

## 2020 Summit – What a Weekend!

Parliament House. The steps lined with reporters. Crowded with the famous, the politicians – the best and brightest in the nation going forward together – and me.

A beautiful clear calm Canberra morning – yet I could feel the shared excitement, the sense of opportunity. So many feelings running through my mind. I knew something special was about to happen – and I was going to be part of it.

Brought together in the Great Hall like a precision military operation. Proud to be Australian as we all sang the National Anthem together. Then the Prime Minister's inspirational speech of what the weekend might deliver for the future of Australia.

The challenges were exhilarating. Think big, wide, long-term, inclusive and linked-up. Think outcomes and impacts. The things that will take up all forward together to a future we can only guess at. The future our children will inherit from us.

Challenge - and responsibility. This is not about me, or my organisation – but the future of all the children in all the families we try so hard to represent. The sort of future we want them to have, and to be able to hand on to their children in turn. Looking around, you could sense the same thoughts in each face.

Then into our particular streams, mine 'Strengthening Communities, Families and Social Inclusion' to meet our facilitators and enter into vigorous debate and conversation. Indeed our stream was themed around social inclusion and I was amazed at the range of things laid on the table. "Same sex marriages" were debated at great length as well as the homeless and the absolute right for all Australians to have affordable housing.

There was much about creating one Australia not divided by race, religion or culture. To respect our heritage, inclusive of the great cultural heritage of our Indigenous peoples. The *Sorry Apology* be the beginning not an end.

I believe some *big ideas* were completely off the fence, one being *no new house built should be allowed to build a fence around it* - to community hubs that provide a one stop shop for people requiring support- and that support should come before a crisis situation occurred.

But not having education as a stream on its own was a lost opportunity. Including it in the Productivity stream did not allow for the real issues and the big ideas to make the big screen where all was encapsulated at the end of the week end. Unfinished business to carry forward.

It was a privilege to sit, listen and talk with such wonderful people with great minds and heartening to hear we were mostly all on the same page. I learnt a lot that I will take back and inject into my continued commitment for a high quality education for all Australian children.

I think everyone there went away with a renewed sense of hope and purpose. A sense that while there is so much to do, working together, we can do it - working together as a community and a nation.

**What a weekend. What a beginning...**