



# MESSAGING GUIDE

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# about this guide

This is a look behind the curtain at [Australia Remade](#): the way it's written and why, as well as how you might use it. It is intended for anyone who wants to carry this work out into the world.

The purpose of this guide is to reveal some of the core insights and principles behind the way Australia Remade has been written; both for greater shared understanding and for helping to craft future communications associated with this work.

We provide 6 messaging principles that we believe are important in understanding and furthering the work of Australia Remade. We show how we have applied them to the creation of this vision and then provide questions to help you to think about how you might take both the principles, and the content, of Australia Remade forward in the work that you do.

# background

Australia Remade was born out of hundreds of hours of deep conversation with people from all walks of life, in big cities and small towns around Australia. People were invited to imagine they had woken up five years from today in the Australia of their dreams: what did it feel like? How were people living? What was different? What was the same?

We wanted to explore our collective hopes, dreams and vision for how life could be. We wanted to craft a picture of Australia that shows the best version of all of us. Themes began to emerge, which we later organised into the nine 'pillars' of our Vision:

1. A first people's heart
2. A natural world for now and the future
3. An economy for the people
4. A society where every contribution counts and every job has dignity
5. A diversity of people living side by side
6. A country of flourishing communities
7. A new dawn for women
8. A thriving democracy
9. A proud contributor to a just world

While useful for structuring our thinking, in reality each pillar is deeply interconnected, part of a thriving whole.

We also invite you to [read more about how the Vision was created](#), as it offers further insight into communicating the story of Australia Remade. This guide is but one resource for you. The Making of Australia Remade and other tools, including guides to hosting your own Australia Remade workshops and conversations, are available at [www.australiaremade.org](http://www.australiaremade.org).

At its core, Australia Remade is a profoundly hopeful piece of work, and with good reason.

We've seen firsthand that people are hungry for hope, for possibility. We are eager to be asked what we want and to be taken seriously. We long to approach our challenges with creativity and imagination. The word "vision" ('if only our leaders had vision'), came up time and again.

It seems then we have two choices: wait for visionary leadership to come from someone, somewhere else. Or step forward ourselves – in all our imperfection, with all our differences – and start to talk about the Australia we want.

Onwards!



# Guiding principles

## for messaging Australia Remade

We hope you find this guide illuminating and instructive. Like the Vision for Australia Remade, the following 6 guiding principles are meant to inspire and help, not constrain or dictate.

### **We build up our own story, we don't just criticise the existing one.**

This is the most important principle. . . Simply put, we can't be what we can't see.

If all we can imagine, because all we talk about and hear about, is what is wrong with the world – then it's very difficult to reimagine the world anew.

Wherever possible we need to tell our story by leading with our vision and values, rather than the problems we're seeking to address. We do this to make sure we have a genuine alternative to offer; that we don't exist only in opposition to the dominant story or system. We do this to avoid leading every piece of communication with, 'boy, have I got a problem for you!' and then wondering why few people seem eager to join the cause.

Don't conflate angry language and demands (or lack thereof) with resolve to change what

needs changing. Whether it's climate change or inequality, research is finding over and over that people believe in the problems. What they don't believe in are the solutions; the real possibility that things could be different. That's our work: we don't need to keep re-prosecuting the case for why things are bad, **we need to help people believe that meaningful change is possible.**

Speaking our own vision doesn't mean we can't be critical, speak truth to power or speak to the righteous anger and concerns of those seeking a better world. There is, and will always be, a role for putting out fires, standing up to injustice and stopping bad ideas from becoming reality. It's just that we can't stop there. Playing defence alone won't lead to transformation; it won't galvanise people around a new vision of the world we want; it won't build a movement. It's easier to invite people into a 'big baggy tent' and **it is more impactful and sustainable, to connect with our audience over shared dreams than shared despair, disdain or fear.**

## The principle applied to Australia Remade

Australia Remade seeks to put words around the vision of the kind of society we actually want to live in, because that's one thing people say is missing from our public debate at present: vision.

Australia Remade is deliberately positive, a simple affirmation of how life is, can be and will be when we know we're on the right path and succeeding. It is not a list of demands, a policy discussion paper, or an analysis of Australia's problems; it is a breath of fresh air.

In Australia Remade we do reference problems, but we deliberately put twice as much emphasis on vision and solutions, knowing that any statement of what we want implies a critique of where the present system falls short, but in a way that allows people to imagine something better.

Australia Remade document went through many iterations over the course of writing, listening and re-writing. In some of our earlier drafts we led with problems as explanation for why this work needed to be done, in our desire to give voice to people's frustrations and fears.

In the introduction to Australia Remade, for example, we originally wrote reams of text explaining how broken the system is. We wrote about rising inequality, the terror of climate change, government corruption and the increasing meddling and influence of corporations in our lives and democracy. And yet we kept getting stuck, knowing people would likely switch off in denial, despair or mere tedium.

We consciously changed that, moved away from outrage as our opener and ended up with something far more inviting to champion.

### Questions for you:

- Does your work tend to focus on only problems and putting out fires, or do you take time to deeply focus on solutions?
- Where are opportunities in your work to lead more with the Australia Remade vision?

## We use conversational language and avoid technical terms.

There is no point writing about things if language excludes people.

Using simpler terms not only enables more people to understand what is being said but it also holds those of us doing the writing accountable. When we step out from behind our jargon, the real meaning of our message becomes clear and we avoid making the assumption that we all know what we are talking about.

### The principle applied to Australia Remade

**Australia Remade comes out of hundreds of deep, hours-long conversations** with everyday people from many walks of life, as well as consultation with issue experts (whether they're experts in economic policy or experts in surviving on small government pensions!).

Our intention is that our chosen words feel more like a conversation, less like a lecture by an academic. This is a vision that's about all of us and so our language is for all of us.

We've tried to keep things fresh, express ideas in ways people haven't heard a thousand times before. At times we used the exact words or phrasing of the people who were speaking to us of their vision. We deliberately chose shorter words and sentences over longer ones. All of this is to build an on-ramp for people that's accessible and engaging, not wonkish or stale.

In Australia Remade we talk about 'a natural world for now and the future' not 'sustainability'. We talk about a 'new dawn for women,' not 'women's rights'.

In Pillar Eight – A thriving democracy, we write "with big money no longer funding political campaigns and politicians, our leaders are visionary". We could have written something about achieving campaign finance reform but spelling it out simply helps us not only to communicate clearly but to hold ourselves accountable to meaning.

## Questions for you:

- Have you checked your communications for jargon, technical terms and 'dead language' recently?
- How can you communicate the value and vision of Australia Remade in simple, compelling messages?

## We emphasise outcomes over process.

*Talk about the cake, not the recipe.*

Advocates, academics and politicians are waking up to something that business has known for a long time: when we talk about our ideas in terms of benefits and outcomes, we focus people's attention where it matters most, and they're more likely to get on board. When we talk to the public about policy, process and costs, we focus their attention on the irrelevant disagreements and detail: the conversation gets hijacked and we no longer make decisions based on what is good for people and planet.

In essence, **outcomes unite us and give us common ground to build on** as we debate how we get there. They're a platform from which we can build a strong plan to act.

Outcomes are our North Star. If we lose sight of them, we're lost.

## The principle applied to Australia Remade

In Australia Remade, we focus on outcomes for people and planet, rather than the process behind the outcome (the policy to be enacted, the money to be spent). Two reasons: firstly, because this is a Vision document, not a policy document. And secondly, because this is a sound, road-tested principle for effective public-facing communications generally.

Australia Remade is a vision, so by definition it's a big picture document. This is not to say that there is not important policy work to be done. For anyone interested in the deep policy work please do contact us at [info@australiaremade.org](mailto:info@australiaremade.org).

In Pillar Three – An economy for the people, we write:

“Here, everyone has the right to a roof over their heads and food on the table. Strong, respected and well-funded public support systems enforce this right. It is a comfort to know that in good times and in hard times we can have the essential things we need.”

We intentionally did not make explicit welfare models, universal basic income or jobs guarantees as possible policy solutions. While these models may help to achieve an economy for the people, the first point is agreeing that this is what we want before we nut out the mechanisms.

## Questions for you:

- Where is it useful in your work to emphasise outcome over process?
- How might you use Australia Remade in your work to highlight the outcomes you are working for?

## We speak in the present, not the future.

The future! Oh how we're all fighting for a fairer, better, safer, stronger, more sustainable future! Everything will be better, or worse, in the future. But the future never gets here, and on we fight.

### **It's time to reclaim the power of this moment.**

The Now. We acknowledge in these pillars that pockets of the Australia we dream of already exist. By wrapping language around what's right and what we want more of, we seek to make more of it. Right now.

## The principle applied to Australia Remade

The vision and pillars of Australia Remade are written in present tense. When we interviewed people we actually asked them to imagine they'd woken up in the Australia of their dreams, five-ten years from today. We chose this timeframe to provide people with just enough distance from the dramas of the present day events, but not so far into the future that they felt unqualified to imagine how things would be.

In Pillar 2 - A natural world now and for the future, we acknowledge the future in the very title, but we start with an affirmation of our relationship to nature that feels real and solid in the reality of the present moment.

**"We are a part of, and connected to, this land.** We love our wild forests and sandy beaches, our deserts and grasslands, our paddocks and farms. We love our startling wildlife and awe-inspiring vistas – and so we act to protect them."

As this pillar moves into more ambitious statements about our healthy natural world, there's a change story, but there's also a continuity story. We're building on the values and strengths we already have, not hinging our hopes for survival on a magical Future where everything is somehow different.

## Questions for you:

- Where would it help to change your communications focus from 'the future' to 'today'?
- How can you communicate the ideas of Australia Remade in the context of your work while keeping them in the present tense?

## We create a sense of community, of being part of something.

Humans are wired for connection. We see this desire for belonging and connection in countless ways, from religious groups to craft clubs; family, Facebook, party politics... sporting clubs, nightclubs, universities, local markets, local neighbourhood events.

Experience teaches us to offer both a 'low floor' (easy ways to get involved), as well as a 'high ceiling' (pathways to learn, grow and contribute something substantial). We value communication that happens online and offline; top-down, bottom-up, and sideways. We know that when organisations, projects or groups of people get really big, we tend to seek out smaller subsets we can be part of, where people will come to know us and we can experience better opportunities to connect.

Some of the most surprising and successful movements of our time provide a framework, inspiration or meme for people to pick up and run with in their own lives, with little to no oversight from a top-down organisation. **They tap into the energy, wisdom, resources, creativity of the crowd.**

### The principle applied to Australia Remade

Australia Remade encourages us to realise that there is power in coming together, and that we are not alone in wanting a new path for Australia.

As we explore and develop these ideas for ourselves, we start by ensuring our language is inviting, inclusive and personal. Australia Remade is not about a handful of organisations saving the world and here's how you can help. It's about people. **We tell people that they are not alone and we make a seat for them at this table.**

No one owns Australia Remade. It is not the work of a single author, organisation or focus group; but the essence of many voices woven together and distilled into a unifying vision. While we seek to offer a sense of belonging and welcoming tribe, we have no desire to contain or control what happens from here. You might also pick this up and run with it in ways we never could have thought of: in your own lives, families, workplaces, neighbourhoods, sporting clubs, faith communities, schools and universities.

As you breathe life into the spirit of Australia Remade, we hope you take strength and heart knowing how many others are also working towards this same project.

Have a read of The Making of Australia Remade and some of our resources available at [www.australiaremade.org](http://www.australiaremade.org) to help you begin building a sense of belonging around this vision.

## Questions for you:

- How can you foster a sense of belonging within your own circles of influence – whether your family, your school, neighbourhood, workplace or community?
- How can you use Australia Remade to foster a sense of connection for and with the work that you do?

## We don't fall for perfectionism.

Almost by definition, when we put words to something big and important in a public way, we can expect to draw attention to what we haven't said, and criticism as to what could have been said better.

**But the trap is that we end up creating long, bloated 'lists' of wrongs to right, groups to reference and carefully hedged statements designed to stand on safe ground and please everyone.** Five page documents become 50 page documents that will be read by three people. Everyone's had their say, and now we're saying nothing at all.

Another pitfall is when the quest for an unattainable perfection simply becomes paralysing. That's when we let perfect be the enemy of progress, when **we let criticism (real or imagined) mute our voices before we've tried to speak.**

So put down the yardstick of impossible (and subjective) opinions about perfect. **Instead we invite you to join together in sincere imperfection, honesty and vulnerability.**

### The principle applied to Australia Remade

Australia Remade is not perfect. The Vision we share is not perfect. Our work to carry it forward into the world will not be perfect. But the values at the heart of this Vision are solid enough that

we can be confident as we go forth together to build a better world.

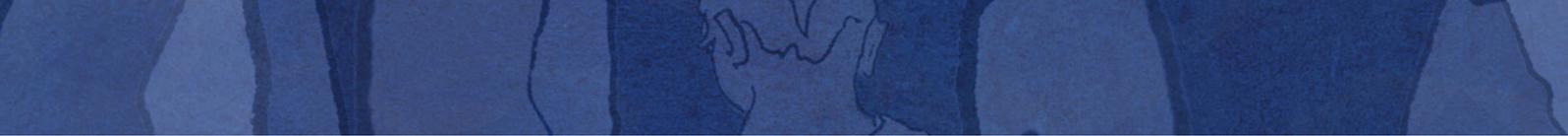
The spirit of this vision and this movement is one that embraces the good over the perfect; one where we turn to each other in a spirit of good faith rather than cynicism. We offer this vision not as the be-all, end-all destination (it cannot possibly hope to say all that could or should be said); but as a springboard to the next conversation, and the one after that.

In the Pillar One, A first peoples' heart, it was tempting to be paralysed by fear. Fear of getting it wrong, not saying enough, not saying the right things or not having the right to say anything at all. We reached out widely and listened deeply, not only to Aboriginal Elders and other respected experts, but to everyday people; Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

As with other pillars we didn't always hear the same thing, said the same way. But we did hear a very common picture, describing how we would like our nation to be and the central role First Peoples should play in this nation. We were able to put language to more than just the end of suffering; to articulate, however imperfectly, an Australia of communities that are whole and thriving. We found that on the other side of the pitfall of perfection was freedom, energy and hope.

## Questions for you:

- Do you let fear of not doing, or saying, something perfectly sometimes stop you from trying, from having a voice?
- How can you use Australia Remade to bring courage to the work that you do?



Australia Remade is a starting point. It is from here that together we can work collectively to challenge the underlying causes of the many forms of injustice that we care about. This messaging guide and the suite of other tools available at [www.australiaremade.org](http://www.australiaremade.org) are designed to help us to all pull together in pursuit of an Australia that puts people and planet first.

**There are many ways for us to do this and many examples already of the Australia we want! So let's get started!**

*"I just feel that humans are geared for hope you know. I see that in my day to day work with community...It takes someone to believe it and then a second person and then a third person and the next thing you know politicians are changing their lines, communities are out in force and it started with a couple of conversations"*

- engagement participant 2017

**[www.australiaremade.org](http://www.australiaremade.org)**



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