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The Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation respectfully acknowledges the Yalukit Wilum clan of the Boon Wurrung Nation who are the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land.

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August 2017

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

NAIDOC Week

A large crowd including groups of attentive bubups from local childcare centres gathered on a cold and windy Monday 3 July for the City of Port Phillip's flag raising ceremony marking the start of NAIDOC Week, one of their many events held under the theme *Our Languages Matter*. Outside St Kilda Town Hall, COPP's Mayor, Cr Bernadene Voss, and Todd Condie spoke, Arweet Carolyn Briggs gave a warm Welcome to Country, her grandson, Jaeden Williams, smoked the crowd, encouraging us to learn some Boon Wurrung words, and the talented didge player introduced the dance troupe. It was a great day. On 5 July I attended the Victorian Government's official NAIDOC event at Parliament House as the guest of Noel Tovey, and was particularly impressed with the sentiments voiced by Victoria's Ms and Mr NAIDOC. A diverse range of NAIDOC-related activities were covered in the mainstream media including some interviews in language. As one 774 Radio listener asked: Why can't we hear from Aboriginal voices more often? More NAIDOC news inside.



Gnarnayarrahe Waitairie, an Elder originally from WA now living in Melbourne, whose name means 'a blue jockey born beside a spring in the Dreamtime', Arweet Carolyn Briggs and Mayor Bernadene Voss.

COPP's Second Reconciliation Action Plan

The NAIDOC Week flag raising marked the official launch of Council's second RAP, some copies of which were symbolically smoked. The RAP's commitments include *protecting and promoting Aboriginal culture and heritage, and continuing Reconciliation with our*

Indigenous community. Stakeholders involved with the consultation process included the Traditional Owners, the Yalukit Weelam of the Boon Wurrung, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and PPCfR. Congratulations to Todd Condie for this significant achievement.

Guest Speaker

I invite you to meet Ann James at next month's meeting. In partnership with Ann Haddon, she established Books Illustrated in 1988 in South Melbourne as a centre celebrating Australian children's literature, particularly picture books. Ann is committed to supporting Indigenous Australians and recently visited a community school in the West Kimberley with Laureate Leigh Hobbs, which she'll speak about and show photos. Refreshments afterwards.

PPCfR's 20th Anniversary

I'm pleased to let you know that planning for PPCfR's 20th anniversary celebrations are progressing for a special event at 6.30 pm on **Monday 23 October** at the St Kilda Town Hall, the site of the first meeting attended by the then mayor and councillors, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Clyde Holding, other dignitaries and 500 citizens, leading to the establishment of the group. As well as reflecting on the past 20 years, we want to keep the conversation open and look forward to discussions around an Indigenous representative body, constitutional recognition and treaty related issues. Special guests include Arweet Carolyn Briggs, Marngrook Footy Show presenter, Leila Gurruwiwi, Mayor Voss, Martin Foley MP and the Solstice Choir. We're compiling a collage of photos and other memorabilia so if you have any items please send them through to me.

Rosemary Rule

Next Meeting: Tuesday 15 August, 6.30 pm, South Melbourne Community Hub, Fishley Street, South Melbourne. **Guest speaker:** Ann James from Books Illustrated. **All welcome.**

REFERENDUM COUNCIL'S FINAL REPORT

After 18 months of consultation and discussion the former Referendum Council's final report was released by the Prime Minister on 17 July. There have been a plethora of reactions ranging from scathing to enthusiastic for the report, which calls for a national vote on enshrining a First Nations' voice to parliament in the constitution, and for a separate Declaration of Recognition containing *'inspiring and unifying words'* to be enacted by legislation.

The report recommends a constitutionally entrenched Voice to Parliament in the form of a national Indigenous representative body. This is the only change to the constitution that the report recommends and that would be taken to a referendum. The Referendum Council said the Voice to Parliament emerged as the 'preferred option' in their community consultations. The report also called for a separate declaration of recognition, outside of the constitution: *'Containing inspiring and unifying words articulating Australia's shared history, heritage and aspirations'*. The 183-page document also supported the idea from May's Uluru Convention for a Makarrata Commission, separate to the Voice to Parliament, to supervise the process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations, and facilitate truth-telling of First Nations' histories.

Council Co-chair Mark Leibler said the proposal for the referendum was designed to be as straightforward as possible. *'Any referendum has to have a simple question... you couldn't have anything more simple than what we propose,'* he said. *'The other thing is there is absolutely zero interference with parliamentary sovereignty... because this body will have no right of veto and, not only that, the parliament itself will define how the body is going to be constituted and how it will operate.'* He added that before the consultation process began it was not clear if the Indigenous community wanted constitutional change at all. *'We needed to know if this was something (the community) wanted... or if they didn't want it at all.'* Fellow Co-chair, Pat Anderson, said the report aimed to reset the relationship between Indigenous Australia and the rest of the country. *'This report is about redistributing power and resetting our relationship once and for all,'* she said. The Prime Minister said that any final change would be a matter for the Australian people. *'The constitution cannot be changed by parliament, only the Australian people can do that, so there is no political deal, no cross party, no leader's handshake.'*

Labor politicians Linda Burney and Pat Dodson expressed surprise at the report's two recommendations, only one of which is to go to a referendum. Ms Burney labelled the proposal 'limited' and expressed disappointment that it didn't address the removal of race powers in the constitution. She was hopeful of a referendum in early 2018, but now doubted that would be the case. *'I think we are on a path that it is further away than what I anticipated,'* she said. On the ABC's *The Drum* program after the report's release, Shireen Morris from the Cape York Institute said the Voice to Parliament will be an 'independent' adviser, different to the Indigenous

advisory bodies that already exist. *'Indigenous people want a constitutionally guaranteed say in [parliament's] decisions. So the bodies of the past, and the hand-picked advisory body of the present, is not representative and it's not constitutionally guaranteed. It can be gotten rid of with the stroke of a government's pen,'* Shireen said.

The report was handed to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition by the now-disbanded Referendum Council. The question of whether a referendum will be held to formally recognise this country's First Peoples in the constitution is still largely unanswered but the report sheds more light on the outcomes from community consultations. Keep your eyes peeled for news and developments.

VICTORIAN NAIDOC WEEK

The Victorian NAIDOC 2017 March was an inspiring event attracting record crowd numbers at the Melbourne march down Nicholson St, Spring St, Bourke St and Swanston St, finishing at Federation Square. It had support from a wide range of communities. One of the most inspirational aspects of the march was the involvement of Aboriginal youth who showed great leadership at this important event. A highlight was Dan Sultan's music and his song *Hold it Together*. This year's Ms NAIDOC crown was awarded to Natarsha Bamblett, a 22 year old Yorta Yorta woman from Shepparton who recently moved to Melbourne to work with the Wirrpanda Foundation as a mentor for young Indigenous teens in Victorian schools. Mr NAIDOC was 21 year old Will Austin who, among other attributes, is an inspiring speaker. The NAIDOC Patron and Elder was Aunty Rieo.



Mr NAIDOC, Will Austin, with Ms NAIDOC, Natarsha Bamblett, at Parliament House, Melbourne.

ARETHA STEWART-BROWN - INDIGENOUS PM

Williamstown High School's Aretha Stewart-Brown has been elected as the first female Prime Minister of the National Indigenous Youth Parliament. She follows in a long line of trailblazing women in leadership from Melbourne's west, including our first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and the first female Victorian Premier, Joan Kirner. The model parliament invited 50 young Indigenous delegates from around the country to come and debate issues that matter to them and rub shoulders with political leaders. At this year's meeting, Aretha became the first woman to be elected Prime Minister as part of the program; she was also the youngest. *'I thought that would have affected being*

elected, but no-one seemed to mind,' she said. 'I think they looked past the age and realised that I was willing to speak out and speak for them.'

The 16-year-old is an increasingly familiar voice in the Indigenous community. In January, Aretha addressed tens of thousands of people who filled Melbourne's streets on Australia Day to call for the date of the national holiday to be changed. Aretha lives in Melbourne's west, but much of her childhood was spent in Nambucca Heads, northern NSW - Gumbaynggir country.

RECVIC FORUM

Victorian Reconciliation Network Forum is on **Saturday 26 August** at their office, Level 2, 112 Langridge St, Collingwood, 11.00 am-2.00 pm (tbc). Agenda: RecVic and Groups updates, Treaty and Constitutional Reform Updates, Grassroots Reconciliation Project Update and workshop, networking. More information to follow. This is a free event and all are welcome. Enquiries: info@reconciliationvic.org.au or 0427 030 545.

REC STONNINGTON

Guest speakers at the group's upcoming AGM are Stonnington Mayor, Jami Klisaris, Rose Kelly and Melissa Lowndes from the Windsor Children's Centre, 6.00 pm, **Tuesday 8 August**, Grattan Gardens Community Centre, Prahran. Refreshments provided. All welcome. Enquiries to Ro Bailey: 9819 9106, ro.celebrant@ozemail.com.au.

THE SONG KEEPERS IN CONCERT

The Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir has become a musical *tour de force* since their historic and highly acclaimed concert tour of Germany in mid-2015. Their signature performance piece *Arrkanala Lyilhitjika* is a narrative musical work accompanied by multi-media, telling the iconic story of approximately 120 years of continuous choral practice in remote Central Australian communities. This work reveals a unique Australian musical conjunction of Baroque and Romantic era choral arrangements; centuries-old sacred poetry (hymns) locked and carried in the Western Arrarnta and Pitjantjatjara languages. With male musicians dominating the contemporary Indigenous performance landscape, *Arrkanala Lyilhitjika* is a story of the cultural resilience of women and represents an unheralded aspect of contemporary Australian Indigenous musicianship.

Monday 7 August, 6.00 pm. Welcome to Country with Koorie Tiddas Youth Choir – free. Concert at 7.30 pm, Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre. Tickets from \$35. <http://www.melbournerecital.com.au>

MIFF 2017

There are some interesting Aboriginal-focused films being screened at this year's Melbourne International Film Festival, running **3-20 August**. They include: the closing night gala screening of *Gurumul Elcho Dreaming*, **Saturday 19 August**; world premier of *The Song Keepers*, **6 & 7 August**; *Westwind: Djalu's Legacy*, **Wednesday 9 August**; world premier of *Namatija Project*, **5 & 7 August**; *Accelerator 2 Shorts*, **13 & 17 August**. Find out all the details via miff.com.au

GARMA FESTIVAL

A star-studded line-up featuring some of Arnhem Land's most popular musical acts is set to steal the show at this year's Garma Festival, held between **4-7 August**. The theme is *Go! Bukulungdhun Makarrata wu* and centres around the Yolngu concept of makarrata, a traditional peace-making ceremony to heal the divisions of the past. Garma will be the next major meeting of the nation's Indigenous leaders in the wake of the recent historic Uluru summit. Artists include Dhapanbal Yunupingu, the daughter of former Yothu Yindi front-man Dr Yunupingu, who will share top billing with hometown favourites including: Bärra West Wind; Neil Murray, a founding member of the Warumpi Band; Emily Wurrumurra; Salt Lake Band, a 10-piece ensemble from Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt singing in English and their native Anindilyakwa language; Garrangangli Band; the Jesse Tree Project; Ganga Giri; Ramo Stars; Radical Son; Michael St George; KK Boys; Valentina Brave and Mambali. Garma takes place at Gulkula near the township of Gove in northeast Arnhem Land. Visit garma.com.au

MELBOURNE 2017 WRITERS FESTIVAL

Running from **25 August-3 September**, there are a number of sessions of particular interest. Indigenous author Kim Scott, Miles Franklin winner, will deliver the opening address considering the history, identity and connection to languages and land, **Friday 25 August**, 6.30 pm; Stan Grant, *A Better Tomorrow* panelist, **Thursday 31 August**, 6.00 pm; Shereen Morrison on Constitutional Recognition, **Monday 28 August**, 6.00 pm; and *Aboriginal Literature Now* with Claire Coleman, Jane Harrison and Kim Scott. For program & booking details, contact MWF: mwf.com.au, #mwf17.

65,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

Aboriginal people have lived in Australia for a minimum of 65,000 years, a team of archaeologists has established - 18,000 years longer than had been proved previously and at least 5000 years longer than had been speculated by the most optimistic researchers. The world-first finding, which follows years of archaeological digging in an ancient campsite beneath a sandstone rock shelter within the Jabiru mining lease in Kakadu, Northern Territory, drastically alters the known history of the trek out of Africa by modern humans, according to the leader of the international team of archaeologists, associate professor Chris Clarkson of the University of Queensland. Among the trove of discoveries are the world's oldest stone axes with polished and sharpened edges, proving that the earliest Australians were among the most sophisticated tool-makers of their time: no other culture had such axes for another 20,000 years. The team had also found the oldest known seed-grinding tools in Australia, a large buried midden of sea shells and animal bones, and evidence of finely-made stone spear tips.

SACRED OBJECTS RETURNED

Museums Victoria will return 24 sacred objects belonging to the Arrernte tribe of Central Australia through the Australian Government's Indigenous Repatriation Program. A group of Arrernte male

Elders requested the return of certain items upon visiting Museums Victoria in 2013. The selected items will now be housed by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT). The collection was delivered to MAGNT mid-July, before being taken to the Strehlow Research Centre's purpose-built facility for storage and viewing by the Arrernte male Elders. The Australian Government's Indigenous Repatriation Program has returned almost 1474 ancestral remains from overseas facilities over the past 25 years.

WILLIAM COOPER

William Cooper -The Aboriginal who stood up to Hitler is a beautifully written account of this Aboriginal leader who was born in Yorta Yorta country in 1860. Cooper's march from Southampton St, Footscray, made a simple demand for justice at government offices at 419 Collins Street, Melbourne. But this wasn't a protest to defend Aborigines. It was a protest to defend Jews. Cooper was not standing against a state government or federal government, but the German Government, and 75 years after the event it's clear that it was the only protest of its kind. It's something that didn't

happen in London, or in Paris, or even in New York; it happened in Melbourne, organised by a man and his people who weren't even citizens in their own country. This was only one of many astounding acts of justice this man made, even in his last years. To read the story, visit <http://www.theaboriginalwhostooduptohitler.com> Unfortunately there is no indication given regarding the author or source.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NITV!

In early July, National Indigenous Television (NITV) celebrated 10 years of being the very first national channel showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander news, current affairs and television production. From its humble beginnings in 2007, then launched as part of SBS in 2012, the channel continues to grow on free-to-air television Channel 34, and now reaches over two million viewers a month. It is available in 95% of Australian homes via free-to-air and a number of additional platforms, including Foxtel and Austar (Channel 144), TransACT, FreeView and VAST (Viewer Access Satellite Television).

