

Jason's Story

"MY OLD PEOPLE WERE DOING THIS BURNING FOR 40,000 TO 60,000 YEARS ON THIS LAND."

"AND I GRIEVE FOR HOW THE KNOWLEDGE WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM OUR PEOPLE"

"...SO WHEN I'M OUT ON COUNTRY, WHEN I SEE THE OLD SPIRIT BIRDS* OR THE WAY THE ANIMALS INTERACT WITH US WHEN WE ARE LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY,

AND THEN TO SEE THE RESULTS,

MONTHS ON AFTER WE'VE BURNED IN THOSE AREAS,

THAT'S EVERYTHING TO ME.

JUST OVER 200 YEARS AGO.

WE'VE LOST A LOT,

* YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO



THERE'S NO BETTER FEELING THAN BEING OUT ON COUNTRY WITH YOUR MOB AND YOUR KIDS AND LOOKING AFTER THE LAND. SPIRITUALLY AND FOR OUR CULTURAL LIVES, IT'S IMPORTANT THE LAND KNOWS THAT WE ARE STILL HERE.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE SHOULD BE LEADING THE WAY IN TRADITIONAL BURNING.

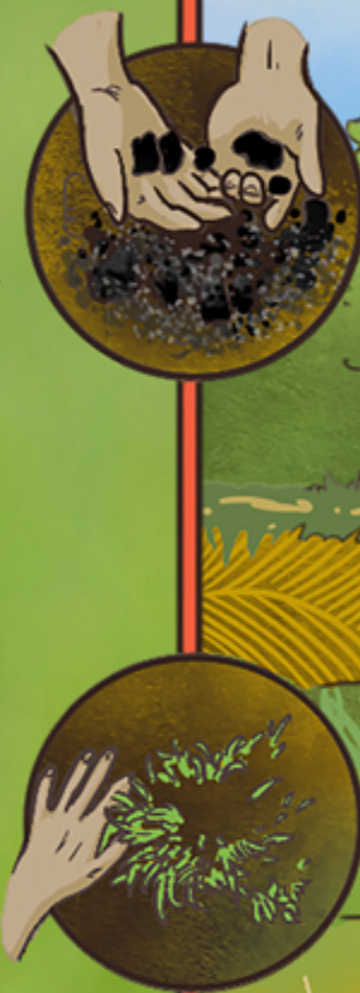


UNFORTUNATELY, WESTERN EDUCATION HAS TAUGHT OUR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SOME WRONG THINGS -

THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW TO READ COUNTRY,

THEY DON'T HAVE THE CONNECTION THAT WE HAVE TO COUNTRY THAT MAKES US ACCOUNTABLE FOR HOW THINGS ARE DONE,

AND THERE'S A LOT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND SPIRITUALLY WITH OUR FIRE STORIES AND OUR DREAMTIME STORIES.



COUNTRY NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AFTER AND NEEDS TO BE CARED FOR SLOWLY - THE WAY WE BURN. WE WANT TO ENGAGE AND TRAIN UP NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, BUT THE OPPORTUNITIES NEED TO COME TO OUR FELLAS FIRST.

FOR ONCE IN THIS NATION'S HISTORY, WE NEED TO HAVE THE NUMBER ONE SAY IN HOW COUNTRY IS LOOKED AFTER. I AM CERTAINLY NO EXPERT BUT I KNOW ENOUGH TO DO THINGS CORRECTLY, AND SPIRITUALLY THE RIGHT WAY. PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS, AND MUST BE, THE WAY TO GO.

IT'S VITAL THAT WE NOT ONLY TEACH ADULTS AND PRIVATE LANDHOLDERS,



BUT ALSO GET IT INTO OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM AND START TEACHING SOME OF THOSE YOUNG 'UNS HOW TO CARE FOR THE LAND.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HAVE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN, BUT I THINK IN THIS CONVERSATION THEY ARE STARTING TO LISTEN, AND THEY WILL TRY TO START SUPPORTING US IN DIFFERENT WAYS."



JASON ANDREW SMITH
PALAWA MAN

CULTURAL BURNING EDUCATOR AND FIRE PRACTITIONER

