



Vicki Morta

National Museum of Australia, 17 March 2021

This voice you hear is Vicki Morta, standing proudly before you as an Aboriginal-South Sea Islander descendant.

Always proud as a Ngadjon-jii woman from the Atherton Tablelands, I was born in Atherton and raised in Innisfail.

I work as an Integrated Rating onboard the RTM Weipa a huge bulk carrier managed by ASP Ship Management Group Australia and owned by Rio Tinto Marine.

I have responsibility for onboard duties such as opening and closing cargo hatches, mooring operations (during arrival and departure in and out of port), as well as watchkeeping on the bridge with the officer of the watch.

I am also filling in as Operational Caterer which means I get to work in the Galley with the cook.

We currently trade between Gladstone, Weipa and Gove carrying bauxite.

It's been 11 years loving everyday onboard and it makes me proud to do something I love for my family, my people and my Union.

This journey began in 2008 where I completed my traineeship in Tasmania, 3 years later I was made a permanent employee.

Not long after because of my perseverance in 2017 I became Maritime Union of Australia's First Female Indigenous Bosun / CIR.

I have never stopped dreaming.

And with the support from my family, work colleagues and my Union I soon aim to become a deck officer.

This will make me the first female Indigenous deck officer.

Through all of this, I remain the Ngadjon-jii woman standing before you.

It is important that every community has a voice, a voice that needs to be heard.

I say this because our communities need someone to hear and address the issues in Australia.

Our First Nations people have struggled for many years dealing with the impacts of Health Problems, the Education System, Land Rights and the rights to having a voice enshrined in the constitution.

We want control of our community, we want to deal with our children and issues our way.

This is why the people in our community want their voices to be heard.



Today our communities have to deal with problems like Drug and Alcohol Abuse, our suicidal rates have increased because we struggle to control our own youth within our communities.

We have experience and ideas about what works well in our communities but we don't have the power to make these changes happen.

There are events like sports carnivals and NAIDOC week where these are only once every so often, that are organised outside of our community.

After these events are finished the community then goes back to normal and the youth are then stuck doing what they did before.

Our community people know a one-off approach does not work.

We need follow up, we need someone to guide them in the right direction, encourage them.

Having a strong Voice that is protected by the Constitution means we could change these programs so they work better for our youth.

Our First Nation Youth are our next generation, this is why once again our voice needs to be heard.

We have too much to lose if it doesn't happen now.

We can't afford to be told to wait for a few more generations.

Our youth need our people, our elders and our culture.

With this knowledge and the education of our culture our youth will have a chance at real success.

I speak from the heart because I know and I've seen what's happening around me, and it hurts to see my people continue on going down this cycle.

This is why I stand before you knowing these problems exists because I have seen it first-hand.

Personally I have family members and friends who have dealt with problems like Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol abuse, youth in detention centres and suicides.

In the past few months I have experienced and watching families suffer and including myself, over depression where those family members have taken their lives and have left a loss in peoples hearts.

These family members were young, and seeing their loves ones still in grief.

I believe they could've been better people in pursuing their dreams to making their people proud.

We can change the way our children should be educated, we can change the justice system and teach our children our way.

We can work together.

Where us Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders we can help make a change; to better the future for our children and our children's children.

Why should it be so hard to be heard?

Why must our children keep suffering?



When we can stand together and make history for this vast nation.

This is why having our voice enshrined we can deal with all of these issues and focus on our people on our land.

With much gratitude and kind appreciation, this to me at first was not to make a big statement or projection about my achievements or my voice being heard but later on perhaps this would be an encouragement to the young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, especially to my nieces and nephews.

If I can achieve this SO CAN YOU!

Dedication and focus, no matter what personal issues one may face, it is, one's own journey that steps one towards the destination - fulfilment and pride in one's self.

Sailing around the Australian Coast and Overseas gave me local and global experience where the horizon had no limits for me, as I strive to improve everyday challenges that comes my way.

Last year, all mankind was challenged by COVID-19, a year of uncertainty.

I took the given opportunity to speak at the Maritime Union of Australia National Conference and in December I was awarded the prestigious Award from the Queensland Council of Unions - an award dedicated to an "Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Activist who has made an outstanding contribution to the Union over the Past 12 months".

This short career passage, to all my young aspirers is achievable with the right attitude and constant positivity on one's self.

And I also know that we must empower our people's voices so they can make positive changes in their communities over the long term.

That is why I will continue on having determination for a voice enshrined in the constitution.

I seek my voice to be heard and my name to be known.

This is important not only to me but to my First Nations People from this country.

So I now ask for you to walk with us in this movement and stand by us to better our future for the First Nations People of Australia.

Thank You for your time, I hope I have made a difference.