Persuasive Narrative

I have lived without mankind for many more years than I have lived with them. I am a home to kangaroos, koalas, and kookaburras, but I now reluctantly house other creatures such as cane toads, camels, and European rabbits. I first met mankind when Indigenous Australian people built rafts and paddled to my beautiful sandy shores. I’m the Great Barrier Reef. I’m Uluru. I’m the Twelve Apostles. I’m all of this wrapped into one historic continent. I am Australia.

Since the beginning of the dreaming Aboriginal people have shown enormous respect for my land, and by having a spiritual, physical, social, and cultural connection, we lived in harmony. To them I was their mother, and my health was central to their culture. My associates used to undertake regular patch burning, which helped me reduce the risk of a wildfire, but also helped them by chasing out the animals for food. My friends used traditional burning, fishing traps, sowing, and storing plants to create a system that was sustainable and supplied them with necessary resources. Because my protectors undertook sustainable development, it allowed me to keep producing natural supplies at a comfortable rate, without the risk of using up all of my resources. Each Indigenous person feels they belong to a piece of my land, and this person is entrusted with intimate knowledge and responsibility to care for that land. We both benefited from their connection to my land, and I will be ever grateful for the care and respect shown by the Indigenous Nations.

It was 1788 when everything changed, for both me and my Aboriginal friends. When the European boat touched my beautiful shores, and white legs splashed through my waters with firearms brandished, I could tell this was going to be a massive culture shift. But little did I know how much this invasion would hurt not only Aboriginal people, but would also to bring me to my knees until I can give no more. Many Indigenous Australian protectors died due to introduced diseases and organised massacres. The white Europeans trampled and overgrazed my natural vegetation, replacing it with foreign vegetation which reduced the population of my natural plants and permanently affected my ecosystems. Invasive foxes and cats drove my native mammals to extinction, and invasive plants have threatened or endangered my species. When Aboriginal people first came to me, they treated me with such respect I imagined having a big population of humans would be a wonderful sensation. But the invasion of white Europeans proved me wrong, showing me I cannot sustain a population that doesn’t care for me properly like the my old friends did.

It is not only the introduction of exotic species that is harming my land and my creatures. The white people facilitate other procedures of slowly torturing me such as deforestation, agricultural clearing, overgrazing, overfishing, pollution, and infrastructure development. Deforestation is like a brain tumour, once started there is no turning back and it affects the whole of my body. Without trees I start to erode and soil sweeps into my rivers, choking my waterways. Agricultural development is when white people clear and overgraze my precious resources, leaving me hurt and wounded. But the process that causes me the most pain is infrastructure development. Infrastructure development feels like someone is stabbing me in the back every time a new development is formed. The air pollution from the cities makes it hard for me to breath, which brings forth droughts. My water becomes polluted because it runs through enormous cities and mines, intoxicating me with a cancerous liquid that runs through my veins and harms not only me, but my animals as well. A good example of this is one of my rivers in Tasmania, called the King River, which is completely polluted with acid drainage from the copper mines, killing my trees and leaving them bare of wood. The heavy concrete infrastructure leaves burning holes in me, and if you could in some way take it all away, you could see how it has torn me and my forests apart, destroyed animal’s homes, and degraded my ecosystems entirely. I feel like I am on an emotional rollercoaster because I often feel sad but also angry about the way I am treated in this 21st century. When I am angry wild bushfires start up, but when I am sad, the heavens open and floods arise.

It’s pretty clear to me that since the white people have come that my lands are being demolished, and there is no turning back. I am crying out for help, and the only people hearing me is Indigenous Australian people, the first people to walk over my lands. There are political parties like the Australian Greens who are attempting to stamp out racism and are willing to phase out coal and gas. This would help the Aboriginal people to be treated equally by the white people, but also bring awareness to help restore my land back to its natural beauty. The Greens are attempting to raise awareness for ecological sustainability and grass roots democracy, but this message is not being well received by the public. There are also other non-for-profit organizations such as the Australian Conservation foundation and the Australian Marine Conservation Society that are trying their hardest to help the hopeless situation I am currently in. These political parties and organizations are doing all they can to help me, but it is futile when most of my citizens don’t care about the condition I am in. I desperately need help and support, but nobody has provided that for hundreds of years. Please, stop blindly conforming to destruction of my lands, but rally together and create a movement to promote my health and stability. Currently I am sick and weary, but if I am kept healthy then you will receive clean water, purified air, regulated climate, and food. You can choose our destiny for the both of us, please choose wisely.

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