing the events around our Wanjina DreamRaisers project. It started in early 2009, with the book *Dreamtime Set in Stone – the Truth about Australian Aborigines, as requested by the Those-Who-Know*, with three series of *Wanjina* paintings by Gina Sinozich, and *Wanjina Watchers in the Whispering Stone* sculpture by Ben Osváth, followed by a series of paintings by this extraordinary sculptor and painter.

However, our efforts to help Aboriginal people date back to the late '80s, with an essay by Master Ananda published in 1990. The essay, entitled *The Eclipsed Sun*, was praising ancient Aboriginal tradition, pointing out how it is waning, on the verge of disappearing, and urging modern society to pay more attention and help Aboriginal people, to prevent their demise.

At that time, we were attacked and ridiculed for complimenting Aboriginal tradition, as the common attitude at that time was utter scorn for all things Aboriginal.

When Wanjinās get mouths, beware!

I am a medium and I talk with Gods.

I have been working with teachers from other realms since 1987. My husband Damir and I were bound by a vow of secrecy, and we shaped our lifestyle in accordance with our work with the Masters. I never spoke about that, until in late 2009 I was told the time has come to reveal so.

In 2009, the dynamics of teaching changed. The Those-Who-Know, whom you can also call Gods, or Wanjinās, or DreamTimeKeepers, or Masters-of-the-Sixth-Level, said the time is up, the world is in crisis. It is now or never, there is such a sense of urgency, with the world being on the brink of catastrophe. We must make one last push to help people rethink their priorities.

Among the Hostiles details how the participants in the DreamRaisers project were chosen, how they were connected to Wanjinās through me, and the extraordinary work they have created under my guidance. It details our time of joy, those magic moments with Goomblar, with Gina, with Ben, our year of bliss, super-charged with divine influences.

But it also details the dark side.

Time of Joy – Time of Terror

Everything has its opposite, cannot exist without being shadowed by its mirror image.

Those magic days were followed and intertwined with the darkest, most horrible experiences, ranging from threats from a few evil-minded locals, to the spineless politicians, powerless police, with the local council yielding to lies, and with the residents scrambling for cover in fear of Aboriginal violence, which was given the green light by political correctness gone mad.

Our time of terror started with the book, and can be pinpointed to Chris Tobin, a white man posing as an Aborigine, whom we hired as a tourist guide a few times earlier in the year. He couldn't understand the ideas in *Dreamtime Set in Stone* and started making all sorts of threats in early December 2009. He was soon joined by Goomblar Wylo, who, up to that point, had been a brave whistleblower, telling the truth about the Aboriginal condition, but soon cracked under pressure from other Aborigines and regretted his six months of honesty and courage. There was also Tobin's sidekick, a man called Lexodious, who joined Tobin in his campaign of hate, verbally attacking Gina [the painter] in December 2009 – during their protest with the grand total of eight people – and making death threats to me in July 2010.



Lexodious abusing Gina, December 2009



Lexodious abusing Vesna, December 2009



Trespassers entering the gallery to abuse the guests, December 2009



All-Aboriginal protest, organised by Tobin, with a grand total of eight people, December 2009



Vesna to protesters: "Why don't you all just go home and do something useful..."



When dealing with irrational people, sometimes it's best to walk away

The worst experiences were triggered by the creation of the *Wanjina Watchers in the Whispering Stone* sculpture, when Ben Osváth became a part of the DreamRaisers project.

Tobin kept harassing us, and – in addition to all sorts of earlier threats he had made in relation to the book and the paintings – on 25 January, while I was sitting in front of the sculpture talking with Ben and Damir, he approached us and started ranting. He kept threatening to destroy the sculpture, assuring me the only way for me to prevent that from happening is to remove it, saying he must do it, this is my last warning, he'll destroy it because, as he said, "the Kimberley elders told me to do so".

On 5 March the sculpture was vandalised, with all four sides heavily damaged. Ben counted more than 100 axe marks, showing the frenzied hate of those wielding the axe.

The following week, Tobin repeatedly called me to tell me I must wrap up the sculpture, because those Kimberley elders are coming, they cannot see it, if I don't wrap it up I'll regret it, again making all sorts of threats.

On 13 March, during the Blue Mountains Music Festival in Katoomba, Ben, Damir and I were spending the weekend at ModroGorje, with Ben trying to fix some of the damage done to his Wanjina artwork. In the morning, we saw Tobin and caught him on our security camera while he entered our property and attacked the small sandstone with the plaque, which we had positioned in front of the sculpture a week earlier, bearing the name of the artist and title of his artwork. He started rolling it back and forth, in an attempt to dislodge it and roll it down onto the footpath. Had he succeeded, it would have been broken into a thousand pieces.

In the afternoon he came back, with the Kimberley elder Donny Woolagoodja in tow. Woolagoodja came to see the sculpture, accompanied by his minder, and they were soon joined by Goomblar.

I invited Woolagoodja to come in and talk to me. Whatever I said, he looked at his minder, who kept shaking his head, prompting Woolagoodja to say no. During this encounter, explicit death threats were made, with Wylo yelling "If you dare to publish another book I'll kill you", launching into a 10-minute rant, listing all the things he was going to do to us, killing me, killing Damir, killing Ben, burning down our house, taking us to court, and so on.

During this spectacle, Woolagoodja and Tobin were standing by, watching and smirking.

Towards the end of his rant, Wylo had some hysterical women joined in, screaming "You white witch, you are stealing our culture". After recovering from their rant, I approached Woolagoodja again and said, "Donny, you certainly cannot condone this, we need to talk". He responded with: "I'll leave it to Chris to handle that". The entire incident, all 50 minutes of it, was captured on our security camera.

I called Tobin's employer, the Department that issues licences to tourist guides. "We hired this man a few times last year", I said, "and now cannot get him off our back. He keeps ranting in front of our house, embarrassing us in front of our colleagues and students, insulting our guests, and keeps introducing himself as a National Parks ranger, to make it appear as if he speaks on behalf of your Department, in line with Department policy."

"Far from that, we would never condone such behaviour" his employer assured me, "But we always have that problem with Aboriginal guides. They keep shooting off their mouth, ignoring our guidelines, cannot learn, but there is nothing we can do other than warn him again." So it was another one of the "can do nothing" responses.

At the same time, the main perpetrators tried to engineer a diffusion of responsibility, to make it appear as if “everybody is doing it”, so that no one could be held responsible for these acts of violence. However, with Donny “leaving it to Chris [Tobin] to handle” and Tobin screaming he’ll destroy the sculpture, and inciting hate by roaming through the village yelling “It must be destroyed, she is stealing our culture!” it is clear who are the instigators. It didn’t take long for some drunk Aboriginal women to start yelling after me “It must be destroyed, you are stealing our culture”. It seems quite easy to prompt the unthinking into violence.

But others – who could have stopped them but didn’t – are equally responsible. The Wanjinias are big on personal responsibility and hold everyone accountable for their words and actions. No one can hide behind a group, community, or the name of an organisation. No one can be absolved of responsibility by saying “It’s none of my business”. By sitting on the sidelines, refusing to act, such people might believe they are doing no harm, but in the eyes of the Wanjinias they allow violence to escalate. By doing nothing they still face consequences and are regarded as accomplices in crime.

The death threats went on for the following five months, ranging from “warnings” how easy it is to make someone disappear in the mountains, how easy it is to burn down someone’s house, to more specific threats that I’ll be “thrown off the cliff”. People kept calling me to warn me, again and again, telling me: “Aboriginal elders are conducting ceremonies all over Australia, they can kill you any time they want, you have no idea how powerful those elders are, once they point a bone in someone’s direction... you’ll be dead, dead, dead.”

At the end of July, Lexodious ventured out of the bush again, to make threats to my face. Among general accusations and racist insults, unaware that he was being recorded he said, verbatim:

[excerpt from the transcript of our 8-minute recorded conversation]:

“... You will be sung. You are going to be in lot of trouble, lot of trouble... You have no idea how powerful our lawmen are, you see, what’s been happening to you is nothing compared to what is yet to come, it will not stop, I’m telling you...”

“You should quit those threats.”

“These are not threats, I am not threatening, I am just telling you what will happen... you are in heaps of trouble, you are making trouble for yourself, you were told not to do it, you’ve been warned but you don’t listen, now it will only get worse and worse and worse.”

“You mean all that vandalism and threats were a warning? If we are doing something wrong, you should take us to court, that would be a civilised way if you have a problem...”

“We don’t give a fuck about your courts and your white people’s law! We’ll punish you in line with *our* traditional law, you know what it’s called? You know about Aboriginal culture? You know about our payback law?”

“The only thing I didn’t know is that Aboriginal people are so violent... no, I wasn’t aware of that.”

“You know about Aboriginal payback law? You don’t, but we’ll teach you! I’m sure you and your artists never sat with Aboriginal elders and lawmen in the Kimberley, you never spoke with all of us...”

“Not only violent, but racist too, hey? I have no intention to sit in the dirt with any one of you, and we don’t need to go anywhere or talk with anyone, we are doing mindscapes and soul-scapes....”

“But you were asked not to do it, and you still refuse to listen. You are nuts and you are disrespectful. You are not Aboriginal and you have no right to write about Aboriginal culture whatsoever. Who gave you the right?”

“Read the book, perhaps you’ll be able to figure it out.”

“You refused to talk with our lawmen, but we’ll teach you our payback law... you cannot imagine what’s coming to you, you’ll be sung, yeah, you’ll be sung, you are *already* being sung...”

[end of excerpts]

“To be sung” is an old Aboriginal expression for being killed in a ceremonial way, by Aborigines dancing and chanting and pointing a bone in your direction, wishing you dead.

Wanjinas say ceremonies like that were conducted in the distant past, but no longer have any meaning or power. The *Among the Hostiles* document details the Sky-God’s explanation of the spiritual dynamics and the waning of those ancient traditions.

Getting yet another confirmation that the local Aborigines are acting on orders allegedly issued by Donny Woolagoodja, I contacted one Kimberley man and asked him to pass on a message to Woolagoodja, to tell him if he indeed wants me dead and if he issued any such directives, he should recall those orders, because these local psychos are taking it quite seriously...

Among the Hostiles also details good experiences, as there are also different kinds of Aborigines in the Blue Mountains, though it is quite hard to find them, as they do not mix with the mob that runs the show. It contains their comments, as well as reactions from a wide range of people, locals and Sydneysiders. It gives the reader an overview of the good and the bad and the ugly. In order to cope with my increasing concern and frustration, I focused on collecting research material, temporarily shifting away from my role as the Wanjina CEO and concentrating on surveys and interviews, acting as a story collector.

People were telling me about their own experiences with Aboriginal people, of their thoughts and fears, and why they often cannot say what they really think. Among the quotes, you will find the good and the bad, from ordinary residents to community representatives, council workers, politicians and officials, businesspeople, artists, and law enforcement officers. The police initial response was “Cut your losses and run away while you can. We know these people well, they will not stop until they completely trash your house, drive you mad, or worse... Cut and run!” I refused to believe them, it couldn’t possibly be that bad, could it?

Eight months later, when police still couldn’t put the evidence together and make a case against the law-breakers, they repeated their initial advice: cut and run! I told them that I understand that some people have no self-control, can explode in rage, but soon calm down and regret their words and actions committed in the heat of the moment. The police was adamant that these people are *always* enraged. Are you saying they work themselves into this frenzy, reach such a high level of rage and can sustain that? *Yes! And they will not stop. Cut and run. These people cannot change.*

And this time I listened. [*Among the Hostiles details the police responses and explanations as to why they are so powerless.*]

But you’ll also find lovely comments from close to 400 people who signed our petition to save the sculpture and keep it in place, and from our feedback book where they entered their comments and responses to Ben’s artwork, defining it as stunning, unique, intriguing, incredibly beautiful, extraordinary, impressive, amazingly powerful.

Among the Hostiles firmly places responsibility with the individuals behind any actions undertaken, but it also details input from the good people who refused to join the lynch mob.

Some of those good people said:

[A true Aboriginal artist and a tourist guide]: "Tobin is not an Aboriginal, and certainly not a Darug elder. I know how it feels for you, he was doing exactly the same to me... He used to be a nice guy, but last year something happened and he snapped... he started terrorising me, it went on for months... bullying me and trying to set my place on fire... the police was powerless, could do nothing, they can never do nothing... then, in December, he suddenly stopped... I wasn't sure what happened; then I realised he found another target, in you. I like your sculpture, and I told some locals who asked me if I thought it's all right, of course it's all right, nothing wrong with it... if someone doesn't like it, they shouldn't look at it. It's art. If you don't like something, don't bloody look at it. All this fuss over art... they need to grow up.

"Actually, I should thank you, I was finally off the hook. And, believe me, he will not stop, that bastard is so full of hate he must vent it all the time, your only hope is that he'll find another target soon, and leave you alone. If you hoped that someone from Aboriginal community will help you, fat chance, you see who he is surrounded with, including that bloke at the Council? A bunch of white guys like him, pretending to be Aborigines..."

[Another true Aboriginal artist and activist]: "There is an Aboriginal community meeting, organised by Council, you should go there... it's a government funded event, anyone can attend, aks [sic] them and go to see for yourself who are Aboriginal representatives in the mountains... I am not going, I've had enough, I told Brad he is reinventing the wheel, going through the same stuff we've been through 20 years ago... I'm sure you'll see a bunch of white people, we lost our voice to them... There is not many Aborigines like me in the Mountains, and you'll not see us there, these days it's all about white people jumping on the bandwagon and taking advantage of government policy..."

[I did as he suggested, registered my attendance well ahead of that community forum, with the council officer Dave Allen, who confirmed it was a government organised event and every resident has the right to attend. I was welcomed by two presenters, and I spent quite a pleasant hour and a half chatting with several people. As others were arriving, one person knowledgeable of the local community was telling me who is who. I kept asking, for every new arrival, whether this was an Aboriginal person. The answers were along the lines: no, but she is married to an Aboriginal man, no, but she is working at the Aboriginal centre, no, but he is a community worker, funded by some government program, no but his grandgrandgrandfather's mother was half-Aboriginal... and so on.

After the meeting officially started, Tobin interrupted proceedings saying it cannot go on, pointing at me, repeating "that woman must leave".

(That pointing business is one of those quite annoying body-language characteristics – when Aboriginal people are unhappy, they lean toward you aggressively, pointing in all directions, usually at you, wagging their index finger in your face, slicing the air with their palm, so everyone can clearly see that they are abusing you.)



Lexodious shaking finger at Vesna, and she still wouldn't listen...



Tobin showing his favourite salute to the guests at Ben's sculpture unveiling, March 2010

Other people attending that meeting of “all-Aboriginal nations in the Mountains” – consisting of a grand total of 14 predominantly white people, only two of whom had some Aboriginal features – who were polite and nice to me up to that point – were all quite stunned by his outburst, not understanding what he was on about. So he carried on, jabbing his finger, shaking his head and trembling with rage: “That’s the woman behind that terrible sculpture, that offensive sculpture opposite the RSL, that’s the woman who is stealing our culture, and she has a restraining order against me, she must leave, you must all tell her to leave”.

And all the kind people were suddenly enraged. They wanted me to leave. I refused, quite curious to see what was going to happen next.

A council officer kept staring into the distance, I said his boss confirmed my attendance and he had no right to deny me access as confirmed by his boss. He was shrugging his shoulders, as if to say “can do nothing against ‘people power’.”

All hell broke loose. They called the police, I called the police. While we were waiting for them to arrive, the veneer of civilised behaviour disappeared. Some of them started walking up to me, one by one, to yell some insult to my face, leaning towards me, shaking their finger, slicing the air. Two of them were demanding:” You cannot be here, we want segregation, there must be segregation”... which I thought was quite an interesting turn. After decades of whining about segregation imposed on Aboriginal people, now they are demanding it, so their meetings can be conducted in secret, with utter disregard of government policy of transparency and accountability.]

After this digression, back to that true Aboriginal artist:

“I like what you are doing, I see nothing wrong with the sculpture... if you want me to have an exhibition at your gallery I’d be happy to show you my work. I disagree with what that mob is doing to you. That’s why I keep repeating – those are not really Aboriginal people...”

Remember, in our conversations last year, I told you we are not violent people... we never fight, even when attacked, we don’t fight back, that’s why we have such tragic history, we never fought back...

And I still say that, we, true Aboriginal people, we are not violent, it’s against our law. Our true Aboriginal law prohibits killing. We’d rather be killed than kill... even if attacked, we cannot kill.

... Those who are harassing you are not real Aborigines, they are toxic people, they poison everything they touch... they have so much negativity in them, they can’t get rid of that poison... they are what I call the Aborigines who forgot their ABC. That’s what I call it. Our ABC.

A is for Awareness, B is for Balance, and C is for Connectedness. My people are unaware of our origins and law, they are not able to find balance between the material and the spiritual, and they’ve are no longer connected to our spiritual tradition.

Goomblar said something similar in your book, but then he got scared. He was right, we all know that...

I’ve been saying that for years, yes, we forgot our ABC!”

[Among the Hostiles details conversations with true Aboriginal artists conducted over the last two years, and input from a number of Aboriginal people, both local and from other parts of Australia.]

Twisted Times, Twisted Minds

Among the Hostiles also details our experiences with ordinary people, and includes quotes from conversations with people from all walks of life, and their reactions and responses to our troubles.

While the campaign of hate was going on, over eight months I kept appealing to the community, trying to get any one of them, any of the local politicians, community workers, public servants, law enforcement representatives, local media, general folk, to do just one thing, to say publicly: *violence and vandalism are not a way to voice an opinion*. To object to such behaviour, nothing else. Just to say violence is not a civilised way to make a point. None of them did. Their silence was interpreted as a green light to the vandals.

Is artistic freedom a myth?

Among the Hostiles details the local council response to Aboriginal complaints. It includes conversations with council officials, and chronicles how they were talked into trying to intimidate us with false claims about breaches of copyright and intellectual property law, and – when that didn't work – were under pressure to engineer a way to shut us down. The document contains transcripts of conversations with council officials such as: Rodney Bles, a council inspector in the development monitoring team; Brian Crane, acting manager of the health and enforcement section of the council; Brad Moore, Aboriginal community development officer; Dave Allen, community & corporate group manager; Kim Linden, town planner processing our application; Deborah d'Avigdor, administrative officer; as well as councillors such as Terri Hamilton and Mark Greenhill, and others.

Among the Hostiles details the council adopting the Aboriginal Protocol Guide containing incorrect and misleading statements about copyright law being applicable to prehistoric imagery, and intellectual property law being applicable to ideas. I kept pointing this out, but they decided to adopt the document unamended. So in the Blue Mountains, even though council is now fully aware there is no copyright nor intellectual property law applicable to prehistoric imagery and the idea of God, they decided to adopt this Guide with complete disregard for the law as it stands. The Guide is included in this document, with false and misleading statements highlighted. And sure enough, this Guide is already being used as a reference by those trying to censor the artists.

Among the Hostiles also includes the submissions and objections in response to our gallery proposal, from all sorts of objectors. They all start with some false statement, with disregard for the law.

Even though the council officer initially told us our sculpture was fine, within all the current regulations for exempt development (as set out in the NSW Department of Planning guidelines that all local councils have to follow), and our gallery was fine, operating on the same basis as most of the artists' studios in the Mountains, they soon changed their mind. They told us we must lodge a development application for the stone, and even though we knew they should never have asked that, we complied. But rather than going to all that trouble only for the stone, we lodged a second application, this time for change-of-use, to convert a few rooms into a commercial gallery, and to create a sculpture garden in front of the house.

According to standard procedure, once you lodge a development application, it is "in notification" for four weeks. This gives your neighbours and people immediately affected by your proposed development a chance to object. Those objections usually concentrate on your

proposed development being too close to the boundary, overshadowing their houses, or any such immediate impact on the immediate neighbourhood.

Our ModroGorje house is situated opposite the RSL, a popular club, whose management, staff and guests love the sculpture. Right from the start we had their full support, with the management telling us how well their guests responded to our art. We were delighted seeing several hundred people every day taking pictures of our sculpture and entering their comments in our feedback book, telling us how much they admire the artwork.

Our house is also surrounded by several blocks of three and four-storey units, so we have at least a hundred immediate neighbours. Some of them are kind enough to call us, whenever we are in Sydney, when they notice some suspicious characters loitering around our house.

Development applications “in notification” are normally an invitation to the neighbours to object if they disagree with something you propose to do.

In our case, not one of our neighbours objected. Quite the contrary, most of them signed our petition to keep the sculpture in place.

Among those who sent objections to the council, only a few live in Katoomba. Other submissions were from other villages in the Blue Mountains, and organisations from Sydney and cities in other states of Australia, objecting to our art. Council officers told me that they never received objections from places as far away as Western Australia.

At one point, it seemed that council was yielding to the well orchestrated campaign to pressure them into refusal of our development application. On 1 September 2010 they sent us a letter that they are likely to reject our proposal, stating “adverse public impact of the sculpture” as the reason.

Our letter of response is also included in the *Among the Hostiles* document, urging council not to yield to ramblings that have nothing to do with our application or the council planning process. Instead, they should advise the objectors that with regard to artistic design, they need to make a proper claim to the appropriate court. They can not use our development application to achieve something that they are fully aware would be thrown out of court.

Similar claims – seeking ownership of prehistoric imagery, mythology and its symbols – have in fact been denied in the recent past.

Psycho thugs, bleeding hearts and hired guns

In most letters the council received in objection to our proposal, there are two main things the objectors dislike:

- **the truth to be told;**
- **to me being white and representing Wanjinias.**

Reading through the objectors’ submissions, the lies told, the false assertions made, I was at first in disbelief, then worried and concerned. Surely, council could not take these seriously? They are not stupid, would they not see through these transparent attempts at railroading them into playing into the vandals’ hands?

And then I became furious, finding the same accusations and the same wording in most of the submissions. As if they were all given the same master copy to follow and not one of them paused to think about what they were saying. Not one of them bothered to find out what is it we actually do. The facts got twisted, lost in translation. One person tells a lie, another retells it and

adds to it, yet another passes it on with another arbitrary interpretation, and after being retold a few times the final version does not even remotely resemble the original issue.

You will find full versions of all these letters, containing a mixture of unfounded accusations and wishful thinking presented as facts, a wide range of defamatory remarks and slanderous assertions. There are letters from all sorts of objectors, including submissions from:

- Tracey Willow [of Lawson] from the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre (formerly the Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre), informs the council that I have taken legal action “against Aboriginal people who have protested against the statue”. Not true. I have taken out restraining orders against two Aboriginal men, not for protesting – but for their violent behaviour and death threats. But Tracey takes it further, adding that “people are reluctant to speak out for fear of further legal action being taken against them, for speaking out against the statue”.

Tracey also quotes from comments on the ABC Law Report, as if those were something to be taken seriously. There are 107 comments there, most written by the same couple of people under a number of nicknames. When those “nicks” kept repeating the same nonsense over and over again, the ABC kept checking with us if we wanted those comments removed. It was our choice to let them stay, so the world can see what sort of mentality we are up against.

In any case, it is not about what Tracey or her clients want. It’s about what Wanjinias want.

- Kathy Bowrey, a professor at the Faculty of Law, UNSW, sent the council a 4-page letter detailing her personal take on art and what she would wish the law to be. She personally finds the sculpture “very ugly”, which she reckons constitutes reasonable grounds for its immediate removal.

Kathy quotes from the Council’s Aboriginal Protocol Guide, as evidence in support of her claims. In an appalling attempt to bully the council into agreeing with her, Kathy informs them of past court cases (completely unrelated to this case), pointing out that “the courts have ordered the destruction of the property”. This sounds like another encouragement to the vandals. Kathy, being such a great expert in the law, should know better. She should be telling the vandals that – when it comes to art – they can love it or hate it, approve of it or be annoyed with it, but should not touch it!

When speaking of the past, everybody seems to have forgotten that in the past, when Wanjinias spoke, Aboriginal people listened. The entire Dreamtime is based on that.

Kathy complains that we might be “implying a connection with Aboriginal communities”. Well, Goomblar is an Aboriginal man, and he was quite vocal in his assertions about the Aboriginal community while we collaborated on the book. In any case, I don’t remember any of us mentioning a connection with Aboriginal tribes. What I keep pointing out is my connection with Wanjinias. But Kathy, same as other submission writers, cannot grasp the significance of that.

But it is not about what Kathy wants. It’s about what Wanjinias want.

- the Arts Law Centre [of Sydney] submission, signed by senior solicitor Delwyn Everard, also sent a list of what they would like the law to be. But, at least, they are fair enough to acknowledge the reality, ending the letter with “Unfortunately, until the Federal government legislates to enact such protection, there is at present no obvious legal avenue for complaint about such misappropriation [sic] which is why responsibility in this particular instance now rests with the Council when considering this development application.”

So the Arts Law Centre seems to think it would be a good idea to empower local councils to decide what we are all allowed to paint.

But it is not about what the Arts Law Centre wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- Rebecca Jacks [of Medlow Bath] sent to council a cut-and-paste exercise. She copied the text from an illegal, hijacked website, set up by the same person who hijacked the council website in protest of the Three Sisters sculpture. That person hijacked both sites – the council's and ours – and registered both with a provider in California to ensure that they would stay out of reach of Australian authorities.

Rebecca seems unaware that by parroting the text from that illegal site she becomes personally liable, and can be sued for slander. She also threatens council with “undesirable legal consequences” should they dare approve our application;

But it is not about what Rebecca wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- The Telfords [of Hazelbrook] sent their objection, cannot get the name of the artwork right but want the council to know they do not like it at all;

But it is not about what the Telfords want. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- Lyv Bevington [of Hazelbrook, on behalf of the Blue Mountains Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation group] sent a submission containing passages from the Telfords' letter, and also gets the name of the sculpture wrong;

But it is not about what Lyv wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- Den Barber, on behalf of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, sent a letter that I quite liked. This author, with a somewhat convoluted job title, writing in his capacity as *the Aboriginal Co-Management Officer for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Unit for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water*, talks about his involvement with regard to liaison, negotiation, and reconciliation. It is a pity that Den never tried to contact us to attempt to liaise, negotiate or reconcile. Judging by the tone of his letter, he could have offered constructive input and good ideas.

But it is not about what Den wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- The Environmental Defender's Office [Sydney], through their solicitor BJ BeomJin Kim, sent a 6-page submission of unrelated legal quotes, introducing themselves as a firm which acts for the Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre (MACC) and the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC). Their submission repeats some passages from the Arts Law Centre letter, and goes on to list sections and articles, clauses and subclauses, in an attempt to pressure the council to reject our application because “their client is concerned”.

They keep talking of our “unauthorised use of Wanjina imagery” and I am getting tired of repeating myself. I do not need authorisation from anyone else, I am authorised by the Wanjinias and I responded to Their request.

But it is not about what BeomJin or his clients want. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- Gundugurra Tribal Council, in a letter signed by Sharon Brown, complains that I ignored consultation processes that she had “worked tirelessly to achieve”;

But it is not about what Sharon or that tribal council wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre (ACRC), located at the same address as the Gundugurra Tribal Council, in a letter signed by Jennifer Wilkins – of which the wording is almost identical to the Gundugurra submission – accuses me of “neglecting to consider a consultation protocol and process that we all worked tirelessly to achieve and promote”. Jennifer seems unable to remember how many times last year I contacted her Centre, how many times they failed to respond to my requests, and how many times they cancelled appointments, being too busy with “working tirelessly”.

They made no effort to facilitate any consultation, or even to provide any useful referral, and proved to be one of the most uncooperative government funded community organisations I have ever come across.

Jennifer also includes some lies, saying that I have “accused the Aboriginal community in the mountains of defacing the sculpture, when there is no proof that any Aboriginal person was involved”. Furthermore, she calls it a complete defamation of the local Aboriginal community and disregard and disrespect and so on.

Not true! I said that an *Aboriginal person allegedly issued those orders*, and I said that an *Aboriginal man repeatedly threatened to destroy the sculpture*. These are the facts and I do have proof. Who actually wielded the axe is completely irrelevant. As soon as Tobin started screaming that he would destroy the artwork, because Kimberley elders told him to do so, and planted himself in front of our house, standing there for hours yelling that it must be destroyed, I knew it was only a matter of time before those calls for vandalism would be answered.

But it is not about what Jenny or her ACRC want. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- There is also the 12-page submission by Tobin [of no fixed address], full of lies, forgetting that our outings, when we hired him as a paid tourist guide, were video-taped, with all his nasty statements about local Aborigines and their constant bickering amongst themselves, as well as his spiteful comments about Goomblar.

I checked the tape and to his advice that I need permission for Wanjina imagery, I clearly responded by saying: “I do not need permission from anyone, but would like to advise them and invite them to participate in our project”. In his letter to the council – to which he attached my email telling him that I cannot discuss my creative process with him and basically telling him to but out since he had no role in any of our projects – he complains that I never told him about Wanjinias talking to me, forgetting that we never told him *anything*, not a word about me being an archaeologist, nor about my book or Goomblar’s co-operation, or our Katoomba house... We just *listened*, letting *him* talk. I asked him a lot of questions, not because I didn’t know the answers, but because I wanted to hear what *he* was going to say.

Goomblar 2009: Just tell the truth! – Goomblar 2010: Fuck the truth!

Among the Hostiles details how he poisoned Goomblar’s mind and turned him from a whistleblower into an objector. Following his initial excitement at having a chance to tell his story, and asking me to “Just tell the truth!” Goomblar has changed into someone I no longer recognise nor wish to know, someone who now says: “Fuck the truth!”

Yes, people change, their perspective can change, but there is always hope that even when slipping into the worst of their many selves, they *can* change back again.

But Tobin hoped that turning Goomblar against us would do the trick. If he gets Goomblar angry enough, prompts him to yell and swear, insult my guests and assault my cameraman by grabbing him in a headlock, as well as making some threats, we would be intimidated enough to

do what he wants, or what the Kimberley mob wants. But people are not stupid. All he achieved was for those witnessing the scene to go home in disbelief over their appalling, violent behaviour, reinforcing all the worst stereotypes about Aboriginal people today.

But it is not about what Tobin wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- Deidre Ikin [of Blackheath] also lectures the council on what a Wanjina is, repeats the same gossip about me “apparently seeking permission from the Mowanjum community and they refused”. I remember her calling me to tell me she spent six years sitting in the dirt with an old Aboriginal woman in a remote part of the Australian outback, and learned a lot. “What have you learned?” I asked. “Oh, I learned so much about their culture, important things, like, that old woman told me ‘This is not your place, so when you enter my house you must show respect!’ “Good heavens,” I said, thinking that was six years well wasted, for that gem of wisdom, so I said, “In my culture, we call it basic manners, kids learn it at the age of, say, six.”

She also sent the council her personal correspondence to Woolagoodja, in which she keeps sucking up to Donny, apologising profusely for “us whitefellas lack of humility and our arrogance and ignorance, white people’s lack of understanding and lack of respect”. Well, speak for yourself, Deidre! She also mentions Andrew Denton, quoting him and apologising for him being so stupid that he makes her ashamed of being white. She wants Donny to know that she tried to educate me, and provided information about the books I should read.

Even though she also mentioned that I told her that I receive instructions directly from the Wanjina spirits, she acts as if she still believes that I just stumbled across this imagery. She appears to conveniently forget that I am an archaeologist with a degree in prehistory and spirituality of Neolithic man. In spite of that, she wants to educate me with a few titles she is “sure I never heard of, since I’m such an ignorant migrant woman.” Sadly, she comes across as a smart woman, a pity that she wastes her intelligence on racist remarks and silly arguments.

But it is not about what Deidre wants. It's about what Wanjinias want.

- There is also a letter signed by Donny Woolagoodja, on behalf of his Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre [of Derby, West Australia]. In this yet another duplication of passages from Arts Law Centre and Environmental Defender’s Office letters, Donny is telling the council a story about the Wanjina-the-rainmaker, tries to claim ownership of prehistoric imagery, complains that we haven’t obtained his permission to paint, and goes on listing some local gossip and what he heard someone tell him they had heard that someone else said that I said. He claims not to remember me ever contacting him, contrary to what he told me on 13 March.

Donny also urges the council to visit the hijacked, California-registered slanderous website. He inserts “[sic]” at every mention of the word “Wanjina” as we choose to spell it, since he obviously prefers the “Wandjina” alternative. He seems to be unaware of the fact that there are a number of transliterations of the same expression, all equally correct. Some lies are included, such as “We endeavoured, with the assistance of the Arts Law Centre of Australia, to make our concerns known to Ms Tenodi, however, she refuses to alter her business practices.”

That never happened. No such attempt was made by anyone. Threats, intimidation and bullying do not count.

Donny goes on making appalling, defamatory and slanderous statements, and sees no problem with that. Why would he, he has all those lawyers lined up, even though all of them have to grudgingly concede we are doing nothing legally wrong.

But it is not about what Donny or his Mowanjum Centre want. It's about what Wanjinias want.

Some submissions are written with authority and confidence, some are quite childlike, and some include derogatory, racist, defamatory and downright vulgar and primitive comments about me, our art and our artists.

- There is also a submission by Jim Angel, a former Blue Mountains mayor. In his submission he is making suggestions for technicalities that council might use to justify refusal and shut us down. Much like some of the other objectors, he gives council some hints as to what can be used as a reason, in order to hide the true reason – how much our art design bothers them.

But it is not about what Jim wants. It's about what Wanjin's want.

But inane submissions still worry me. Together with Tobin's protestation to the Judge [when I took out a restraining order against him, he said to the magistrate "But your Honour, why cannot I walk by her house, she is hardly ever there..."] it all showed me how closely our house is being monitored by the local mob, and how eager the council is to please the objectors in their political-correctness-gone-mad attitude. We finally realised we will never be able to have our lives back.

We realised we'll be harassed for every move we make, when we use our space to meet with our students, our friends, our workshops for community groups, for our tai chi practice, for displaying too many paintings on our walls, carving another sculpture in our front yard, whatever we do will attract the fury of some deranged person, who will claim they have the right to protest. Yes, by all means, go ahead and protest all you want, but stop calling for our house to be thrashed and our art to be vandalised! Love it or hate it, but do not touch it! That seems to be advice that no lawyer was able to give them.

It is all beyond ridiculous. What you do on your own property is considered to be a private matter. Fair Trading regulations allow you to do at your house what you choose, you can run regular meetings, invite groups for a book club or knitting group... if you were to start a knitting group, and someone dislikes it, the council can come up with some regulation or by-law declaring the knitting needles to be too dangerous an implement and order you to stop. Once they decide to paralyse your private business and meddle in your private lives and your private art, it is time to give up. Even if you are proven to be right and win in the end – it is not worth all the time, expense and grief they will cause you in the process. Because if there is no regulation for them to meddle into your life, they do have the power to make up some new rule and introduce some new by-law to achieve just about anything.

Our troubles with the council were never about the planning process, or development regulations. It was always about our sculpture design. All the submissions focus on our *Wanjin Watchers in the Whispering Stone* artwork. They all act as art critics and try to find something offensive in our semi-abstract work. But, their response to artwork should be irrelevant, as the artistic impact of a work of art is not within council's jurisdiction. It is not for the council to censor art and decide what the public is allowed to see.

Art and response to artwork are a personal matter. If every piece of art were to be removed because some people do not like it or do not understand it, we would be left with no art at all.

The submissions do not address any justifiable reason why council approval that we have sought should not be granted, in other words, they do not address any issues that are for consideration of a council when deciding our gallery application for approval.

And yet, the issue was allowed to snowball, and the debate was run by a couple of psycho thugs, with help from bleeding hearts and hired guns.

But, I hold no grudge against Aboriginal people. I feel sorry for them, for losing their voice to those few evil-minded egotists.

I am tired of repeating myself and we are not going to keep defending ourselves, we have done enough explaining. And my offer of co-operation is no longer on the table. I have no more time for time-wasters.

Artists in the Mountains

While some artists in the Blue Mountains did sign our petition, as they were upset with the attempt to stifle the artist's right to create, most of the local artists proved to be quite narrow-minded and ultra conservative, regurgitating the same themes over and over again, just as Goomblar described them. So, rather than to keep flogging that particular dead horse, hoping that the locals can rise to the challenge, we decided to move on and concentrate on our Wanjina project.

Lot of people contributed to our losses. We hold all of them responsible. Each of them has dual responsibility, collective and individual. Every individual council officer was aware of what was going on, and had a moral responsibility to think about what is actually being done while "following orders". Some of them might believe that they are helping Aboriginal people, not realising that they are doing them a disservice. In hindsight, they will realise what a big mistake they have made, causing the Aboriginal people great damage.

Gentle doctors make stinking wounds

But, no matter what they do, they cannot change the reality of the dreadful conditions – both material and spiritual – that Aboriginal people live under today. Every Aborigine can see it, some even summon courage to say it. Goomblar said so, and kept saying so over six months while he was a proud, independent-thinking whistleblower.

That is how it is. Pretending it is not so will not change anything. Ignoring it is not going to help improve the Aboriginal condition.

Some sincerely believe they have to be gentle, play into Aboriginal sensitivities and keep comforting them for past injustice, cuddling them and reinforcing their victim mentality. Some are just too afraid of saying anything that might be interpreted as offensive.

They become like gentle doctors who would not think of hurting you, even though the pain may be a prerequisite for solving the problem. They are like a dentist refusing to relieve your painful toothache, for fear of causing you some pain in the process.

Is helping just another form of invasion?

Another catalyst for us giving up on trying to get through to local people's minds, was a conversation with an university lecturer. He is another white man who recently declared his Aboriginal origins, he is intelligent and educated, an artist himself.

He said, "What is it that you and your artists are trying to achieve with your projects, what do you want?"

I thought I would keep it simple and sum up our core intention: "We want to help the Aboriginal people."

"Oh, but you cannot do that! You see, you should not help, help is *just another form of invasion.*"

I was speechless. And disheartened. If this clever and sensitive person cannot see that we *truly* care for Aborigines and are trying to help them in a meaningful way, how can we ever hope that simple people would ever understand us. I was angry as well. I wanted to say, well, then why don't you tell that to the Australian Government, in response to the \$5.75 billion allocated to tackle indigenous disadvantage over three years. Why don't you tell them to stop throwing money at Aboriginal welfare and education and health services and housing projects, why don't you explain to them that help is *just another kind of invasion* and all of us invading meddlers should stop upsetting Aborigines with our attempts to help.

Among the Hostiles details all sorts of responses and a wide range of issues, but in conclusion highlights two main concerns, emerging from our Katoomba experience:

Artistic freedom or any freedom of expression is a myth – as seen in our example of the local council and community making a mockery of any freedom one might think is every person's basic human right in a civilised society.

Why those good Aborigines stay silent – losing their voice to wrong representatives, and hidden behind the vandals – as shown by our Katoomba experience.

Katoomba is a good example of the current trend, where vandals run the show, local police can do nothing, while the local council condones and – through their disengaged attitude – even supports the violence. Ben's amazing masterpiece was turned into just a damaged piece of stone, and no one dared to condemn the vandalism. All that those psycho thugs need to do is to say that they are offended, and then they can get away with just about anything, They know that there will always be some bleeding heart eager to justify their actions, saying, "but of course, they are in so much pain, those poor, poor people".

Throughout last year, we suffered considerable losses, but our loss is as nothing in comparison to what the Aboriginal people might lose – through their behaviour and failure to answer the Wanjinias' call.

They are missing the opportunity of a lifetime, a chance of the century, to participate in the DreamRaisers project, to truly improve their image and reshape their lives, to embrace what the Sky-God had in store for them.

They allowed a few violent, cunning minds to take over and to perpetuate the stereotypes. They painted the image of the Aboriginal people as a bitter and angry lot with nothing but hate for white society, and to push the council into playing their game, denying us our rights and to run us out of town.

Well, there may have been only a few violent ones, but they received ample assistance from those who believe that by doing nothing they can do no harm. To sum it up in a quote from Margaret Thatcher: "All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

For us, this was a matter of several hundred thousand dollars, a matter of losing the house.

For the Aboriginal people, it was a matter of losing their soul.

We feel very sorry for them. But the Sky-God says it's time for plan B, so we have to move on and work on his plan. And keep formulating ways to raise awareness of:

- **shocking material and spiritual conditions Aboriginal people live under today.**
- **what Wanjinias want.**

[End of excerpts from *Among the Hostiles* paper]