

00:00:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

This is a 3cr podcast produced in the studios of independent community radio

00:00:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

station 3CR in Melbourne, Australia. Go to [allthews.3cr.org](http://allthews.3cr.org)

00:00:09 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

au

00:00:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

hello, listeners across the Community Radio Network,

00:00:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

you're listening to Earth Matters, recorded in the studios

00:00:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

at 3CR down in Narm in the Kulin Nation and

00:00:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

broadcast nationally across the Community Radio Network. I'm one

00:00:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

of your new hosts. My name is Kieran Stewart Asherton and I

00:00:59 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

thought I would use today's episode as a bit of an introduction into

00:01:03 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

who I am. Now, in order to do that,

00:01:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

I'm a big believer in looking at

00:01:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

history and looking at, you know, the paths that have been paved in

00:01:15 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

the past to get us to where we are today and how all of that

00:01:19 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
history shapes our current identity. Now, I'm a First nations man.

00:01:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I'm a very proud first nations man from the Waniwundian tribe,

00:01:27 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
as well as a few of the other tribes of the Yuin Nation.

00:01:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
If you're not familiar with the Yuin Nation, it is a

00:01:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Aboriginal nation down on what is now known as the South coast

00:01:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of New South Wales. It stretches south from around the Shoalhaven

00:01:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
river, around the Nowra Bombardary area, south along that coastal

00:01:47 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
strip, down, down to the Vic border, and from the coastline

00:01:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
inwards to the escarpment of the Great Dividing Range.

00:01:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
We had that little coastal plateau on the south coast. Now,

00:01:59 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to talk a bit about my heritage, I want to talk a bit about

00:02:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Beowa, or Orcas as they're known in English.

00:02:07 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Now, my people had a very sacred and

00:02:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
a very special relationship with Beowa prior to colonisation,

00:02:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
which is something we're going to explore a bit in today's episode.

00:02:19 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Now, long before invasion, my people, the Yuin people, we had

00:02:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
a very sacred and reciprocal relationship with Beowa

00:02:27 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
especially along the South coast down in the Yuin Nation.

00:02:31 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
To us, you know, these weren't just animals. They were seen very

00:02:35 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
much as our kin, our ancestors and our partners in sustenance.

00:02:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Now, to give you some idea of what I mean by kin, I don't just

00:02:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
mean in, you know, some sort of metaphorical sense or allegorical

00:02:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
sort of sense. I mean, quite literally, our people viewed them

00:02:52 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
as our relatives. Now, how this came about

00:02:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
was, you know, 20,000 plus years ago,

00:02:59 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the coastline was a lot further out to shore than it

00:03:03 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
is today. In some spots along the Yuin Nation, it was anywhere from,

00:03:07 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I think, about 8 kilometres to 20 plus kilometres further

00:03:12 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
east than where the coastline is today. Now,

00:03:15 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
a whole lot of that land over the last, you know, 20 to

00:03:19 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
40,000 years has. Well, all of it, not a whole lot of it. All of

00:03:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that land over the last 20 to 40,000 years has gone underwater

00:03:27 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
with the rising of the oceans since the last

00:03:31 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Ice Age ended. Now, for us,

00:03:35 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
with our dreaming stories, we very much believe that our

00:03:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
relatives who used to live out on this land, which is now underwater,

00:03:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
actually went, you know, through a kind of sort

00:03:47 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of dreaming evolutionary sort of phase where they actually

00:03:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
turned into the killer whales in order to, you know,

00:03:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
remain on their land and in order to survive with those rising oceans.

00:04:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
So for us, you know, looking at our dreaming stories and looking at

00:04:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
our culture, we very much recognise orcas,

00:04:08 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
or Beowa, as quite literally our cousins.

00:04:11 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
You know, they were our cousins that used to live out on the land a

00:04:15 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
bit further East to us, back when it used to be land, before the oceans

00:04:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
came up. So it is a very, very special kinship relationship

00:04:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that we have with these whales now. Not only

00:04:27 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that, we also had a very practical relationship with them

00:04:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that went back thousands of years. You know, how far back exactly?

00:04:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I'm not sure, maybe 20,000 years, maybe more.

00:04:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
But we had this very practical

00:04:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
sort of relationship where we would actually quite often work together and

00:04:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
hunt together. And this relationship is

00:04:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
one that is, you know, not just documented in our oral

00:04:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
history and in our dreaming stories, but is a relationship that

00:04:59 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
was actually very well documented by some of the very first

00:05:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

colonisers and settlers that moved into the Yuan nation. In fact,

00:05:07 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

they used to very much exploit the relationship that we had with these orca,

00:05:11 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

and they used to very much use it for their own whaling industry.

00:05:15 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Now, going back to before that, though, before 1788,

00:05:20 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

our people used to work alongside the orca.

00:05:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

And what we would do is we'd herd other whales into

00:05:28 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

bays like Twofold Bay, for example, down in Eden. And there was

00:05:33 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

a few other very strategic bays where it was quite easy to do this.

00:05:36 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

But we would hoard, sorry, would herd these

00:05:40 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

other whales using the orca. Quite often that people would actually ride the

00:05:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

orca, or we'll be out there in canoes alongside them. We would hoard these other

00:05:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

whales into bays where they were trapped and then

00:05:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

we could harpoon them and we could capture them and, you know, they would provide

00:05:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

a lot of sustenance for our clans and

00:06:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
for the orca as well. That would help to feed us for,

00:06:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
you know, quite some time, as well as a lot of other really important

00:06:08 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
resources like, you know, the oil, the blubber, the bones,

00:06:11 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
etc. Etc. Now, we had

00:06:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
a lot of protocols in place here that,

00:06:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
you know, obviously ensured sustainable harvesting of these other whale

00:06:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
species to ensure that, you know, we weren't driving them towards extinction.

00:06:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
There was also, you know, a lot of rules and protocols in place around what

00:06:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
particular whales we could hunt, what we couldn't hunt. You know,

00:06:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
ages and genders and species of different whales,

00:06:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
different times of the year as well. You know, you couldn't hunt certain whales at

00:06:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
certain times of the year if they were mating or breeding or, you know,

00:06:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
they were migrating through and they didn't have much food themselves.

00:06:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
You know, no point hunting a whale that hasn't been fed probably

00:06:52 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

itself, there's not enough meat on it. But, you know, we had all of these

00:06:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

different protocols and rules and policies in place around

00:07:01 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

hunting these other whales. Now, a part of these

00:07:05 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

rules and policies, protocols, whatever you want to call them, was what we called the

00:07:09 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

law of the tongue. Now, this relationship with

00:07:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Beowa or with the orcas is a relationship that

00:07:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

very much was reciprocal. You know,

00:07:21 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

we used to provide quite a lot of these resources from the hunted whales back

00:07:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

to the orca in particular. One resource that we

00:07:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

always ensured that we gave them was the tongues of the whales that we

00:07:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

would hunt. So, you know, orcas very much enjoyed other

00:07:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

whale tongues. It was like, very much like a delicacy for them, I suppose.

00:07:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

So a part of the rules was, you know, once we would

00:07:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

harpoon and capture these other whales, we would cut out their tongues and



00:07:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
give their tongues back to the orca, as well as, you know, certain organs and

00:07:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
certain other parts of the whale. Now,

00:07:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
this relationship, as I was saying, you know, very much continued on for

00:08:01 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
thousands of years. It continued on post colonisation, when settlers

00:08:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
first moved into the region, down around Eden and Twofold Bay.

00:08:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
They documented this relationship that we had and,

00:08:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
you know, these different methods that we were using with the Beowa

00:08:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to hunt these other whales. And the settlers

00:08:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
very much co opted these systems for themselves and

00:08:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
began to exploit these systems for themselves. Now,

00:08:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
part of this did involve employing,

00:08:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
if you could use that word, employing some of the local mob

00:08:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
from the Eden area who already had this relationship

00:08:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
with Bepwa or with the orcas and,

00:08:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
you know, they'll take mob out on these whaling vessels

00:08:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and they would, you know, rely on the mob singing the certain songs

00:08:54 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and, you know, performing certain certain practises to

00:08:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
get these killer whales to or orcas, sorry,

00:09:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to herd all of these other whale species into places

00:09:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
like Twofold Bay, where they were essentially, you know,

00:09:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
trapped in and they could be harpooned more easier by the settlers,

00:09:15 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
whaling vessels. Now, the practise

00:09:19 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of, you know, splitting the bounty with Beowa,

00:09:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
giving them the tongue and other organs.

00:09:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
This was also well documented by the early settler whalers as

00:09:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
well, and it was very much a practise that they continued on for quite

00:09:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
some time. Pardon me. They knew that, you know, they would have

00:09:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to split this bounty, otherwise the orca wouldn't

00:09:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
want to continue this relationship and they wouldn't help them anymore.

00:09:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
So, you know, they were very happy to do that for the most part.

00:09:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Now, this story takes a bit of a turn here,

00:09:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
unfortunately, where it gets a bit sadder and it gets a bit more.

00:09:57 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Well, look, we're about to talk about colonial erasure and that colonial violence,

00:10:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I suppose. So, you know, when we look at colonisation, it didn't just bring the

00:10:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
dispossession of my people, it also very much broke up relationships.

00:10:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
So, you know, the whaling industry down around Eden on the

00:10:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
South coast turned our sacred kin into commodities.

00:10:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Settlers saw orcas and whales as resources to

00:10:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
be exploited, not relationships to be respected.

00:10:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Yuan people were very much pushed off of country. We were cut off from

00:10:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
our waters. We were silenced when we tried to speak out around our old ways.

00:10:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
And for the most part, we were very much cut off from that whaling

00:10:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
industry as well, with the exception of very early on when

00:10:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
many of the settler whalers exploited some of the mob's labour

00:10:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
down there and exploited our relationships. After a while, though, you know,

00:10:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the orcas got to know the settler whaling vessels and

00:10:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
it kind of got to a point where they didn't need mob anymore.

00:10:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
You know, they could cut mob off. They didn't require

00:11:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
blackfellas with these sacred knowledge to come out on their

00:11:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
ships anymore, because they could just go out in their whaling vessels and, you know,

00:11:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Beowa would see that vessel and would associate it with, you know,

00:11:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
this relationship that we've got and would come and help these whaling ships.

00:11:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Now, where this all went wrong as well, there was

00:11:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
actually a whaling vessel that came in at one point

00:11:27 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
during the late 1800s, and this

00:11:31 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
whaling vessel didn't follow these protocols around

00:11:36 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
giving Biowa their share of the bounty.

00:11:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
And what they did was they came in and they essentially exploited

00:11:44 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the system and process that was happening, but they took the whole whales. You know,

00:11:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
they didn't cut out the tongue, they didn't give any of the organs from

00:11:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
these hunted whales back to Beowa you know, back to the orcas.

00:11:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
And as a result, the orcas

00:12:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
were very frustrated. You know, understandably, you know, they had done all this labour

00:12:07 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and they weren't paid their fair share of the, you know, the profits or

00:12:11 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the bounties or, you know, whatever you want to call it from the labour.

00:12:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
So they started to actually revolt a bit. And they

00:12:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
started to revolt in ways where, you know, they would start actively

00:12:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
hindering the whaling vessels, doing stuff

00:12:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
like getting in their way, pushing them off course, barging their boats and

00:12:31 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

whatever else to, you know, let these people know that they weren't happy with

00:12:35 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

the fact that their labour had been exploited and they hadn't been

00:12:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

given their, you know, their due payment for it as

00:12:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

well as, you know, I'm only guessing here, but I would assume they were

00:12:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

also very unhappy with the way that things had changed. You know, they went from

00:12:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

being this very reciprocal kinship relationship

00:12:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

with the mob down there to suddenly being very exploited

00:12:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

by the colonial whaling industry.

00:13:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Now I want to talk a bit about Old Tom.

00:13:05 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

So Old Tom is the name of one of the Beowa

00:13:11 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

that used to live down around that area. And he died sometime

00:13:15 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

in September, I think on the 19th,

00:13:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

1930, I think it was, when his body was

00:13:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

found floating in, I think it

00:13:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

was Twofold Bay maybe. But anyways, his body, you know, was found sliding.

00:13:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Unfortunately, he had passed away. And not only that,

00:13:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

in the lead up to this, in the decade or so prior to

00:13:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

him passing away, quite a lot of his pod had actually

00:13:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

moved on from the area. You know, they, I suppose,

00:13:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

got fed up of being exploited as well as the way

00:13:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

that the local environment was very rapidly changing. Because, you know,

00:13:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

the colonial whaling industry was not one that was built on sustainability

00:13:57 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

practises like first nations people. It was instead a highly

00:14:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

extractive one. And these settler whalers

00:14:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

were coming in and just absolutely taking everything, just decimating the place,

00:14:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

you know, not just whales or the seals and stuff like that as well.

00:14:13 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

And you know, a lot of the other primary food sources for Beowa

00:14:17 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

were being disrupted, being overfished and over

00:14:21 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

poached and just being decimated by the new settler

00:14:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
fishing and whaling industries. Now back to Old Tom.

00:14:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
So Old Tom hang around, he was like

00:14:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the main, I suppose you could call him a patriarch of

00:14:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the pod that we used to go out whaling with and hunting with.

00:14:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
But what happened was, is actually quite a

00:14:47 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
sad story once you actually like look into it and learn it all.

00:14:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
So this is a Beowa or orca that had

00:14:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
very much, you know, maintained a long cooperative relationship

00:14:59 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
with my people down there on the South coast. You know,

00:15:03 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
as I was saying, when settlers took over the whaling operations, they took

00:15:07 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
over these relationships as well and used to very

00:15:11 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
much exploit the orca,

00:15:13 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
including Old Tom to help them herd Baleen

00:15:17 Keiran Stewart-Assheton



whales towards harpoons and into these bays where they were trapped and whatnot.

00:15:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

But, yeah, you know, as I was mentioning, that unspoken agreement

00:15:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

was broken by a lot of the new whalers moving into the area.

00:15:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

And as Old Tom aged, his health really declined

00:15:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

as well. A lot of his pod moved on and kind of left him behind.

00:15:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Well, we don't actually know if they moved on. There's also a suspicion that a

00:15:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

lot of his pod was. A pod was actually ah slaughtered a bit

00:15:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

further North up at Jervis Bay by a French whaling vessel that was

00:15:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

in the area at the time that apparently did actually take some

00:15:54 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

orca. So, you know, there's that as well. But, you know, a lot

00:15:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

of his pod had either moved on or they had been murdered. And he

00:16:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

was, you know, alone, essentially, towards the end

00:16:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

of his life down there near Eden. Now,

00:16:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

he was found, as I mentioned before, in 1930, I think in September

00:16:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

of 1930, his body was found showing a lot of

00:16:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
signs of malnutrition as well. There were a lot of reports about how

00:16:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
his teeth had been worn down and broken. You know, quite possibly this

00:16:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
was as a result of doing stuff like grabbing onto those cables and those other

00:16:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
whaling lines that the harpoons would be attached to

00:16:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and, you know, helping to drag those baleen whales in, which was

00:16:38 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
as well, a practise that they, you know, quite often did, going right back

00:16:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to pre colonisation as well. Like when we would harpoon these Baleen whales,

00:16:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the orca would grab the lines as well and, you know, help us drag him

00:16:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
into shore and whatnot. But, you know, his teeth were

00:16:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
absolutely decimated, which, you know, probably very much played a role in his  
malnutrition.

00:16:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Grabbing onto thos wire cables, you know, obviously had a far

00:17:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
more devastating impact on his dental health than

00:17:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the old reed ropes that my mob used

00:17:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to use back in the day, which were a lot softer, of course.

00:17:13 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
And, you know, essentially he was left to starve at the end of the day

00:17:17 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
when whaling settlers broke up

00:17:21 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
this relationship and broke up this pact and, you know, stopped. Stopped paying

00:17:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the fair share. Now, there is some aftermath to

00:17:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the extinction of his pod as well. There's some really. This isn't a good story.

00:17:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I'm just gonna, you know, I'm just gonna like, preface this for any of the

00:17:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
listeners. This story doesn't end very well, unfortunately.

00:17:42 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Following his death, his entire pod gradually disappeared.

00:17:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
The few that were still around, not just from the waters, but from

00:17:50 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
existence, which is a really, really sad part of this

00:17:54 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
story. Now, What I'm talking about here is a recent genetic

00:17:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
mapping that happened along the Australian coastline

00:18:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
where scientists went and done a lot of genetic mapping

00:18:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of the orca pods that call this continent home or

00:18:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that frequent this area. And they've also been able

00:18:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to get some of the genetic mapping and DNA from Old

00:18:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Tom himself, because old Tom's skeleton actually sits

00:18:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
in a whaling museum down in Eden. You can go down there and see

00:18:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
it yourself and read some of the whaling journals and whatever else where they talk

00:18:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
about the relationship that we had. But they were able to,

00:18:34 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
you know, scrape some DNA out of his skeleton and they were able to also

00:18:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
map out his genes. And the really,

00:18:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the really horrendous and sad part of this story is that

00:18:47 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that pod that we coexisted with for hundreds,

00:18:52 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
if not thousands, if not tens of thousands of years, that pod that

00:18:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
we had such a, such an entwined mutual relationship with

00:19:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and such a amazing relationship with, like, you know, at the end

00:19:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of the day, I don't know of any other people around the world,

00:19:07 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
indigenous or not, who have ever ridden wild

00:19:12 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
orcas. Now, you know, don't get me wrong, there's probably a

00:19:16 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
few dozen people in the world that have ridden orcas in their life in captivity.

00:19:20 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
All of them. I don't know of any other people who

00:19:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
have actually gone out and rode wild orcas.

00:19:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
But on top of that, not just ride wild orcas, but have this

00:19:32 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
incredible relationship, this incredible reciprocal

00:19:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
relationship, this kinship with them where we

00:19:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
both help to feed each other and we both help to nourish and nurture each

00:19:44 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
other. A relationship like that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world as

00:19:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
far as I've ever been able to discover. Now this pod,

00:19:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I'm really sad to say it no longer exists. In fact,

00:19:57 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
genetic mapping tells us that today there

00:20:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
are no living descendants anywhere around the waters

00:20:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of so called Australia that descend from

00:20:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
old Tom and his pod. That entire pod

00:20:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
was wiped out, gone forever. That relationship,

00:20:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
that thousands of years old relationship, also wiped

00:20:23 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
out, gone forever. It's a very sad part of the

00:20:27 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
story and I think it really, you know, it speaks to quite

00:20:31 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
a lot of things. It talks to, you know, colonisation quite a lot.

00:20:35 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
This is a cultural tragedy at the end of the day that was created solely

00:20:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
by colonisation. And, you know, it's, for me, it's a

00:20:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
very upsetting fact. That pod which once cooperated

00:20:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
with my people in a relationship built on reciprocity,

00:20:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
on sustainability, was wiped out within only a couple

00:20:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of generations of colonisation. The extinction is a direct result

00:20:59 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of Settler exploitation , of disruption of Yuin cultural practises

00:21:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and the violence of the colonial whaling industry in general. This severing

00:21:08 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
of this kinship, both human and non human, is just one of

00:21:12 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the many ecological and cultural losses caused by invasion.

00:21:16 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Now, in terms of colonial whaling industry in general, it didn't

00:21:21 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
just destroy orca pods, it's absolutely devastated entire marine ecosystems

00:21:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and it's very much disrupted ancient coastal lifestyles.

00:21:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Whales that were once a part of our ceremonial cycles and,

00:21:33 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and a part of our sustainable relationships were hunted to near extinction

00:21:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
for profit. Whaling stations like the one down in Eden

00:21:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
became sites of ecological plunder, where the settler

00:21:46 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
economy turned sacred beings into oil and bone.

00:21:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
This industry was never about survival for the settlers either.

00:21:52 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
It was always about extraction and about Eurasia.

00:21:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

It was always about dispossessing my people, not only

00:22:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

of land and sea, but, but of these interspecies relationships

00:22:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

that defined our sovereignty, our survival and our way of life.

00:22:08 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

And this story also speaks to this whole notion that

00:22:13 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

quite often happens here in this colony with the cultural

00:22:17 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

and information wars that happens around erasure

00:22:21 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

and romanticization. So, you know, very much you look

00:22:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

at Old Tom, for example, and we look at that orca pod and we look

00:22:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

at how it's often romanticised by settler history. And especially

00:22:33 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

if, you know, you go to these museums, these whaling museums, where they have

00:22:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

these relics of Old Tom, they have all these relics of that

00:22:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

past whaling industry during the 1800s,

00:22:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

all of these old journals and diaries and whatever else, and the

00:22:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

way that settlers still very much talk about it today, it's very romanticised.



00:22:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

But beneath all that romanticization, beneath all of the,

00:22:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

you know, feel good platitudes, lies a very

00:23:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

devastating truth which, you know, as I mentioned, is that that pod,

00:23:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

that entire pod, was wiped out as a direct

00:23:08 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

result of colonisation.

00:23:12 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Now, I've spoken for the last 20

00:23:16 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

odd minutes. We've only got about five minutes or so left of the show.

00:23:20 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

But the reason I really wanted to talk about this in the first episode was

00:23:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

to, as I mentioned at the start, give a bit of a background

00:23:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

of my own people. And, you know, why I

00:23:33 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

am so passionate about the things that I am, you know, why I'm

00:23:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

such a political person, why I'm so interested in history and why

00:23:41 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

I'm so interested in my people's culture and our sovereignty and all of those

00:23:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

other things. It's because there is such a proud history there for

00:23:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
us. There is such an amazing history and

00:23:54 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
an amazing culture and such beautiful relationships

00:23:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and kinships that used to exist prior to colonisation. Now

00:24:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
for me, you know, this is all something to be celebrated. Obviously not what's  
happened

00:24:06 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
post colonisation, but all of this stuff prior to colonisation is something

00:24:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
to be very much celebrated. It's something to very much try and bring forward

00:24:14 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
as well into our lifestyles today. When we look

00:24:18 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
at my people and we look at the reciprocal relationships we used to

00:24:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
have, not just with Beowa or orcas, whatever you want to call them,

00:24:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
but with many other species as well, like, like Mirigan,

00:24:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
Warrigal, the dingo. You know, we used to have again, such a,

00:24:33 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
such a. It's so hard to explain using English,

00:24:37 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
honestly, but we used to have such a intricate relationship with them as

00:24:40 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
well. Where again, it's not like anything you would envision through a Eurocentric

00:24:45 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

lens. You know, we didn't have pet dingoes. That's not how we

00:24:49 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

viewed our relationship. Likewise, you know, they weren't subservient to

00:24:53 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

us, they weren't our property. You know, they weren't something

00:24:58 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

to work for us very much like how dogs and various other

00:25:02 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

animal species are treated today in today's society.

00:25:05 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

But instead they were reciprocal relationships

00:25:10 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

built very much on mutual respect and mutual trust,

00:25:13 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

mutual understanding and mutual sharing.

00:25:16 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Now these are all values that we more than ever really

00:25:21 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

need to start enshrining that we really need to bring forward into

00:25:25 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

our day to day lives. Otherwise, you know, we're heading down

00:25:29 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

the same route of old Tom and his pod.

00:25:33 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

When I say we, I'm not just talking about black fellas or, you know,

00:25:36 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

I'm not just talking about the underdog, I'm talking about humans in general. When we

00:25:40 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
take a look at the amount of ecocide that's happening not

00:25:44 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
just on this continent and its waters, but right across the entire

00:25:48 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
globe, it paints such a horrendous

00:25:52 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
picture for our future. We really need to reimagine

00:25:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
ways of living and ways of going forward. And for me,

00:26:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I get a lot of that inspiration and a lot of that power from

00:26:05 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
looking at my people's history, looking at our culture, looking at all the things we've

00:26:09 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
overcome, all the things that we've achieved and trying to bring that

00:26:13 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
forward to today somewhat in, I suppose,

00:26:17 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
you know, like a cultural revitalization. Although that doesn't quite fully encapture

00:26:22 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
what I'm talking about here. But yeah, so thanks

00:26:26 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
for listening. That's me. I will be back again in

00:26:30 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
a couple of weeks to do another episode of Earth Matters on

00:26:35 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the next episode. I'm going to build on this a bit more

00:26:39 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and I'm going to again focus on my own people

00:26:43 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and my own history. But in the next episode, we're going to be looking

00:26:47 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
at today and that some of the impacts that we're facing today.

00:26:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
In particular, I want to talk about PFAs per

00:26:55 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
and polyfluoro alkaline substances, if you don't know what they are. But yeah,

00:27:00 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
I'll be back soon to talk about PFAs, to talk about the way that PFAs

00:27:04 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
is impacting our food and water systems

00:27:08 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
today, as well as the environment in general, as well as

00:27:12 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
the massive health impacts it's having on some of our Aboriginal

00:27:16 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
communities, not just in the Yuin nation, but right across this entire

00:27:20 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
continent. So tune in again next time to

00:27:24 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
hear me talk a bit more about that. And then after I do that episode

00:27:28 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
for the following episode, I'm going to be talking about some

00:27:32 Keiran Stewart-Assheton  
more contemporary stuff that's happening around this continent.

00:27:36 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

And I would just like to give a quick shout out and thank you to

00:27:40 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

the Community Broadcasting Foundation for their ongoing

00:27:44 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

support with this programme and many others,

00:27:47 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

and for ensuring that we can actually have these conversations and

00:27:51 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

get these messages out to the public. So big shout out to the Community  
Broadcasting

00:27:56 Keiran Stewart-Assheton

Foundation. My name's Kieran. Until next time. Have a good one.