

Hassan Aviad ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to the Adelaide Festival of Ideas and to today's session. When a stranger calls, my name is Hassan Aviad. I am the chair of the strategy council of South Australia, and I'm also a chair of the department of foreign affairs and trade council for Australian Arab relations. And it gives me great pleasure to be here with you today and to facilitate the session. So today's session for those who come across the seas with boundless Plains to share with courage, let us all combine to advance Australia fair. We may think we have a right in Australia, but we definitely don't have it. Perfect. There are plenty among us who still fear the notion of welcoming stranger and asylum seeker, or if UGI, but after decades of immigration, how do we know who is from here and who is not, and does simply being born in Australian truly make you one?

Hassan Aviad ([00:59](#)):

Because one thing we know that despite many of our differences, the one thing we do have in common is that we have all migrated to Australia and joining us today, we have Benjamin Law. Benjamin is an Australian author and journalist he's known for his books, the family law Gadjah adventures in the east and quarterly essay, 67 moral panic 1 0 1. The first of these is now an award-winning TV program with SBS, Dr. Jennifer Caruso. Jenny is an Eastern Aranta woman who lectures in Aboriginal cultures and history. Her research focuses on the impact of removal on the stolen generations and Peter Drew. Peter is known for his clan Stan post installation campaigns, challenging Australian identity, most notably real Australians say welcome and for works based on the Ozzie folk hero Mongo fan, welcome to our panelists. And we'll kick off by asking why did we stop upholding the values of our national Anthem and what the fines, the real Australians of today. And I'll open it to you.

Benjamin Law ([02:05](#)):

I think it's almost the perfect metaphor that very few of us know the second verse of our Australian Anthem. I mean, when, when you say those words, we probably are familiar with them now, but if advance Australia fair just kept playing to its second verse. I doubt very many of us would be able to recite what are apparently our national values. And I think that that's kind of a very fitting metaphor for how we've forgotten our, our shared, our shared foundation story or what we aspire to in the first place, you know, and it is an aspirational goal. Those values that we're supposed to uphold, but they've really kind of slipped our grasp. And I think, especially with, especially with this country's asylum seeker policy, how it's only gotten more cruel, it hasn't, it hasn't gotten really, you know, less cruel as time gone as time has gone on with every successive government, no matter what their political leanings it's gotten worse.

Benjamin Law ([03:01](#)):

And I thought it was kind of an interesting an interesting point this week, where it was almost being said in celebratory terms, how low our migration had gotten this year, that it wasn't an anomaly that our migratory levels, like I wasn't really aware in our country yet that we'd reached a point where migration was kind of conflated with asylum seekers. But the fact that that's now the discussion that, you know, over 10, less than 10,000 people were accepted into this country as migrants, as opposed to last year, to hear that discussion being had as a positive thing I thought was very telling.

Speaker 3 ([03:41](#)):

Definitely. And

Hassan Aviad ([03:42](#)):

It's really interesting because it doesn't mention anything in diverse about visas. It does mention, it does mention, you know, it's coming from coming from across the sea. But I think one of the things that really comes out is courage, you know, with courage, let us all combine. So I think that the real focus there of courage of unity, of how that brings us altogether. What's, what's your thoughts on that?

Benjamin Law ([04:01](#)):

I, I remember finding that line when I was getting ready for the first poster project and it really struck me because it's, the rhetoric is completely different to the rhetoric that you get from I guess the left in terms of trying to make progress in that regard because it's to appeal to courage, you would more likely appeal to compassion. But courage actually speaks more to the conservative mindset because what it actually suggests is that you need courage in order to welcome people that seem different. And that's that's actually quite insightful because it suggests that fear is actually natural and inevitable. And that's something that I always tried to sort of aim my projects towards because if you come to somebody who's afraid and say, have more compassion, you just mark yourself off as being naive, innocent, and weak. Whereas if you appeal to their better nature of courage you have some, well essentially you can't cure a fear with compassion. You need to inspire people to have more courage. And so I thought that's, that's actually, because people look at that Atlanta middle allows sort of nationalistic art and say, well, it's simplistic, but that's actually quite psychologically insightful to appeal to people's courage. Right?

Speaker 4 ([05:28](#)):

Although I think that notion of fear that we have here and the idea why do we have to, why do we have to have courage to invite people to this geographical space? I mean, what is it about, you know, what you've got to gird your loins and bringing these brown pet skin people, and these people who are coming from all parts of the earth and you going to be a hero because you do that really, that's a, you know, that's a wonderful concept. And then this notion of you know, advance Australia, fair fair for who and fear of what skin color it's embedded in our history. It's embedded in the history of the of this nation. When you go back to Federation and the ideas of what would this nation look like as we went to, you know, as a combined as a combined nation and all the discussions were about you know, mainly for an eight, the Anglo Saxon rights.

Speaker 4 ([06:29](#)):

So that notion of fear, it, you know, started well before Federation and the, is those conversations started well before Federation. So I suppose fear is the is the springboard that has to be broken down in relation to when we're looking at the arrival of peoples from all parts or all parts of the earth, let alone from the fact that we are supposed to be a nation that you know, is it looks at the ideologies of enlightenment and inclusion and, and inclusiveness. And, but it's sort of like inclusion and inclusiveness slowly as you look like us. And I that's that needs a whole lot of unpacking. So therefore the work that you do then says, you know, I mean, I saw your posters and I looked at the posters and I went, that's my great-grandfather there because he's Afghan heritage.

Speaker 4 ([07:37](#)):

So Afghan heritage Muslim, the state wouldn't be the state without people like my great-grandfather and the opening up of of the state. And even back then you live the, the Muslims lived on the other side of the railway line because you couldn't associate, you, weren't allowed to associate with with white society. And I was, you know, thinking when you did the welcome to country and, you know, there's

been a lot of noise about what comes to country et cetera. You know, and people saying, why do we have to have this? We have to have this because we need to be reminded constantly and regularly that this country was occupied before the arrival of any peoples on any boats from anywhere else. And so therefore the identity and sovereignty yeah. If this nation was in existence before any of those arrivals. And so therefore our current day acknowledgement of country is about looking at our identity as a nation and an inclusive and inclusive identity, I think

Speaker 3 ([08:55](#)):

On the question, the question,

Hassan Aviad ([08:59](#)):

Well, identity what does it define? How are we defined as Australia? What does it mean to be Australian? How do you get that tick in the box that says you're an Australian? I mean, we constantly sort of debating this. We're constantly having a discussion around identity, and I think identity is quite evolving throughout history. It, what does it really mean to be in Australia? Even if we take it back to pre-settlement, you know, what does that mean? What does it mean? What's, what's, what's held in that definition. It's just all about mateship. I'm going to buy him a beer a bit later and I don't drink, but

Benjamin Law ([09:32](#)):

It's pretty simple. Cool. that's my Queensland, that's my Queensland coming out. I think like this whole concept of what is Australian is flimsy, because there are a lot of Australia's. That's the first thing, what are we talking about? Are we talking about regional suburban metropolitan Australia? Or are we talking about, you know are we talking about the 75,000 years of indigenous history, or are we just talking about white history? Like, we don't seem to get into the specifics of what we're talking about when we talk about Australia, because Australia is a mosaic, you know, even first nations are mosaics. And we talk about Australia as a multicultural country, but one of the conversations I've been having with indigenous mates lately is how Australia was already a multicultural country before colonization because of how many first nations and how many languages there were. So, you know, it takes these kinds of pivots for us to reframe how we even see our country in the first place. It's why I find Peter's work so valuable. It's why Jenny's work is so valuable with the research that, that you do. We, we, you know, in, in some ways, John, Howard's right in that we need to know our history better, where he's wrong is that he has a very particular view of history.

Benjamin Law ([11:00](#)):

It's a very myopic view of history that he, that was a lot of people like him want to advocate and feed down. Australia has so many hidden histories. We have a hidden indigenous history. That's not taught in schools. We have a hidden history. That's not talking about schools. You know, the Chinese have been here almost as long as white people. And apparently some Chinese people even accidentally went to Australia before that, before the first recorded migrants, I found out the other day from my friend scintilla chin guy paid that there were black people on the first fleet, not black people as in indigenous Australians, obviously, but black people who were brought over by the British, because they were either intention, laborers, or they were prisoners themselves. I did not know that. And the fact that we're still learning about our own country, you know, the fact that the stuff that I'm learning about now just feels like the stuff that should have been learning about at school. You know, when we talk about Australia and what defines Australia, like, I feel like we even have a long way to go to even discovering our own path.

Hassan Aviad ([12:02](#)):

They don't want you saying when you're talking about real Australians say welcome. Who are you thinking about? Well,

Benjamin Law ([12:09](#)):

I mean, that phrase is obviously a contradiction. I mean, it's it because if, if there is such thing as a real Australians and they say welcome, it's, it's a riddle, because it's essentially saying that in order to be a real Australian, you need to have no boundary, that's it collapses in upon itself. But I mean, I chose that phrase because it's obviously a twist on sort of the right-wing rhetoric that is in order to be a real friend and you need to. Yeah. and so and it was inspired by that verse in the Anthem. But I, it came to me as a phrase while I was overseas, funnily enough, because you don't really think of yourself as Australian when you're here because you're surrounded by other Australians, but I was studying in Scotland and I suddenly became the Australian guy.

Benjamin Law ([12:58](#)):

And I thought, well, what does that, what does that really mean? And at the time the Australian federal election was on and both major parties were promising to stop the boats. And that phrase stop. The boats just really struck me as being particularly absurd. And so I made a poster in the style of a 19th century poster, and it said Australia says, stop the boats to avoid Aboriginal genocide, stop. Great. Britain's illegal migration to Australia. And I went down to London and stuck up a bunch of those. And they were very popular, but, you know, I was actually in a very interesting experience, happened to me while I was sticking them up in the east end. And I was approached by men of, I think it was on west Indian descent. It was like a man of color. And he sort of said to me, well, what's up for these posters? And I said, oh, you know, I'm making fun of the Australian sort of policy towards a song city because, and he said, oh yeah, they're the one that stopped the boats now that's good, you know, should keep the country pure. And so him and I, it really spun me out. And I sort of realized these things are not as simple as what I think they are. Identity is very, very complicated.

Hassan Aviad ([14:13](#)):

And Jenny obviously Aboriginal communities for thousands and thousands and thousands of years have been welcoming, many people, many visitors to Australia. What's known now as Australia. What's your take on the welcome. And what's your take on that invitation that you guys are facilitated?

Speaker 4 ([14:29](#)):

I think the that we, you know, when we say welcome th there are, there are different meanings within such words as welcome and different meanings in such words as sorry. For Aboriginal Australians, they, they notice simplistic shorthanded as they are within the English lexicon that they actually carry with it to with them a whole range of other meanings. So that if it's, you know, and you can say this, we, we do this you know, when we say welcome anyway. But when we, you know, when we look at welcome, we are also welcoming and inviting people to know about the history of the nation. It's I, I always sort of have this argument with around migrants, you know, this idea around, you know, we weren't here, then we didn't do this stuff.

Speaker 4 ([15:32](#)):

You know, the ever it was always, so we always noticed it's always somebody else who did the bad stuff. It, it wasn't us. And you know, my, my folks migrated here, et cetera, but you know, something, when people migrate here, you actually supposed to take on all of the history, you can't cherry pick the good bits. You've actually got to take on board, all of the bad bits. Now, the thing is that a lot of people who are boat people, a lot of people who are fleeing to this country, you know, I mean, we drive eight hours and we're in the same state, you know, so many people who are coming, they have experienced a lot of the things that Aboriginal Australians have experienced. And so I it's, it's, there's a recognition within that. So within a welcome, it's also saying, we realized that you were fleeing from something that is unbelievable and unimaginable.

Speaker 4 ([16:37](#)):

And and so this is supposed to be a safe Haven for you. But that notion of it being a safe Haven, I think is, you know, has sort of been pushed being pushed to one side. And that's you know, that, that builds the rhetoric of, you know, who this place is, who this place is for. And what do you have to do? What, what do migrant peoples, what do both peoples, what do refugees have to do to prove themselves to be worthy of existing on this continent and in this space? Well, you know, how many of, how many of you are going to go out over this weekend or have been out over this weekend? And you've got, you've had Chinese, you can go, you're going to have, look, I might go to the Greek restaurant, you know, I might go to the Italian, we have Italian at our house all the time apparently, or make a really good pasta sauce. And I was told that I might get married there. My mother-in-law

Hassan Aviad ([17:49](#)):

[Inaudible].

Speaker 4 ([17:51](#)):

So you know, why is it that we create hoops? So people who are fleeing horrors that we did are unimaginable to us.

Benjamin Law ([18:04](#)):

I think, I mean, one of the big reasons why we do that is cause we it's, there's a deep, underlying anxiety we have about our history that we feel that, well, we know that there is this illegitimacy. And so we offset that anxiety through xenophobia. And it's interesting, the way things all sort of seem to be coming together with the debate around recognition the Republic, those things are sort of coalescing, whereas they used to be sort of separate issues. And there's a sort of a deep desire for redemption, I think, in the wider Australian public. And it's kind of this is going to sound silly because I'm not sort of that way inclined, but it's, it's a kind of spiritual poverty in a way that we all suffer from, and that we sort of want to overcome in some way. I think it's

Hassan Aviad ([18:57](#)):

Arriving here at 19 myself from Lebanon. I really connected with some of the comments made before around identity identity crisis. What does it mean to be Australian, et cetera? And I remember the first time I had Vegemite that wasn't a pleasant experience. I thought it was yeah.

Benjamin Law ([19:15](#)):

About what's your relationship to vision

Hassan Aviad ([19:18](#)):

Much improved. [inaudible] The first time you had to learn what a snag is? I mean, all those sorts of languages for me the experience or an identity crisis, I had an identity crisis process because I was trying to belong. I was trying to connect. And I guess, what is the message from you around new arrival migrants, people that are aspiring to come to Australia? What is your advice to them? How did they assess, how do they integrate into society? How do they get more involved into society in Australia? What do they need to do? Or do they need to do anything at all?

Benjamin Law ([19:54](#)):

I got, I got a version of it. Yeah. This question, but in a much more hostile way when I was doing a public talk at a library, which is, you know, what about those people who keep to themselves and speak in their own languages and just stay in their own communities. And I'm living in Sydney at the moment. I'm like, what do you mean Mosman? No. And I feel like it's all the, the responsibility is always placed on the people who aren't white to have to adjust. And, you know, I, I don't really see that many white Australians learning first languages, for instance, you know, first nations languages. I didn't, I find that kind of you know, that, that kind of assumed dynamic a little bit. I don't know, a little bit strange. And at the same, of course you want to participate in Australian culture.

Benjamin Law ([20:49](#)):

I defy you to find a migrant who hasn't really tried to, to adjust and embrace everything about Australia that they can, but I look at someone like my grandmother, so my parents migrated here. And then in the mid 1970s from Hong Kong is the easiest answer. And and they took my, my grandmother, my dad's mum also migrated with them. She don't speak any English and that whole conversation now about toughening, the requirements of language to, to come into this country as a resident and then as a citizen, you know, I do find that, that discussion a little bit personally distressing because my grandmother, you know, we need to take the actual examples of people. If you actually talk to those people, they have tried their very best. But when you arrive here in a new country you need, you know, you, you need resources. If you're going to learn the new language, my grandma was really busy working seven nights a week. And if you're going to have a conversation about making it easier for these people to learn English, then you need to have a conversation in good faith about what resources, what new resources are going to be made to those community members to make that an easier task. I mean, I do think that that's a great idea, but where's the next part of the conversation and what are you actually announcing to make that happen,

Speaker 3 ([22:11](#)):

Jenny? Yeah,

Benjamin Law ([22:12](#)):

I mean, well, Australia has a history of, of, of having tests for people, whether they're allowed to come in or not. And sort of any tests that we bring in now has to have some awareness of that. But it is. I mean, it's a serious question because I mean, we do, no matter how open minded you are, we do actually want people to, to integrate. There are sort of requirements that we sort of, everyone has some sort of a list and that plays out in interesting ways. I mean, we recently had the, the marriage equality vote and some, some of the areas that had the highest no vote where in Western Sydney and there's that sort of a, that's a standard by which we'd perhaps like people to assimilate to, but at the same time, I mean, anyone coming to the country, they should be willing to adapt, but not forget everything they're

bringing in because that's the, the wealth that we have is that is that diversity, but I think, yeah, a lot of the dynamism of Australia comes from the conflict and from the, the disagreements of what our values are, that conversation needs to be ongoing for it to be interesting and bear fruit.

Speaker 4 ([23:27](#)):

I think that I actually think that there's already a willingness. I think that I think that people when they put their entire life at stake already have within built within them a willingness to take on board and and to learn and to find out, you know, the best ways that they can live in their communities. I mean, people migrated over here and settled in in areas where there was safety. You know, we have like for instance my husband's family and parents, they came from Italy post-war and settled in areas where there was safety and safety also safety with each other because they could use the same language and understand the same concepts and then work out what did those concepts, what did that language mean in the Australian way, and then adapt their thinking and their language structures to incorporate those Ozzy concepts.

Speaker 4 ([24:40](#)):

You know, I mean, you have look at you know, that really old movie about the, the Italian laborer and they quite happily, you know, use terms, quote, marks, people Daigos walks, et cetera, et cetera. Then he caught himself there. All right. And, and then laughed about himself to become accepted within the, within the [inaudible] within the society that that he was working in. But interestingly, interestingly, one of the things that I've found is that those oldies, as we call them, came over and clustered in groups, you'll find them in all of the major cities clustered in groups and the language used there is now no longer used back in Italy. So it's a really, really rich source of language. That's 60 years old. And so, yeah, but I, I think that there is a willingness to,

Benjamin Law ([25:43](#)):

And, and even beyond that, if you look long-term, there was a study that was done recently that showed that the children of migrants, or at least second generation of the first of the first generation that arrives tend to actually do academically better than the P than their peers who've been here for generations. So, I mean, if you're talking about adapting into the culture achieving well, speaking the language really well, well, the second generation actually surpasses those, those kinds of expectations because Asians we're good. That's true, but I'm not. And so I just had to get really good at English. [inaudible],

Hassan Aviad ([26:25](#)):

It's really the value, the value of that piece of paper. And what I refer to as a piece of paper is it is an Australian passport. I mean, I having grown up in war, I remember we used to go to bed with \$300 under the pillow and our Australian passport. Cause I was lucky to be born here, but my parents went back to the world when was three. But I remember that as a child, we did that every single time. And I didn't quite understand to your point when you arrive here. I think migrants and people that arrived in Australia see everything as low-hanging fruit, the opportunity is here, but how do you reconcile that? From a positive perspective. So when newly arrival, they see the opportunity worlds of the oyster, and then you've got Australians that have integrated, that have mixed, that have been living here for quite some time, then it will tend to appreciate the value of that with that paper or that opportunity. How do you, how do you guys view

Benjamin Law ([27:20](#)):

That? My sister, I think just don't acknowledge the value of what the, how the, the lineage of our institutions is incredibly long and HOD, you know, there are hard fought battles in order to have now the rule of law parliamentary democracy, but we just take it for granted. It's just the way it is. And yeah, I think it's, there should be a wider appreciation for those things in general that make it easier for immigrants to to learn those things. That's what, and we wouldn't have to rely on a silly language test. That would be actually an appreciation of actual values. Okay.

Speaker 4 ([27:59](#)):

Sorry. I am so moved to the next

Hassan Aviad ([28:03](#)):

Page. Take your time. Take your time.

Benjamin Law ([28:06](#)):

I was recently back in Hong Kong just to visit extended relatives and, you know, they're my family over there is like middle, middle, upper class and all educated and stuff like that. But it's hard in Hong Kong because there is no social safety net. So you have to earn decent coin because con you know, it's one of the most expensive cities in the world or your, and if anything happens to you, if you acquire an injury disability, like there are no, there are just no social safety nets there. And beyond that, you know, getting educated, all of that stuff, it's, it's really up to you to kind of hustle as, as parents. So when my parents moved here, I mean, one of the classic other stereotypes of Asian families is like, you're going to get educated. Education's really important. Asians love talking about education. And and so when my parents moved here and saw how robust the education system here was, like, they just thought that's incredible.

Benjamin Law ([29:04](#)):

But then of course, you know, us Aussie, born kids who were just schmucks to kind of sneer it, our teachers and my parents were horrified about the way that we spoke about school, you know, in our teen years, you know, this school sucks, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I, you know, so, so even as someone who's born here absorbing those kinds of values where, you know, teachers, teachers in this country aren't as valued as Asian cultures. So yeah, you, you start taking those privileges for granted very, very quickly. And it's not until you, I think you travel more that you realize what a kind of, quite

Speaker 3 ([29:40](#)):

Miracle of the country. So we've

Hassan Aviad ([29:42](#)):

Got a a couple of minutes to still cover this, and then I'm going to go to before to take some questions from the from the audience, which of these did you want to add?

Speaker 4 ([29:51](#)):

Well I, I think, I think you're right. I think that we doing actually within this country, we do not recognize that we have systems of protection for ourselves. They're not applied equally and they don't work equally and then becoming degraded. And that I agree and I, it is not you know, I mean, equity is different to equality and we need to focus on equity more than, than a general, you know, everybody



gets an equal slice, a slice of the pie. I think education is the most powerful tool for any, any group. And we have to ensure that we have access to education. There are many areas of inequality that are still in play. I, and I, you know, I can sit here and I can say to you, you know, how many Aboriginal deaths in custody is still occurring? How many Aboriginal children are being removed? What are the educational outcomes and achievement levels for Aboriginal people in our schools and and in universities. But when I say that, use Aboriginal as the benchmark, and then have a look that there are groups of people in Australia that you can find similarities that those accesses and not equitable for. And then they go back to that. I think that whole grand ideology, of course, who we are as Australia. Thank you,

Hassan Aviad ([31:41](#)):

Jenny. Look, we are ready to take questions from the audience. We have a few roaming Mike's around just to give an opportunity to everyone, please, if you could just limit it to a question versus a statement so we can allow, allow as many questions as we can. That was excellent. Thank you. So we have one, one question there and one on top, so yeah, we'll start up. And then a lady at the top in the yellow and a couple in the middle. So yeah, we've got plenty of questions probably up. That's fantastic. Thank you guys. Expecting me to mock everyone. Thank

Speaker 5 ([32:12](#)):

You very much for the enlightening discussion so far, but it's coming through. Yes. But the fact is that we live in a country that has no bill of rights. Our constitution part 51 26, says the cotton that has the power to make laws regarding the people of any race for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws. And we have a minister who is in of immigration who has acquired the powers that be the envy of many dictators and, and who has denigrated asylum seekers, refugees. They useless and also takes every opportunity to denigrate black Africans. And I just wonder, where do we go from here? How do we reverse this process when it seems to be getting worse?

Hassan Aviad ([33:09](#)):

Thank you. Just anyone in the panel, anyone would like to comment

Speaker 4 ([33:13](#)):

Stand up and protest, protest works, make a social movement. You know, there are clusters of social movements around, but this whole notion of, of getting up and walking the streets with your, with your play cards and banging on the parliament parliamentarians doors and saying, this is not acceptable. I blame the Howard era in a lot of ways for the absolute silencing and the fear mongering and you know, use your voice and, and use your feet. You've got to actively do something to to make sure that people know that this is not acceptable in this country, our politicians.

Benjamin Law ([34:03](#)):

I mean, I think the first thing you can do is, is, is have a realistic look of what that says about our identity. I mean, I, I, I can only really speak for culture and culture is not really about changing the world. It's more about compensation for what we can't change. And the Australian identity is built on an ethic of power. That's why all the institutions are here is because when the British arrived, they were more powerful than the people who they committed genocide upon. And so that's the truth about who we are as humans and, and the people in Canberra at the moment sort of continuing to act that out. And so the very first thing you can do is adjust your sense of what Australian identity really is at the bottom, and then underneath all the layers of compensation. Excellent.

Hassan Aviad ([34:57](#)):

I might need to move on to another question, please try to limit it to a question. Cause we've only got eight minutes left on question time. So we've got a question right here at the bottom and lady there with the DME, read them as well, please. If we can get a mic ready for the lady in the middle. Thank you, please. Go ahead. Hello. Thank

Speaker 6 ([35:15](#)):

You very much for the debate. And I'm particularly interested in talking about this point of education. Quite hear you, sorry. I'm very interested in talking about the education you comment on education. I actually was born in Zambia and lived in Zimbabwe until I arrived here. And I do do projects in Africa as well. And I work a lot with different groups and particularly interested in working with new arrivals and refugees. And I've discovered with the process of work that I'm doing and also meeting some of the mothers within mothers meetup, that there is a huge lacking the education system because there's no support for parents. The government's interested in, in supporting the students in so far as getting them to into jobs so that they can become successful taxpayers. And in the schools are also introduced and interested in supporting the students. So they become successful and they can become good Australians. But also then it comes to the point where the people who are assisting them at the schools and supporting them. We'll tell them that if they are having problems with the cultural difficulties of family they can actually leave and take the money away with them. And then there's a huge breakdown with no support the children.

Hassan Aviad ([36:32](#)):

Can we please try to get to the question because I need to take other questions.

Speaker 6 ([36:36](#)):

What is going to happen with, with why aren't they supporting mothers in Africa? We've got this huge question,

Hassan Aviad ([36:42](#)):

Please, please, please. I need to stop you there. I've taken the question from you. So we're focused on education wide and the families and the mothers supported. Happy to take that. Thank you very much. We'll take that question from you. Anyone would like to answer it. Mothers are

Speaker 4 ([36:58](#)):

Never supported the and mothers of color I never supported. There was tends to be a lack of understanding and an unwillingness to understand that families are not structured. Families of my my birth families are not structured the same way that whites white families are we? Yeah, so we need to work within the system to change the system. Thank you,

Hassan Aviad ([37:25](#)):

Jenny. I've got a question with a lady in the beanie. Thank you.

Speaker 7 ([37:28](#)):

I just want you to comment on the difference between the power that an Australian passport gives us as mostly white Australians to travel any country in the world, as opposed to the really strict, horrific stuff that happens to any refugee in the world where they can just be locked up indefinitely. I actually have

Benjamin Law ([37:50](#)):

Those passport rankings now where they assess, you know, how powerful your passport is because of course, if you come from one nation state versus another, you have liberties to travel places without these and Australia is, is one of the most powerful passports. Like not only do we have a passport in the first place, but to be able to wield that, like I remember going to, when I was traveling to India, like people were just fascinated at you know, where I was having conversations on the train, just how far I could have gotten with that passport alone, that they were just applying to travel to not as a, not as a refugee, not trying to get a migration, but just travel to we're incredibly privileged. I mean, I can't say anything. Yeah. Excellent. Excellent.

Hassan Aviad ([38:31](#)):

The lady at the top in the yellow, she's put her hand up first, please. So we can get a mic. Thank you very much. And we've got a district. We can hold the mic here to the middle, please as well. The gentlemen with the lovely brown beanie and the 20 year Scott.

Speaker 7 ([38:52](#)):

Okay. Hello. I'd like the panel to comment on the context of the discussion and I'm national ability to analyze. I'm really baffled because it seems to me that we live in the 21st century where the internet communications, Facebook international space travel, international capital international labor. So many things are in an international standing. We're traveling to Mars. We're looking at Seattle as a universe, our neighbors on Mars and Venus today. They're not why are nation states so important? Why is why is this notion that nation states that came out of a medieval world where there was a flat earth policy and where, you know, before Darwin said that humans were animals.

Hassan Aviad ([39:42](#)):

Thank you. So the question is around, why do we have nation

Speaker 7 ([39:45](#)):

States? Why do we, why are we grounding? This argument in that nation states are, are immovable. When we really looking at, at a world, a blue planet earth in the solar system. Thank you very much.

Hassan Aviad ([40:01](#)):

Thank you for your question. Any of our panelists,

Benjamin Law ([40:06](#)):

I was about, I was about to say, you know, I completely take your point from a more macro philosophical level. Absolutely. But it does remind me of the question sometimes. Like, why do we talk about race? We were part of the same race, which is the human race and race shouldn't have to matter, but we live in a reality where it does. And there are certain cultural and economic privileges attached to our community groups. Similarly, the geopolitical reality at the moment is nation states. And that's why we have to talk about it rather than ignore the realities of the cultures in which we live.

Hassan Aviad ([40:46](#)):

Probably room for one more question from, from yourself. Hopefully if it's quick, we'll be able to get another one. And otherwise that's the final question.

Speaker 3 ([40:55](#)):

From the minute

Speaker 6 ([40:56](#)):

We're born, we're encouraged to believe that strangers are dangerous. And so it concerns me. And I'd love your opinion on how we change the understanding of the word stranger, because strangers are dangerous. We're taught that from birth. Yeah.

Hassan Aviad ([41:12](#)):

Thank you. So please, each, each of you, if you can comment on this though, this,

Benjamin Law ([41:15](#)):

Yeah. This really gets to, for what we're talking about in the previous question is slightly on it as well. There's this quite a view amongst people who are, let's say more compassionate that the other side just don't understand that strangers aren't really dangerous and it's just about, they need to get the right information about asylum seekers and then that will change their minds. But it's, that's not really the case. I mean, temperamentally, those people are, the conservators are different. They, they don't have as much compassion and it's, and I'm not saying that in a derisive way. I think that the polity like is it's like an ecosystem. You need the people who are very compassionate and you need the people who are just want everything to have, be very neat borders. And they, and they do talk about compassion as a liability in terms of special.

Benjamin Law ([42:04](#)):

Absolutely, absolutely. And so the way those people, it's not that they're lacking information. It's just that they have made a decision to compromise innocence for power in order to have power, you need to lose a certain amount of innocence and, and a good thing to show those people is that that rubric is endless. You can, you can give away all your innocence and get more and more power, but that system sort of destroys itself because you know as history shows us. So I just think that kidding ourselves sort of flattering ourselves into thinking that we've just got all the right information that strangers aren't really dangerous is it, it actually impedes our ability to convince the other side to act differently. Thank you.

Hassan Aviad ([42:49](#)):

Just a quick parting statement or a comment from each of you please, before we have to wrap up the session.

Speaker 4 ([42:56](#)):

Well, just on this whole strange, strange business. Okay. Tony is a tendon I'm Aboriginal Afghan. So therefore our children are Italian Aboriginal Afghan. One son has married a Dutch a girl from Dutch background. He's second marriage. So his first marriage, my first two grandchildren are Aboriginal Afghan Italian. And the little boy is Aboriginal Afghan, Italian Dutch. And my second son is married a Fijian girl. So that's Aboriginal Italian, Afghan Fijian. My daughter has married a Maltese. And so there's,

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you know, there's a difference between the forms of danger around stranger. And you know, that you can use say, you know, I mean that that's about you teach your kids around their own personal space and then they grow to understand that in a more global sense, I think. Thank you.

Benjamin Law ([44:09](#)):

And I'm just going to take it sideways because it reminds me of I recently did the second series of the SPS series filthy rich and homeless were five privileged Australians spend 10 days experiencing various forms of homelessness. That's going to be on in mid August and part 14th of August, three nights only special event SPS undermined. And part of that experience is engaging with the homeless people who live in our communities. What's a stranger. They stopped being that as soon as he chats with them. Right. Thank you.