

LIA POOTAH COMMUNITY

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WHO ARE THE LIA POOTAH PEOPLE?

As many people are aware there are two separate and individual Tasmanian Aboriginal communities within Tasmania, each with their own unique cultural heritage and Ancestral descent:

- The people descended from the Bass Strait Islands, who include Fanny Cochran Smith and Dolly Dalrymple. Women who were captured and removed from the land of their Ancestors to the islands.
- Those descended from men either convict, free, bushranger or soldier who took Aboriginal women to "wife". Women who were never part of sealers raids, or G.A.Robinsons round-up, but women who were living free within their communities before becoming "wife".

Tasmania's two Aboriginal groups are the Palawas, descended from the captured women and sealers, and the Lia Pootah people who are descended from the women who never left the land of their Ancestors.

The Lia Pootah people have strong unbroken land ties to the place of their birth, Tasmania, and all the Ancestral places of importance, which in the past, held great cultural significance to our Ancestors. The land now called Tasmania holds the very essence of the Lia Pootah people. Because of the shame factor of the past enforced by nineteenth century policies, and the modern Aboriginal politics, many families still remain hidden and ashamed. Modern Aboriginal politics have ensured that many of our people are still forced to live in shame and fear. We, the Lia Pootah people rejoice in our heritage, which is one of unbroken land ties, family and community knowledge embracing the wisdom from the Ancestors, which we are passing on to our children.

The Elders for the Lia Pootah people are a Traditionally guided Tasmanian Aboriginal community, in this way we are a very different community to the Palawa people. The Palawa have a well documented history of an island culture, developed over many generations between Tasmanian Aboriginal women torn from their families and europeans, mainly sealers from many countries and nationalities. The Lia Pootah community has an almost two hundred year history of reconciliation and integration within the broader Tasmanian community.

This is why we, the Lia Pootah Community today carries on the traditions of the past by having a fully reconciliation policy, which follows in the Traditional Aboriginal way. We do not believe that an Aboriginal organisation, which has no

community members only employees, has the right to determine who we are. As part of our Traditional heritage we also recognise that there are eight Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities each with the sovereign right to determine the Aboriginality of their own members for their community,

- Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Community
- Flinders Island Aboriginal Community
- Circular Head Aboriginal Community
- Mersey Leven Aboriginal Community
- Deloraine Aboriginal Community
- West Coast Aboriginal Community
- Lia Pootah Aboriginal Community
- South Eastern Aboriginal Community

and that each of these eight communities have their own community Elders which give them strength. We recognise that there are three separate Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders Councils,

- The Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania
- Wallantanaliny Lydidder Southern Traditional Aboriginal Elders Council
- The Grass Roots Sovereign Aboriginal Elders Council

Wallantanaliny Lydidder Southern Traditional Aboriginal Elders Council consists of respected Elders, from other Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities, working together as a united group for the benefit of all the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Including recognition of two nations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people

- Palawa
- Lia Pootah

As a Traditional Aboriginal Community, we the Lia Pootah Community / Nation, recognise our non-Aboriginal partners, by welcoming them to our community. We also accept and respect our non-Aboriginal Ancestors, who are part of our heritage. We believe that sharing our cultural heritage is the way to make a stronger more united community for our children.

We also welcome those Aboriginal people into the Lia Pootah Community who have become lost because of the policies of the Palawa's since 1995. Wallantanaliny Lydidder acknowledges that much of our Aboriginal heritage and Aboriginal family links is passed down through families histories in the Traditional way. Our Cultural Storytellers know that for the Lia Pootah Community records of Aboriginality were not kept by the invaders, our Ancestors were never recorded owing to the "Vermin Law and genocide policies" which covered all Tasmanian Aboriginals who were living free and integrating into the broader nonAboriginal community of the nineteenth century.

As Elders for the Lia Pootah people we take this opportunity to say hello and please contact us for further information about renewing your Aboriginal ties..

Yours sincerely

Tereetee Lore (Kaye McPherson)
Spokesperson for Wallantanalinany Lydidder Southern Traditional Aboriginal
Elders Council