THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by – DR DOSEENA FERGIE

To network, share and exchange knowledge with
Other Elders and community members from Indigenous Nations around the world

e.g. Finland, Norway, The Netherlands, Canada, USA, New Zealand.
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Signed: Dated: 5th October, 2017

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Intergenerational Trauma
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This tour enabled me, as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder to look at health and well-being from a sociological perspective. How people related to each other in the past and how they relate now with the future in site. My aim was to observe how some of the First Peoples from around the world (Figure 1), are recovering from the impact colonisation has or had on them. I asked myself, “What are the triggers, and, how have they enabled themselves as a community to rejuvenate and revitalise their cultural identity and sense of belonging. I wanted to understand the environment of society and network, share and exchange knowledge with Indigenous peoples.

‘Indigenous’ in this sense means the first peoples who had initially inhabited an area over centuries. During that time, they had developed a balanced, viable and sustainable civilisation. These same societies were overtaken by European ‘super powers’ at one point in time. There were acts of enslavement to remove basic human rights and genocide to eliminate them from the records of history. The trauma that resulted impacted future generations in the form of decreased social, emotional and physical health and well-being that lead to high risk behaviours with subsequent poor health outcome. However, on this study tour I was encouraged with what I encountered when I visited some of these groups.
The countries I chose were located within Europe and the Sub Artic Region - Italy, Finland, Norway and The Netherlands, Britain and Canada (Turtle Island). Then the regions within the Pacific Oceania, mainly Hawaii and New Zealand (Aotearoa).

I encountered stories of resilience, pride and growth. The continuous murmuring of Indigenous deficit statistics like the high mortality and morbidity rates compared to their Non-Indigenous counterparts, pales into insignificance behind the forward moving models I observed. They focused on a community’s strengths. I returned with a better understanding of the evils of colonisation and assimilation and an awareness of the inter-societal structures and political hearsay that posit an illusion of Indigenous support, but who, act counter-productively. It seemed that when the Indigenous people and their issues became visible to that society, they were foreseen as a threat to the maintenance of the dominant rule of power. Racism and discrimination came in many subtle forms but their impact continued to be devastating. In contrast, self-determination offered strength and healing, it gave hope for a better future.

**Highlights:**

My journey revealed the complexities when dealing with First Peoples who had been subjected to colonisation but who continue to fight for their human rights and a return of their sovereignty over the land and sea.

I saw that the coloniser’s cities, had become multi ethnic communities.Ironically, populated by those that they had once enslaved. Globally, the times had changed. Indigenous peoples had now become a rising force and perhaps a threat to white-privileged eyes. First Peoples were desperate to break out of the shackles that have long hindered them. They had risen in numbers and in their innovative thinking. Turning the ills of assimilation, into gain, through education. I observed that this has become a pivotal point for the young people, who, by living within a Western system, were beginning to understand and manoeuver better in the dominant society. By doing so, they could support and assist their people. Despite the tragedies of the past and present, Indigenous peoples had continued to maintain values of respect, caring and sharing in their myriad of relationships with each other, the environment, the cosmos and the spirit world.

Here is an overview of the countries I visited.

In Rome (Italy) and London (England) I met men and women of Christian Religious Orders (see photos) support my research of Aboriginal children. They had accompanied Benedictine monks or Sisters of Mercy, overseas, to be educated,170 years ago. Each child died within three years of leaving the Great South Land. Given Australia’s devastating history of colonisation, my mandate, to repatriate their skeletal remains and indeed their spirit, is regarded as an important part of healing for Australian Aboriginal people and the whole of Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders believe that a person’s spirit, after they are deceased, will wander around, unsettled, until their remains are buried back in Country.
In Finland (Sampiland), I visited the Sajos Cultural Centre and Sami Parliament (see photo), later I went to Siida Sami Museum and Environmental Centre in Inari. I received all the information I needed by being strategically located. At Sajos, unplanned situations developed as I was sitting at the entrance doing craft work with Sami women (see photo). Community members, health, education and media professionals came up and spoke and I was given an appointment to see the Chairperson and President of the Finnish Sami Parliament, where we discussed the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan.

In Norway (Mid-Finnmark) in the towns of Karasjok and Lakeslv, I visited the Sami Norwegian psychiatric centre and mental health and substance use units called Samisk nasjonal kompetansetjeneste (SANKS) (see photo). A diverse mental health program focussing on the impact of intergenerational trauma. Strategically located near the Norwegian Sami Parliament I was fortunate to hear about the policies of the new Parliament. An opportunity also opened for me to meet the Cultural Minister where we discussed the importance of Sami self-determination and the urgency to lobby for SANKS to have an increase in sustainable funding from the Norwegian government. This would enable SANKS to work more effectively with the Sami community in Scandinavia.
In the Netherlands county of Friesland, I stayed with the Frisian people in Lueewarden. Like the Sami, they are white Indigenous peoples of that part of Scandinavia and Germany. I heard what it was like to be under the rule of the colonisers from a notable 94-year-old Frisian Elder. However, to my dismay, I also discovered how important the Slave Trade was to the Netherlands. Much depended on the evilness of this trade, to increase the country’s wealth, through the former Dutch East India Trading Company.

On Turtle Island (Canada) in Toronto, Ontario, I shared with a First Nation Elder who used her performing arts as a political platform. She recounted the plight of her Indigenous people and the energy her family placed on fighting for self-determination. I then attended the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education where 3,000 participants from all over the world took part. All presenters were proud to discuss their culture and the positive impact their programs were making in their community. It was here for the first time since I left Australia, that I met colleagues from the Australian Catholic University (ACU). I found this to be so refreshing and empowering.

In Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), I had the opportunity to visit both the Tsawwassen First Nation community who manoeuvred a viable Treaty with BC, and the peak Indigenous Health body – the First Nation Health (FHN) Authority and the Chairperson of their Council.

At that time of my visit, the British Columbian Bushfires were still raging through an estimated 1,200 bushfires which claimed 40,000 evacuees. The photo shows the smoke haze over the Rocky Mountains as I flew over. Within that area, in Kamloops, I witnessed the colourful Annual 38th Pow Wow (see photo) and then talked to Thompson River University academics, mentors and researchers. In Whistler, I visited the inspiring Squamish Li’l Wat Cultural Centre where I participated in a handcraft workshops for the youth.
In Hawaii, the highest source of income is from Tourism. At the Polynesian Cultural Centre in Honolulu, the entrance fees went toward funding the university fees for the students performing the cultural activities at the Centre. However, I also met Indigenous researchers and nurse academics on Oahu Island, who coordinated unique and successful programs that had a strong cultural focus. They were eager to collaborate with Indigenous colleagues in Australia.

In New Zealand (Aotearoa), I visited the Maraes in the Bay of Plenty where I was told the stories that have been the inspiration of Maori self-determination. In Auckland, I discussed how the Maori health and wellbeing were catered for by the mainstream health services when I met with Indigenous coordinators of the Pacific Health & Workforce of the Auckland and Waitemata Department of Health. In Whakatane (Bay of Plenty) I met the nursing and research faculty of Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi, a Maori specific tertiary education organisation.
Overall, there was a major change in my perception of Indigenous issues from one who often taught about deficit statistics to now listening and observing ways that highlighted the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples. I learnt a lot about myself, my past and where I sat in the present. I felt empowered as I lived within the Indigenous worldview environment for most of the time. It was here that I came to appreciate the fact that it is the First People’s Knowledge, Language, Ceremonies and Rituals that breathe life into their respective communities.

**Highlights**

One may ask the question “What has the past got to do with the present?” The answer is simple – everything! Why is it important to literally begin the journey of digging up the past? To research and find the ancestral remains of Aboriginal children who died 170 years ago in Europe and repatriating them back to Country is part of healing. It allows visibility of Indigenous people in society and it is so important spiritually to honour those who have walked on, albeit so many years ago. For me this made my study tour even more special. To stand beside the graveside of two children who died long ago was an incredibly humbling experience. I would imagine they had gone through feeling the same emotions that I felt while being away. Only they did not return to Australia like I did. To begin the process of repatriation of their remains back to Australia remains a highlight for me. I valued what our ancestors had to go through. These were brave children who did not give up their education even when it was difficult and different. Their desire was to help their people back home in Australia.

Another highlight, was visiting Winston Churchill’s birthplace at Blenheim Palace and the College he initiated in Cambridge. I learnt about his life, his ancestors and the leadership he gave to Britain in a time of world crisis. To be awarded a study tour scholarship from an organisation formed in his memory was both humbling and an honour.
It was awe inspiring, as a nurse academic, to visit the Florence Nightingale Museum. In my early years as part of my secondary school course I heard about the leadership impact Florence had made on the world. As a nurse graduate, I like others, had taken the Florence Nightingale oath with sincerity. So, it was a surreal experience to hear about her life and to see her memorabilia. I was pleasantly surprised to read about Mary Seacole’s influence as a Jamaican healer, on the soldiers at war. I learnt from both of their lives, that if you are given a vision for a work to be done, you will also be given the wisdom and strength to carry it out against all odds.

I learnt through these examples that anything is possible.

I remember as a child standing on the shore of my island and wondering what was over the horizon. The Churchill Fellowship Study Tour enabled me to explore just that. Sky rail or trains do not have a driver at the engine. It runs on automatic pilot and goes from A to B back to A repeatedly. It is programmed to stop at designated stations along the way. My Churchill Fellowship study tour was like that sky train, one in which enabled me to hop on and off numerous times during my eleven weeks away from Australia. I successfully carried out my objectives and more.

I visited the Archaeology and Anthropology unit of Cambridge University that housed the Indigenous archives from all over the World. I valued touching and seeing artefacts from the Torres Strait Islands at the British Museum. It strengthened my cultural connectedness to Country and gave me a sense of identity and purpose.
I was privileged to meet a plethora of people from all walks of life. From passer-byers who helped me with my luggage, through to appointments with Ambassadors and Australian High Commissioners to talk about Indigenous repatriation. I was asked to be interviewed about the objectives of this tour and my thoughts on the organisations and nations I had visited. This was another highlight for me. To think that other people overseas were going to hear about this work and focus on the strengths of a rejuvenated culture.

Conclusions

On tour, the trauma of colonisation and the rise in self-determination as an outcome, was often referred to by the participants. But most First Peoples spoke of their appreciation to learn from their traditional ways of knowing, being and doing. Their hopes lay in their young people as they sought to transfer their knowledge down to the next generation, so they could become strong and resilient. Languages were being revitalised and learnt through the generations. There was greater emphasis placed on the need to learn about colonised history and the importance of addressing intergenerational trauma. Organisations who wanted to work collaboratively with First Nation peoples, appreciated and acknowledged openly the need to empower the Indigenous perspective and allow the necessary freedom to manage their own affairs. They had entered the Indigenous world, appreciating, acknowledging and empowering Indigenous perspective and freedom that came in the form of truth, integrity, kindness, respect and dignity.

There are challenges facing Aboriginal Australians to overcome their disadvantage within this Country. Issues that other Nations have overcome and are thriving which we can learn from. It requires Aboriginal Australians who are Leaders in their community along with those who are knowledgeable about the Western system to manoeuvre and persevere in their quest for social justice; equity, that leads to
economic growth; and environmental sustainability. These are products of communities who are well versed in Knowledge, Language, Culture and Ceremony.

Figure 2. Study Tour Journey Around the World

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy (7 days)</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>Domus Australia</td>
<td>Fr John Boyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>St Paul’s Outside the Wall</td>
<td>John McCarthy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>St Cecilias</td>
<td>Abbot General Fr Michael Kelly of Silvestrini Order</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Abott Fr Edmund Power</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Embassy to the Holy See</td>
<td>Sr Margaret Truman</td>
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<td>Sr Carmel Eberius</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hon. Melissa Hitchman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (6</td>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>overnighter</td>
<td>24-hour daylight</td>
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<td>days)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inari</td>
<td>Sajos Cultural Centre</td>
<td>Elie Maarit Anttijeff</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Katarina Gutorm´</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Susanna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Venue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sami Parliament</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Aslak Paltto – Yle&lt;br&gt;Risten Rauna Magga&lt;br&gt;Martta Alajarvi&lt;br&gt;Tiina Sanila-Aikio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siida Museum &amp; Environmental Conservation Centre</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Anni Guttorm</td>
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**Norway (6 days)**
- Karasjok, (Finnmark)
- 23rd - 28th June
- SANKS
- Sami Norwegian National Advisory Unit on Mental Health and Substance Use
- Gunn Heatta<br>Renathe Aspeli Simonsen<br>Ann-Karin Furskognes<br>Lena Marie Guttorm<br>Trine Solbakk<br>Lars Nussbaum

**Netherlands (7 days)**
- Amsterdam, Friesland<br>28th June - 5th July
- Frisians
- Australian Embassy
- Tsjabbe & Wystke Vysske<br>Mother – Hinke Oostra<br>Hon Dr Brett Mason

**Britain (12 days)**
- Cambridge, Bath, London<br>5th – 17th July
- Cambridge<br>Cambridge University<br>Downside Abbey<br>Benedictine Archives<br>Blenheim Palace<br>Australian High Commission<br>Gumley House<br>British Museum<br>British Library
- Churchill College – John ?<br>Indigenous Museum<br>Dr Simon Johnston<br>Dom Leo<br>Dom Christopher Calascione<br>Churchill Birthplace<br>Australian Deputy High Commissioner – Hon Matt Anderson<br>Faithful Companion of Jesus Generalate<br>Sr Claire Sykes<br>James Hamill & Jill Hessel

**Canada**
- Toronto
- WIPCE Conference
- WIPCE participants
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Nation Polytechnic</td>
<td>Toronto Council of Fire Native Cultural Centre</td>
<td>17th - 30th July (14)</td>
<td>Grand Chief Doug Kelly &amp; Joe Gallagher (CEO) Andrew Blak</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vancouver (4)</td>
<td>30th July - 3rd August</td>
<td>FNHC / FNHA Tsawwassen First Nations</td>
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<td>Kamloops (6)</td>
<td>3rd – 9th August</td>
<td>Te Kem’lups Pow Wow Te Kem’lups Schwempic Community Thompson River University</td>
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<td>Pow Wow Museum – Theodore Gottriedson Assoc Prof Lisa Bourque Bearskin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whistler (3)</td>
<td>9th – 12th August</td>
<td>Squamish Li’lwat Cultural Centre Staff at Cultural Centre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vancouver (1)</td>
<td>12th - 13th August</td>
<td>Overnighter Len a&amp; Victoria Heryet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Honolulu</td>
<td>13th - 20th August</td>
<td>University of Hawaii Polynesian Cultural Centre Dr Manulani Meyer &amp; N Dr Jamie Boyd</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7 days)</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>21st – 23rd August</td>
<td>Auckland / Waitemata Health Board Abel Smith Dr Linda Chalmers</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Te whare wananga o Arawanganui Nursing and Research Faculty Jacqueline Thrupp</td>
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<td>(5 days)</td>
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<td>Evie O’Brien Prof Te Kani Kingi Ngaira Harker Dr Paul Hirini Kirsty Maxwell-Crawford</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Whakatane Tour &amp; Marae Patsy and Pake and Noti Nakora</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>26th August</td>
<td>Home</td>
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Through my observation of each nation’s culture, behaviour, the infrastructure of society and the political environment people lived in, I learnt interesting facts about each of the different First People group I met. Figure 2 illustrates the route I took from Melbourne, Australia to the European continent through Asia; to North America and the Pacific Oceania.

**The Sami**

Nomadic reindeer herders of long ago, herding continues to be practiced today. There are 3 different groups – Central Sami, around Lake Inari which is the third largest lake in Lapland; the larger Northern Sami in Norway and the Eastern Sami, of Russian influence, otherwise known as Skolt Sami. Colonisation was and continues to be through the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Government. See photo above of the various groups in traditional costume that make up the Finnish Sami Parliament. The Northern Sami, where 90% Sami live, were the earliest in being active in maintaining their language and culture despite the dominant Norwegian influence and policies. The other two groups almost lost their language and culture because of the Finnish Government’s push to assimilate them into Finnish society by legislating all Sami be taught to speak the Finnish language in school and prohibiting their cultural practices and ceremony. Today, although the older generation do not speak the Sami language because of this, it is their children and grandchildren who have begun to learn the language and cultural practices through early learning centers and school. They have followed a Language NEST program borrowed from the Maori’s successful language rejuvenation program. I found that within bicultural relationships, it was not uncommon for children to learn and use their two ‘mother tongues’.

Recently, the Finnish Government has attempted to be inclusive, by allowing the resurgence of Sami language and cultural practices. The Sami can now elect their own Parliament. Although their authority remains limited, especially regarding the recognition of their entire traditional land. Sajos, the Parliament building that incorporates cultural and community services was opened in 2011 with a state of the art environmental design. It attempts to actively rejuvenate cultural practice and work in a way to be inclusive of Sami and Finnish programs. The local Sami community have been shy to fully access the facilities or programs to date, but, Elders continue to mentor the young people in their cultural knowledge like craft making.

Sami Elders found it challenging to talk about the past. The following are some stories about the impact of trauma.

An Elder could not hide her tears when she recalled her childhood. She was bullied at school because she was deemed as being different wearing Sami clothes and unable to speak the Finnish language. Her only safety was at home where she could speak her ‘mother tongue’ and learn about her culture in the presence of like-minded relatives. Today, she remains critical and suspicious of those claiming now to be Sami, but who in the past, have remained silent about their ethnicity. She believed that they had not been misunderstood and persecuted as others who claimed their ethnicity had been. She strongly
felt that these people desire to reap the benefits of Sami lifestyle such as, land ownership and communal acceptance.

Another community member spoke about the rejuvenation of language and the pain felt by Elders who kept silent. She spoke of the elderly Sami man who, though drunk, inadvertently told his traumatic story as a child when he had to be admitted to hospital unexpectedly. Other children in the hospital were bought by staff to peer through the window at him getting undressed out of his traditional costume. After years of silence, as he remembered this public humiliation he wept uncontrollably. He had been traumatised.

An Elder who worked in the health field explained that it was not unusual for the elderly who were showing signs of dementia to talk about the past, but this was usually done by speaking in their own language. The challenge remained for staff members who cared for them was to learn to understand them. Today, there is a high need in health care recruitment, for Sami people to apply, and attend to their Elder's needs in a culturally appropriate way. I then journeyed to the Netherlands, to Friesland to meet the Indigenous people there.

The Fresians

In the Netherlands, Fresians believe they are invisible to society. They 'blend' in well, because they too are light in skin-colour. Once these oral storytellers were rich in numbers. They are tall, resilient and strong people, who the Dutch call 'stubborn'. They have not gone away. Today, they are aware of the deliberate acts toward assimilation that the Government is propagating within society. Despite this, they have endeavoured to keep their language, customs and family units together.

Colonisation occurred through the Nordic and Germanic tribes many centuries ago, then through the Netherlands Government. Historically, the Fresian culture and language was the dominant some 500 years ago. The Dutch language was only the trade language then. Now, it is the Fresian language that has experienced oppression, with many Fresians ashamed to speak it. The Dutch claim that they are the source of knowledge for projects when it was the Fresians who originally designed it but not given the recognition.

Even so, there were unique stories about the war years against the Nazi invasion (as there were in all the Scandinavian countries) of Fresian families protecting their menfolk from being caught and recruited into the German Army. This saying, “Buter, brea e griene tsiis, wa’t dat net sizzle kin is gin oprjochte Fries.” (“Butter, bread, green cheese, who is not able to say that is not a sincere Fresian”), was surreptitiously used at the border, during the war years, for the protection of Frisians and their land.

I interviewed a 94-year young Fresian Elder who talked about the past. She told me that the Fresian people, until recently, lived and died in their own village. The advantages to this was, they kept their language, sports, music, cultural customs and beliefs alive. Assimilation showed itself as soon as they were born, because the parents were forced to give a Dutch name to the child. During school, they were not allowed to speak Fresian but Dutch. The photo shows the Elder holding up the Dutch language
board they had to use at primary school. But parents continued to name their children after their ancestors from previous generations. So, the Fresians have two names. Choral singing, using the Fresian language was a means of keeping culture alive by bringing generations together to connect. As was regularly playing the traditional game of Kraansen (see photo). A game like cricket and tennis combined, involving the whole community. Wreaths of victory are then proudly displayed outside of each house.

First Nation, Metis and Native Americans.

Colonisation came through the French and British Empire. The 1876 Indian Act gave the Federal Government exclusive rights to govern over Reserves and Indians. By 1884 the Residential schools had begun to ‘Christianise’ and ‘civilise’ the Indian without their consent. In 2008 the Canadian Government apologised for these acts. Even so, many treaties had been made between Indian Bands and Government causing disadvantage and great disunity among Indigenous people.

I found that on Turtle Island in Toronto at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE), Aboriginal people actively spoke about the past and were proud to display their art and crafts and talk about their culture. They were open about their songs and ceremonies and encouraged participants to take part in their social dancing. This had a tremendous unifying effect on everyone present.

The First Nations have retained their language and fought for their spirituality. The Indian Act originally outlined how the Reserves and Bands could operate. But unashamedly it also defined who was and who was not recognised as an ‘Indian’. Who was eligible to register or have Indian status and those who were denied membership in Bands. It placed restrictions around them, compelling Indians to renounce their Indian status and join Canadian civilisation as full members – a process Canadians called enfranchisement but to the Indigenous people it meant the disenfranchisement of all human rights. This was a common practice of colonisation with many Nations including Australia. Along with this identification a First Nation person was given an identity number e.g. 688xxxxxx before they were permitted to access the only source of funding, given through the Federal Government. For the Canadian Government, the Indian Act is not regarded as a treaty but only a legal response to the treaties. It has remained a source of discontent among First Nation peoples, especially pronounced this year, in 2017, when Canada celebrates 150 years of presence on the continent.
The Polynesians

Most of Polynesia was colonised by the British, French and American empires except for the Kingdom of Tonga which maintained Royal Sovereignty. Hawaiian activists continue to raise awareness of Hawaii’s need for self-determination, away from present American rule. It was here in Honolulu that I met my doctoral examiner for the first time – a renowned Indigenous epistemologist. We talked about the fact that Indigenous people can now articulate themselves better today through different mediums whereas in the 1980’s it was difficult to do so after having been in a subordinate position through colonisation for such a long time. I had also noticed this when talking with community Elders of other Indigenous nations thus far. We discussed the importance of “the art of giving” as Indigenous ways of Being, and not one of aggressiveness. And discussed the difference between Western ways and Indigenous ways, not only in society, but in education and research. We concluded that Indigenous higher degree research students should be given a choice in education institutions to be mentored by other Indigenous scholars, through their studies and into their early career as researchers. We talked about how important it was for processes, whether it be research or developing programs, to always consult with and include community members. It was also expressed by her, that our Australian Mob do have a lot to offer in terms of how we understand our culture. She regards Indigenous Australians as leading the way in aspects such as communication, our sense of wisdom and knowledge in research. Our time together re-confirmed the importance of this study tour. I was on the right track that emphasised the strengths and portrayed the resilience of Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

In Honolulu, I could contact a Hawaiian Associate Professor in Nursing who had developed a unique way of establishing culture in the nursing undergraduate curriculum. It was a program of Indigenous Knowledge and Culture incorporated into not only the nursing but formed the basis of other programs. The organic garden was the centre piece of learning, before nurses attended to patients. It challenged the current way of ‘doing’ nursing. The successful outcomes from this program proved the significance of placing culture in the centre of the learning process for Indigenous peoples.

In Aotearoa, there were discussions about the Maori and Pacific Islander workforce in nursing; their recruitment and retention and how it was important to have Indigenous people recruited to attend to
Indigenous patients in a culturally appropriate way. This was particularly important in the cultural care of older Polynesians who had borne the brunt of colonisation.

I had met so many people on my trip who had a gift of hospitality and caring. They helped me to see that it is spontaneous, that eating, sleeping and relaxing are so important to the sojourner. As always in all the Indigenous nations included in my travel, we concluded our time by the giving and receiving of gifts – a wonderful gesture of appreciation for our time together, but it also pointed to our hope for future partnerships.

**CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING THEME**

To discuss the plethora of experiences on this study tour, seven themes have been chosen that highlight how the various communities that are outlined in the Programme, rejuvenated their cultural identity and sense of belonging (Figure 3). The artwork behind these words depict a healthy community growing stronger because the roots grow out of a strong cultural foundation, that consists of various creative layers. The seven themes include Relationships, Culture, Language, Education, Self-determination, Economy and finally Health and Well-being. Figure 4 illustrates each of these seven themes subdivided up into issues that were highlighted within the study tour.
Figure 3. Seven Themes
Figure 4. Empowering Issues Identified Within Each Main Theme.

(Artwork - “Healthy Community” by Safina Stewart (nee Fergie) 2014)
Relationships – Respect and Reciprocity

One of the most distinctive features about this First Peoples tour was the presence of respect and reciprocity within, and, extending beyond those communities. Communal activities bought a sense of unity amongst the participants as each generation from the young through to the elderly demonstrated respect and pride in their cultural heritage, as they worked or performed together. They were inclusive and non-discriminatory. Through these means there was a natural growth to maturity in each generation.

I observed the strengthening of a community’s capacity at major events, like the Kamloops 38th Annual Pow Wow, when relationships were nurtured through the sharing of ceremony, food, knowledge, fun and sorrow. At the Pow Wow, a grieving family’s burden was carried by the whole community. These various activities were a continuation of the healing process this family was going through, because of the young girl’s sudden death. The family members paraded her photo within the Pow Wow arena, while everyone stood as a sign of remembrance. Then the young women performed what is regarded as a healing ‘jingle’ dance (see photo). The family were then given an opportunity to be involved in the Pow Wow by choosing the winners in some of the dance competitions. Hands were shaken as a sign of appreciation, to each family member, by those who competed. There was an air of compassion that sought to encourage not only a sense of normality and balance despite the grief, but also a strengthening of relationships as community remembered those who had ‘walked on’.

I noticed that children and young people were mentored by the older generation as they danced and sang or were taught cultural crafts. Their development was modelled by mature leaders. They grew in confidence the more they engaged. Prizes were given out for every event at the Pow Wow, to all participants including the drummers of the Pow Wow. The shaking of hands down long lines of participants by the winners expressed their gratitude for all those who participated, but had not won. This was all done in the hot sun, while First Nation people wore their full regalia (see photo above). The supply of cold bottles of water was appreciated by everyone, even the spectators. One felt honoured to be there, to participate and bear witness to this spectacular ceremony.
Reciprocity in the sharing of gifts served to strengthen relationships. I witnessed the sharing of potlatch gifts such as tribal-embossed blankets, shirts and other give-aways that not only bought a surprised joy to the receiver but also to the giver. It was a means of showing respect. During colonisation, this traditional practice had been prohibited. The values of caring for each other; protecting and sharing of cultural knowledge, time and gifts were commendable and important for the healing of trauma.

Sport was used as a non-discriminatory activity. The unique Kraansen sport for instance unified and strengthened Fresians in their cultural heritage. But it was also an avenue for collaboration and inclusiveness as they permitted non-Fresians within their village, who were willing to learn the game, to participate. There was a sense of connectedness within the entire village.

Food became the centrepiece because it provided the right environment for people to communicate with each other, and allow healing to take place. In all First Nations events it was the preparation and sharing of communal meals that strengthened the bond between those who participated. The Luau at the Polynesian Cultural Centre for instance bought people from many different nationalities together (see photo). There was a sense of unity and mutual understanding when we ate together. Alliances between the Native American Bands to form the First Nation Health Authority would have celebrated their agreement to work together with a meal. The Squamish-Li’lwat Nations pooling their resources and cultural knowledge together would have celebrated their unity, around food. The dining area on the Marae in Aotearoa functions as a key area in all the ceremonial performances.
Developing leadership skills was imperative to the sustainability and maintenance of cultural identity and resilience. It provided a cohesiveness within the community and gave direction toward a better future.

Leadership among the young people were especially celebrated within the community. This was highlighted in the Kamloops Pow Wow where a young person was honoured for his hard work because academically he had attained a Master’s degree as well as sporting achievements galore. He composed and performed his own ceremonial dance as an identification of the significance of his culture, and was given a standing ovation. The commentator declared that “Education is the new bear. We encourage our youth to strive well in their education to support our people to live in the oppressor’s world” (see photo). Good leadership models are the key to forward direction into the future and the sustainability of First Nation peoples.

It was a delight to observe young people being mentored about their culture in the Squamish-Li’lwat Cultural Centre. 400 young people have passed through this program so far. I observed young adults being mentored by a leading First Nation fashion designer who volunteered her time to support them and many other young people through coaching basketball and other sporting events. The compassion of Indigenous peoples toward supporting their own is commendable because they are most often volunteering their services for free.
Inspiration for the more mature community members came through distinguished leaders, to encourage perseverance and retention of current leaders. An example was the public lecture entitled Maori Knowledge: Doing, Knowing and Understanding presented by the Maori Elder and founder of Te Whare Wananga o Arawanuiarangi, Sir Hirini Moko Mead, on the Wananga’s 25th Anniversary (see photo). The audience consisted of mainly senior members and scholars of the Maori community. Other examples were the inspiration given by the Six Nation Elder Women’s Choir at the WIPCE Conference; the mentoring of Indigenous tertiary students by Elders in the faculty who provide cultural oversight; the guidance of the female Chairperson of the Finnish Sami Parliament leading her people toward Truth and Reconciliation; the Maori leaders Paki and Patsy Nikora (see photo), who have provided guidance and leadership to mainstream business cooperatives in Whakatane, Aotearoa; the Indigenous health leaders like the Chairperson of the First Nation Health Council, who advocated for many years for First Nation health needs to be addressed through services led by Indigenous staff, such as the Chief Executive Officer of the clinical services, First Nation Health Authority. He could ensure a culturally safe and sustainable environment was provided due to his high leadership position.

Amongst all Indigenous communities I visited, those who were outside of the community were always encouraged to participate in the people’s cultural events, like the WIPCE social dance and cultural meals. To me this reiterated again the inclusive attitude of First Peoples.

Language – currently spoken, Language nests

First Nations who had a Treaty/ies with their Government (like Aotearoa and Turtle Island) lobbied for language restoration and developed it for community through their own education system. It was understood that through language came the understanding of cultural knowledge and the ability to better understand what was communicated.

A common theme I heard throughout was the important part played by the revitalisation and daily use of the traditional languages of these Nations. These languages had been squashed through colonisation but now were being restored, enthusiastically learnt and spoken by the younger generation. They learnt through language nests otherwise known as early learning centres (see photo). Elders who had been prohibited from speaking could in some cases now learn if they wanted to. A number chose
not to learn for fear of reprisal. I was told that when senior members of that community aged and developed dementia they tended to revert to their mother tongue. This then became a barrier to their care because health workers who supported them could not understand them and therefore were not able to offer the best care in a culturally safe environment.

Indigenous peoples like the Fresians had to learn to live in both worlds. For instance, while at school they learnt only Dutch knowledge, but when they were at home in their own community they learnt the Fresian culture and spoke that language. The discrimination against them was so great and painful that many gave up their Fresian language and culture for fear of being persecuted. It was through learning the traditional languages that a deeper knowledge of culture was appreciated.

Culture – Learned behaviour, currently practiced

Learning and practicing their culture through various ceremonies, rituals and events was pivotal in all Nations. The variety of music modes like throat singing amongst the Inuit to the yoking of the Sami; the chanting of the Turtle Island First Nations; the harmonisation of Polynesian singing; as well as the celebration of all Nations through music and dance, were highlights in my tour. Bright coloured cultural costumes were worn with pride by participants both within their communities as well as at the World Indigenous People’s Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Toronto. Culture, a learned behaviour was developed and practiced by all members of the community.

I sensed that among First Peoples there was always a sense of being on ‘a journey of learning’ because of the disruption, due to colonisation, that halted culture being passed down. However, the selling of arts and crafts were avenues through which Indigenous people could both learn and display their heritage. Cultural places like Sajos (the Sami community centre and Parliament) gave community the opportunity to meet with other services. While Cultural Museums like Siida (Finland); the Sampi Cultural Park in Norway; the Squamish-Li’lwat Cultural Centre in Whistler (British Columbia) and the Polynesian Cultural Centre in Hawaii gave opportunity for cultural knowledge to be passed on (see photos).
Rituals that were performed like a Welcome or Acknowledgement to Country through Action songs in the case of Maori’s, or Smudging by First Nations and Metis peoples, were pre-requisites to any event/meeting. To be given an opportunity by Elders to cleanse an event of negative attitudes and actions was important for correct spiritual functioning of that activity. It also heralded the participant’s willingness to be receptive to what would transpire through the event. Smoking the peace pipe, a cultural call or chant as found amongst Polynesians were important rituals of welcome. The formality of gift-exchange was an important ritual of reciprocity and respect as seen at the WIPCE Opening and my contact with each gatekeeper and organisation. Gifts were precious, for instance, I endeavoured to give my adult children’s artwork and music to show my appreciation for their sharing of story, to me. This exchange meant that I valued the richness of their input.

Education – Intergenerational, Navigating to Live in 2 worlds

To navigate both worlds because of the disruption caused by colonisation, Indigenous peoples have had to learn to live in both worlds. The harsh Residential Schooling received by most First Peoples on Turtle Island until the 1996 closure, traumatised all the child residents. To gain employment within a dominant world it was deemed important by the government of the day that children were to disregard their culture and be educated in a western system. And yet oral communication and the mode of Storytelling remained the *modus operandi* in all Indigenous nations.

Sometimes education was given in precarious ways. I was visiting the Indigenous Learning Centre at a tertiary institution when one of the elders who mentored Indigenous tertiary students explained how he
was initiated and had to learn survival skills. It was a ritual that he saw as building positive character in a person, though not at the time of inception. He recalled to me that one day his father took him to a high plateau and there he was left alone for two weeks to learn to survive and fend for himself. He cried for a couple of days but then realised he had to fend for himself. His father faithfully came back as he had promised. He discovered that his son had learnt not only to survive but thrive in the ‘wild’ – this was his initiation from being a child to becoming an adolescent. However later he explained, this natural process through the developmental stages of the life cycle would be disrupted as he and other children were forcibly taken to residential school. There, there was an attempt to eradicate cultural knowledge and learn western ways. They suffered under the harshness. Yet for over a decade this same young boy in the story, who was now an ‘elder’, supported young Indigenous people for 15 years in their studies, so that they would become positive role models for their people. Government policies to assimilate all Indigenous children around the world into the dominant society was cruel and unrelenting but again this story showed Indigenous resilience.

Within the faculty of mainstream universities, I also met some Indigenous scholars who, in their facilitation role, had crossed the divide between Indigenous knowledge and Western ways of thinking. Many persevered despite the discrimination that pervaded the system. They had done so to better support Indigenous students and provide a better pathway for them to follow. They commented that cultural safety was important for Indigenous peoples coming through the education and health system, but the system remained challenging, despite the increasing historical awareness of colonisation.

I found where progress had been made in leaps and bounds was in tertiary institutions that were solely Indigenous focussed. They emphasised cultural aspects to the curriculum as well as providing a culturally safe space for students to learn in. Te whare wananga o Awaranuiangi for example, had good student outcomes compared to mainstream institutions. The Six Nation Polytechnic in Ontario is working toward setting up a First Nation University in their state. I visited other mainstream tertiary institutions such as Thompson River University in British Columbia and the University of Hawaii in Oahu that have an Indigenous Centre within their campus staffed by First Peoples (see photo). These collaborations and separate entities address the same challenges. One challenge is to ensure that they abide by accreditation standards that were designed and operated under a western education system. To do this and meet community cultural requirements, scholars have designed creative ways. One such program is the Windward Nursing Course in Oahu which bases the development of cultural care for Indigenous clients by programming nursing students to initially learn to care for an organic garden. Here the students are better able to transfer this knowledge over to the care for a person. Having Indigenous students access this program ensures that cultural knowledge and language is sustained thereby ensuring better culturally appropriate care for Native Hawaiians.

The development of cultural humility and cultural safety in health and education services has been an ongoing challenge. However, the First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) and Te whare wananga o Awaranuiangi have made in-roads in this area, through professional development by the FNHA, and by training Maori and Pacific Island students through the Wananga (see photo).
Participation in the WIPCE conference in Toronto (see photo) allowed me to listen and observe other educational and health services successful programs to educate more Indigenous peoples. It is through this conference that many ongoing relationships and exchange of knowledge will occur through the WIPCE network.

In Aotearoa, I wanted to see how Maori and Pacific Islander people suffering from the impact of trauma would be appropriately cared for. I could discuss Maori and Pacific Islander health service recruitment and retention at one of the largest health services - the Auckland and Waitemata Hospital. I met senior Indigenous staff who worked in challenging circumstances to increase Indigenous employment in the health service. It was evident to me that unless there are Indigenous staff working at this higher level in hierarchy, change in terms of Indigenous employment and patient access will take much longer to develop. Care for Indigenous people by staff who are from that area would be better, because their worldviews are similar, and therefore, the barriers to care and access will be reduced.

Self-determination – Recognising the past, Collaboration

Outside of the Kamloops Residential School (1893 – 1977) building stands a monument dedicated to honour the survivors (see photo). The fact that the Residential School buildings have remained and are being used by the First Nation descendants amazed me. The bush fires had bought thousands of evacuees to stay in the Pow Wow ground and the school was used as a dining area for them. There
were stories of some families experiencing trauma as they re-lived the painful memories that occurred to them at this same school. Not only did they have to deal with losing their property, they were forced to re-visit this institution. I too had felt an air of oppression in that place. Even so, the Elders who wanted the residential school to remain standing, did so to declare First Nation resilience. While the rest of Canada celebrates 150 years of presence, First Nations do not join in the celebration. They remain in a disadvantaged position politically by living under the Indian Act. A Certificate of Indian Status, dependant on the quantum of Indigeneity one acknowledges, is still issued (see photo). It dictates the entitlement of services financed by the Federal Government that you can access.

In Canada, the current British Columbian (BC) Government and Federal Government appear to be more determined to help, despite the slow roll out of election promises so far. At a recent United Nations meeting the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau talked about the mistakes and failure in the past of the Government to support the First Nation People and his endeavour to right the wrongs of the past.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Articles 3 and 4 states: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue, of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. I would suggest that to do that, there must be a recognition of the past and present injustices and a compensatory process that would enable Indigenous people to move ahead into the future. In North America, Native Americans sought to restore tribal, community self-government, cultural renewal, reservation development, educational control and equal or controlling input into federal government decisions concerning policies and programs. To obtain Aboriginal sovereignty it demands control of parts of the Country by Indigenous peoples. For First Nations peoples on Turtle Island and Aotearoa and the Polynesian islands this has occurred. Indigenous peoples have made it economically viable and beneficial to their communities. However, in Australia this is only occurring in isolated pockets, where there has been access to Native Title lands.

There are examples of Indigenous peoples active on self-determination issues with the government. One nation won a court battle for Native Title, but there was doubt by other Nations as to whether they would be able to continue to be financially secure and sustainable in the long term. Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) decided not to go down the Native Title way, but instead, utilised their strategic geographic
location as a coastal place beside the borders of Canada and the United States (Point Roberts). They obtained a Treaty with British Columbia (between both BC and Federal Governments). The TFN Council took the lead, being aware of the collaborative challenges that lay ahead. It began with a ‘leap of faith’ despite criticism by other First Nation Bands and some members of TFN. Their strategic plan remained inclusive of its members who were situated both locally and scattered throughout the country. TFN worked collaboratively to be sustainable, but it was also of mutual benefit not only for this First Nation community, but also to mainstream Canadian society. They built a shopping mall, being the largest enterprise is an example of economic collaborative work. The Tsawwassen Council and staff were constantly aware of listening and observing the community environment, ensuring they always communicated well and listened for feedback from members.

Among other nations though, advocating for the rights of Indigenous people appeared different, depending from whose perspective it came from. In Hawaii, there remains active resistance to American dominance. However, to some locals like the Japanese driver I had (a former representative for Japanese Airlines) who replied, when I asked his thoughts about Hawaii activists ever winning their fight for independence, said that there was ‘no way’ that they would win. He suggested that the activists were reluctant to ‘move on’. This I found interesting coming from a non-Hawaiian person. In the Scandinavian countries of Finland and Norway, the Sami Governments were advocating for the rights of their people. Notable Sami health professionals were challenging the colonisers to give them adequate resources to address Sami needs. While in Vancouver the First Nation Health Council was ensuring that the rights of their First Peoples to be cultural safe within the Health System, were being adhered to. The recognition and honouring of treaties by the coloniser, and the principles within them of self-determination by First Peoples’, dictated the amount of economy that was allowed.

**Economy – Land & Sea, Strategic and Sustainable**

During my travels, I heard that Indigenous peoples saw that it was important to have good governance that ensured sustainability and forward movement of the community. The control taken up by First Nation communities developed into unique forms, for example:

In Vancouver, the Tsawwassen First Nation’s (TFN) economic viability through the development of the TFN Mills shopping complex and real estate as business incentives, were pivotal in their treaty with the British Columbian Government.

TFN has had its own Government since 2013, the Tsawwassen Legislature, consisting of 13 TFN members elected at a general election, and the Chief. They discuss and make laws which form the principles that fundamentally organise the Nation. The TFN Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018 states: “Twawwassen First Nation will be a successful and sustainable economy and an ideal location to raise a family… Our Government will help us achieve our goals by communicating, being respectful and taking full advantage of our Treaty powers.” TFN obtained considerable finances because they wanted to work in collaboration with other services and organisations and not be aggressively active. In fact, after 2021, TFN property tax rates will no longer be tied to Delta’s (a BC local Government) rates.
The Tsawwaasen First Nation have retained a culturally growing community who are further developing their cultural identity. Their customs and law are strong and written into their policies. For example, land is passed down through the blood line only. They realise that they are responsible for the land to care for it, but not to own it. There exists within staff and leaders such as the TFN Council members a strong passion to work for community by doing something practical instead of criticising. The challenge is high expectation but the importance of good quality delivery. There is a gap between those who work with Government and move quickly for the community’s benefit, and those who are conservative and live under traditional principles. The craft is to bring both together.

The Chief, is 26 years young but a futuristic thinker. He does not have the baggage of the past but lacks life experience. Therefore, the current Council, which is all female, and other male role models will guide him. TFN remains a consultative community where there is input to and from community on any changes. For example, seeking agreement or obtaining information to and from Elders so that it is not a burden to them is usually done over a recreational activity centred around food.

In Whistler, BC, The Squamish & Li’lwat Cultural Centre is a leading model. The Squamish Nation and Li’lwat Nation came together to sign a unique protocol to work together. It has taken nine years for this Cultural Centre to be economically viable and self-sustainable. The Centre is strategically located at Whistler, BC, where year-round sporting activities is available. The mountain bike championships in summer, and in winter, the snow and glacier activities on Mt Whistler. Festivals generate sales for small businesses but more recently they have held the Paralympics. Investing in mentoring 400 youth in a year supplies those Nations they came from, with a stronger and viable community that ensures sustainability in the future.

The Kamloops Indian Band otherwise known as the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc is a First Nations Government overseeing the 1,000 members, within the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council in the BC Interior. It lies in a strategic location at the confluence of two great rivers, the North and South Thompson Rivers, enabling it to utilise this economically important location. The Thompson River University Health Faculty under the guidance of their First Nation staff members are currently working with Kamloops Indian Band in Indigenous research.

In Hawaii, the beauty and richness of the tropics lends itself to the economy of this Country. It relies heavily on the Tourist Industry for local employment and trade. For tourists, this nation provides an
opportunity to relax and recuperate away from their stressors. A Hawaiian Samoan person spoke of the importance of having a strong work ethic that is enhanced by a deep spiritual character. This he believed, would prevent complacency and disadvantage. The person was scathing of Hawaiians who do not wish to be employed and just enjoy the casual lifestyle, but all his adult children had been sent back to Samoa to learn their language and culture. They now have good jobs. To him the Hawaiians are divided but in Samoa they are “united by God”. When I asked if he could recognise the impact of trauma on his family he said that having a deep spiritual Christian connection and a strong family upbringing made a positive difference. He recalled that his father was an alcoholic but was touched by the Lord, the whole family became Christians after they saw the change in him for the better. He believed it was these values that enhanced a young person’s resilience.

The Sami in Finland and Norway on the other hand, have diversified away from their reindeer herding into other jobs within mainstream, to provide for their family and community. There is a viable tourist business facility in Karasjok, Norway and Siida in Finland, that educates tourists on culture, demonstrates the art of silver jewellery making and retails several cultural artefacts and goods. There is a regular bus load of tourists that venture through, that guarantees sustainability. (see photo).

First Nation organisations are aware that they need to endure and be relevant so their services and programs must be community driven. Two examples are firstly, the Toronto Council of Fire Native Cultural Centre which desires to be an autonomous, vibrant cultural agency that involves and serves the Indigenous community with confidence for, and commitment to, their well-being. Secondly, Te whare wananga o Awaranuiangi, located in Whakatane, Aotearoa states that they have a distinctive role in the tertiary arena because Te reo and matauranga Maori (Maori Knowledge) is central to their teaching and learning.

There is a strong link with being culturally sustainable and debt free but also being environmental sustainable. It must also be recognised though that these Nations above have been given a large portion of their land returned from their colonisers. This has been a large factor in them being able to move forward in their journey of healing.

Despite all these advances, I had observed that there was a large degree of Indigenous homelessness in the cities I visited on Turtle Island, Europe and in the USA. Health and well-being is influenced by a myriad of issues. The playing field is complex and not linear, painful and overwhelmingly sad, yet, from
the darkness comes light and life. Cultural issues are strongly linked with a people’s health and well-being.

**Health and Well-being – Resilience highlighted, Resistance continuing**

The sign of a great nation is the measure it gives to caring for society’s so called ‘rejects’ – the lonely, the outcast, the mentally unstable who roam the streets; who walk constantly, sit at bus stops all day or who lie in the shade of trees and buildings; the homeless; those who wonder aimlessly; who speak to themselves; who are always alone, with no one to have a conversation with; who do not have enough to eat each day; who do not have access to clean water to drink, bathe; who do not have satisfactory shelter to shield themselves against the elements; who are open to being violated; people who only a few really know about, to care enough, to intervene. Yet all around them they are surrounded by a society who have much, compared to them.

How are Indigenous peoples looking after their own, given they have the largest disadvantage in terms of social determinants. I witnessed an illustration of this one day. It was Sunday morning as three men, each following the other in an imaginary line, were walking on the pathway beside a main road. I observed that two of them were drunk, given the way they were walking and muttering. They followed the leader who was sober and had clearly taken the lead, given the commands he was rendering to them as they crossed over to the opposite pathway, toward the bus stop. There they waited, bedraggled and incognizant of their surroundings. I interpreted the scenario as one in which the leader would have risen early to find his friends, who had failed to return home that night. He sought to find them and bring them home safely. This took time and effort on his part but his caring attitude saved them from the dangerous possibilities that seemingly lie benign to those in a state of stupor. I assumed these men were from the Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) community close by.

The TFN Strategic plan states that “As a community, we will feel safe on Tsawwassen Lands, we will be healthy, and we will have every opportunity to achieve our dreams. We will honour our culture and practice our language…” Under this umbrella primary health programs that foster social development and decrease risk factors to enhance healthy living are designed. It is not an optional extra because, older community members have alcohol problems; the youth in community have substance misuse problems; and under TFN lore/law, if anyone or any family is found to be harbouring drug dealers on their property, a sign about their misconduct is placed in front of their house. This is type of public shaming discipline is usually enough to bring about remorse and restitution from the accused. As well as emphasising the cultural background of its people, TFN is working in collaboration with the Fraser Health and the BC Government to fulfil its vision for a safe and healthy Tsawwassen community, on their Land and Waterways.

The First Nation Health Council (FNHC) that governs the First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) remains the largest Indigenous controlled health body on Turtle Island. The Federal Government supports First Peoples through the FNHA. Funds came from Canada Health. At the high-level position, the members of the FNHC of which Grand Chief Doug Kelly (Fraser Salish Chief) governs as Chairperson, are active
in advocating. (see photo). For instance, they meet with the Federal and British Columbian Health Departments who oversee several health services. The challenge initially was to get all the First Nation Bands and Nations located in the designated area to agree and support the change in the governance of the FNHC and servicing of the First Nation Health Authority (FNHA).

The FNHC includes Indian worldviews in the context of a biomedical system. An example was given where there was cultural healing given to non-Indians after a serious fatal accident that occurred previously. It was at the First Nation thanksgiving service given to honour all those involved in attempting to rescue the victims that these people, who had been traumatised through their unsuccessful rescue effort, were then able to receive healing themselves.

In the past one prime minister was proactive in supporting First Nation people, but then when he was not re-elected, the FNHC hopes dashed for a year until a change to a conservative government allowed future First Nation health plans to be re-considered. The majority agreed that they needed to have control in their own hands. There was a discrepancy because of the differences already in health care for each area under the different treaties, but once negotiations with the Government started, then everybody came on-board. Not everyone agreed, but the Council is persevering and moving forward. Even so, there remained a high expectation from all parties. Here, the FNHC can bring First Nation complaint issues to be rectified, within the system at the high-level position, by ensuring resolutions happens. Complaints are quickly rectified at this level.

FNHC had been advocating for a change to Indigenous Health since 1997. It came about in 2007 however there was a dramatic change from 2010 in the FNHA under the leadership of their chief executive officer, who I met, Joe Gallagher (see photo below). I was shown the 5 geographical sections across British Columbia in which FNHC governs and FNHA services. Their challenge is cultural safety competency. Of its employees, 35% are First Nation, the rest are non-natives who need cultural safety training. There is also the challenge of fiscal distribution in those five geographical areas. FNHA now wants their own accreditation that is appropriate.
This leadership model in health is quite unique because when compared to Finland, the Sami Parliament does not have the authority to challenge the Finnish secondary care sector. For instance, I met a Sami person whose pregnant wife had to travel 800 kilometres to a hospital to birth her baby. In regards to epidemiological studies, there remains no central research base collecting and developing Sami specific health data.

In Friesland, the Elder I interviewed had been honoured by Dutch Royalty for her important work in choral singing (see photo above). She had travelled the world with the local Fresian choir for many years. Strengthening the community through song as many of them learnt their ‘mother tongue’ through this process. Through it many Fresians found fellowship where once they were isolated and had felt depressed.

At the WIPCE conference it was wonderful seeing ACU staff involved. Their leadership and creativity on the Conference Committee enabled this year’s event to be so successful by empowering and uplifting all involved, despite the challenges of managing such a large crowd. They were honoured at the opening of the conference as they came up the Great River to the Six Nation’s Pow Wow Grounds (see photo above).

To have specific Indigenous health services provides First Nation communities with culturally safe premises in which their health needs are addressed efficiently and effectively. The Indigenous specific birthing centre located in close proximity to the Toronto Council of Fire Native Cultural Centre is an example where First Nation women can transition over to the Centre’s parenting program and other activities after they have given birth. Even within Te whare wananga o Awaranuiangi, the nursing students provide a basic primary health care clinic for the Maori community. This had been well attended by community members and Elders.

In the same town, the development of a Youth Justice court procedure held on a Marae, and overseen by the Maori Elders in conjunction with a mainstream court Judge, have experienced better outcomes. The reason for success is that proceedings are carried out in a culturally appropriate environment and the youth under trial is made accountable to Elders of that community as part of their probation. The recidivism has greatly decreased through this procedure.

Recently there was the Royal Commission or Inquiries into Missing Women (as depicted in the art work below), the majority being Native Americans. It is also known as the Trail of Tears on Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert in British Columbia. Due to poverty and lack of public transport women resorted to hitch hiking on Highway 5 from 1969 to 2011. Highway 5 intersects at Kamloops going north where most of the disappearances occurred. It has a bearing on how women feel safe, but also evident of the discrimination toward Indigenous peoples. I travelled on Highway 97 that entered Kamloops from Vancouver in the west. I saw the changing landscape, the forest areas with snow covered mountains and desert tundra all covered in smoke. To know that I was so close to sadness and loss both due to the 1,200 bush fires burning with its 40,000 plus evacuees and those connected directly or indirectly with the Missing Women, was a surreal emotion. I was conscious that I
was among people who were grieving and suffering from these ordeals. Unfortunately, the Inquiry has not gone so well lately.

MAJOR LESSONS LEARNT

While on tour I attempted to further enculturate myself by having traditional cuisines. Dinner in Norway for instance, was within the Sampi cultural park in a turfed Lavuu shaped facility. Each group area had a central open fireplace. A tree stump served as your table and food (Saami cuisine) was served on a wooden platter. I had Reindeer stroganoff with local vegetables and a dessert made with cloudberries (Indigenous berries). Both were new to me and delicious.

There were only a couple of times when I was heading in the wrong direction, due to poor planning. My only challenges were the jet lag due to constant time differences. For example, in Scandinavia I experienced continuous daylight and changes in temperature conditions. For instance, it was extremely cold in Finland when I arrived, whereas England and Rome were particularly warm. There were the bushfires in British Columbia that constantly covered the beautiful environment with smoke filled air. I had to adjust to the different types of beds and menus in the accommodation I chose. And of course, the various languages I had to adapt to; handling different currencies; and being familiar with public transport to get to my designated locations to meet people, was always challenging. All these issues
influenced my cognitive and adjustment ability, but they do not take away the enjoyment and sense of fulfilment I had from the plethora of experiences along this amazing journey. It truly was a once in a lifetime experience.

Even so, I noticed those rejected by society in Rome, London, Toronto, Honolulu. They all looked, walked, smelt, dressed and behaved in a similar way. I noticed them because to some degree (little as it was compared to their life) I was roaming, I wore the same outfit, there were times when I did not know how to get from A to B or where I was going to live the next day, I was tired, I felt the change in climate. I was in a foreign place that spoke a different language, that abided by different rules, that drove on the ‘wrong’ side of the road, and, if I had to enter its emergency system that would involve different rules, treatment, and processes. I felt isolated even while everyone was rushing around me. My time away made me conscious of the needs of others less fortunate than I – albeit Indigenous, homeless people, refugees, the mentally unstable, the lonely senior citizens, the sick and the dying. It was a humbling experience.

Tourism brings in money for Indigenous peoples. This process can provide the opportunity to highlight one’s cultural identity and give people leverage to walk proudly. To be performing your cultural activities every day is a privilege. But the social environment is also challenging when accommodation and living expenses are costly. As I entered Honolulu I was shown 3 – 4 bedroom apartments overlooking Waikiki valued at 4 million dollars each, that had been sold out before they had even been built. Although this is an extreme situation, to live locally for Hawaiians remains expensive for most.

It was evident to me that for First Nation people the spiritual context was just as important to pay attention to as the physical was. It was important to have formal welcome ceremonies. The importance of honouring the smudging ceremony which places the importance of not bringing bad attitudes and influences when one is about to discuss things or perform a ritual. For me I found that having a Christian spiritual base and relying on others to pray for me was personally very important.

I was disappointed not to meet up with researchers at the University of Waikato because they were out on fieldwork themselves. So, one day, I would like to return to both Windward College in Oahu, Hawaii (which I did not visit) and the University of Waikato in Aotearoa. Through my international experience there are a number of issues that I would highlight as recommendations for consideration.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. If Self-determination is the right to determine one’s own political status, then there must be a recognition of the past and present history to move ahead into the future. This will reveal the injustices to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by the Australian Government. Aboriginal sovereignty demands Indigenous peoples to be in control of parts of this Great Southland. These pertain to Land and Sea rights. It requires the Australian Government to be responsible and held accountable for the consequences that they instigated in the past. With it comes the need to compensate Indigenous Australians for what rightfully belongs to them. An Apology that has Action is what is needed. The Victorian Treaty between Victorian communities and the Victorian
Parliament is currently undergoing discussion. I would like to investigate what Aboriginal rights have been covered by the Government and what still needs to be done. I will need to be updated on the progress thus far toward the Constitutional recognition vote? I believe that these processes that highlight ‘unfinished business’, require legal investigation, before Australia can have complete healing from past and present injustices to Aboriginal people. There is a need to investigate whether the genocide history by the Australian Government has been pursued in an International Court of Law (e.g. International Court of Criminology).

**ACTION – Seek legal advice on Aboriginal Genocide charges against Australian Government.**

2. Self-determination also entails the freedom to pursue one’s own economic, social and cultural development. Not many Aboriginal Australians are economically independent. We need more educated Aboriginal Australians (i.e. those who understand Western ways of doing business) to build the businesses and lobby for Indigenous peoples. Even so, business-minded Aboriginals are growing in the workforce. Other Nations have had their land returned to them. This has enabled them to have their own businesses and develop positive plans for growth and sustainability in the future. This also allows them to overcome the negative hindrances within the social, cultural and political determinants. We need to utilise Indigenous knowledge and not give it away. Aboriginal organisations must have a strong link with being culturally sustainable, debt free and environmentally sustainable.

**ACTION – Network successful businesses overseas with Indigenous Australian stakeholders (individuals or Indigenous organisations).**

3. **Community:**
Cultural issues are strongly linked with people’s health and well-being, therefore developing cultural activities and knowledge must be paramount in any programme. Issues that strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultural identity and belonging must be highlighted to give people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, hope and passion. The injustices of the past need to be identified and recognised so that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can obtain healing. In regard to this I wondered if all non-Indigenous members the Churchill Foundation had been given the opportunity to learn about the past and current issues concerning Aboriginal history and politics?

**Governance and communication:**
All Indigenous organisations must strive to have good governance and communication measures to ensure integrity, viability and sustainability. There are examples overseas that may help Australian organisations. What cultural aspects are needed to enable these processes to get better? For example, the TFN Council mentors the young elected Chief. Specific Elders, chosen for their life experiences mentor him too. There is accountability in place.
Indigenous people must also ensure in their community that there is not a gap between those educated well in the western education system and business world with those who have lived in and want to continue with their traditional culture. Both need each other and could be pursued through collaborative work / projects. It must be recognised that there is a gap between those who work with Government and who move quickly for the community’s benefit in the western system, compared to those who are conservative and live under traditional principles. The craft is to bring both together. Communities and mainstream organisations must have a strong passion to work for community by doing something practical instead of criticising. The challenge is to ensure a good quality delivery.

Aboriginal Nations/Communities should consider collaboration and sign their unique protocol to work together. There remains a high expectation from all parties, even though not everyone will agree. The Indigenous Boards of Management that exists must persevere and should move forward.

**ACTION – Investigate possibilities to network and collaborate to better the current processes when governing organisations and communicating with community.**

4. **Education:**
Indigenous organisations and collaborating mainstream services need to be aware that to endure and be relevant, their services and programs must be community-driven. They must desire to be an autonomous, vibrant cultural agency that involves and serves the Indigenous community with confidence for, and commitment to, their well-being. This requires shifting the perspective to an Indigenous dominance. This could be done by developing Indigenous specific nursing/health professionals training facilities that non-Indigenous people can join in.

**ACTION – Highlighting this in my contact with organisations and individuals to further the possibility of such facilities.**

5. **Health:**
It is important to understand the local history of colonisation for true understanding and healing to take place. For instance, a gatekeeper spoke about the history of Sami Alcoholism in which during the war years there were ration cards for Norwegians etc. At the time, the Saami had control of all the resources such as bush food. They knew the land and were skilled in how and where to get them. These were traded via their Scandinavian ration cards for alcohol. By knowing this fact this may remove the Sami ‘veil of shame and guilt’ that the dominant society had developed and stereotyped Indigenous people to be the ones at fault. There are similar stories placed on Indigenous Australians that have led to their negative stereotyping.

Primary health programs should design basic inclusions that foster social development and enhance healthy living. Health programs and health literacy should be strengths based focused
with less emphasis in deficit statistics when presenting to Indigenous communities. Specific Indigenous health services must provide First Peoples communities with culturally safe premises where their health needs can be addressed efficiently and effectively. It also provides the community member with a choice between which service, Indigenous or mainstream, to use. These should have adequate, sustained funding for Capital works, Infrastructure and Program needs from the Government. They should show evidence of community participation. Health workforces should focus on cultural humility and cultural safety to provide effective workplace change. This will then ensure that staff are culturally competent. This can be accomplished through culturally appropriate assessments and relevant accreditation. Organisations should strive to have more Indigenous employees through offering traineeships or Indigenous graduate places in their organisation. Indigenous employees should be mentored and not just made to work alone. There needs to be greater emphasis on ‘Work: Life Balance’ given the enormous stressors that Indigenous community members are placed under. Leave allowances should be relative to these.

**ACTION – Highlighting these issues in my contact with Organisations.**

6. **Presentations:**
I have personally benefited on this Study Tour, so therefore, it is important to take up presentation and conference requests to share relevant aspects of this study tour and to inform a wider audience on the Churchill Fellowship. I would also seek an opportunity to share ‘My Tips for the Journey’ to new Churchill fellows at their orientation.

7. **Publications:**
Journal articles about how to perform research in Indigenous communities; about research methodology and about the study tour itself need to be written.

8. **Networking** entails, working with Aboriginal Australian organisations and First People networks and thereby connecting communities to share knowledge and learnings; collaborating to prevent isolation; communicating to inform others within the Commonwealth about the Churchill Fellowship; and lastly, to partner in research with other nations and communities.

**CONCLUSION**

Other Nations were kept together as a community whereas Indigenous Australians were deliberately dispersed and traumatised. Cultural Knowledge, Ceremony and Rituals could not be passed on as it had been done for generations previously. Currently, Aboriginal Australians have no political Treaty or Agreement with the Australian Government, nor is there any mention within the 1901 Australian Constitution that substantiates their position within their own Country. Apart from Native Title Claims, there is little political base within the Westminster Legal system of Australia to negotiate for complete acknowledgement of Indigenous Rights to Country, whether it be Land and/or Sea. This needs to be rectified.
I found that for Reconciliation to occur it must stand on an equal footing with the minority. Changing Government policy and law offered an opportunity for the dominant community, in all nations, to learn from the wisdom of First Nation peoples, and walk with them. A few countries were working on Truth and Reconciliation Action Plans. Some First Nation peoples viewed this as a temporary act, to appease the guilt-ridden dominant population. Even so, despite Government rhetoric and unfulfilled political promises, Aboriginals continued to pursue acts of kindness; emphasise the importance of caring and sharing; truth telling; forgiveness; advocacy; justice; holistic healing; valuing reciprocity; respecting the dignity in each individual and being responsible and nurturing their bodies, their community and their natural environment.

This study tour has shown me the extent of similarities between Indigenous Peoples throughout the world. It has challenged me as I have observed and heard creative and passionate ways other Nations have developed to help their communities re-claim that which was lost to colonisation. This also challenged me to critically reflect about my work now and my future. Since returning I have given four major presentations highlighting the extent of this study tour. I am in the process of networking overseas contacts with Aboriginal communities.

I thank the Churchill Fellowship and my employer Australian Catholic University for making this tour possible for an extended period. Both funded my time away to make the best experience I could have so I could bring back worthwhile and beneficial findings to Australian Indigenous peoples, society, academia and the workforce. I now know what lies beyond the horizon I peered at, over 58 years ago.