



Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation Inc.

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Mungo...

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.

This newsletter is supported by a Community Grant from the City of Port Phillip, and we acknowledge Martin Foley MP, State Labor Member for Albert Park, for his ongoing support.

March 2018

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Kicking Off Another Year

Our first meeting for 2018 was lively, informative and well-attended. We welcomed old friends and new, including Elder Judith 'Jacko' Jackson and COPP's Todd Condie. Todd updated us on Council plans - progressing their Aboriginal Employment Policy, and implementation of the second Reconciliation Action Plan. I'd like to follow-up the suggestion to show the DVD of our 20th birthday celebration, hopefully during the March meeting.

Andrew McCutcheon

Andrew, who died in December, was an architect, Methodist Minister, politician, sailor, vigneron, artist and passionate family man. He held several significant ministerial and public offices over many years and was committed to a wide range of community and advisory bodies, including PPCfR. The memorial service in Andrew's honour at the St Kilda Town Hall was a very memorable occasion, concluding with the premier performance of a song he inspired entitled *Uluru – We Look to You* and a display of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. More below.



Thomas Mayor, an Uluru Statement from the Heart signatory, brought the historic document to St Kilda Town Hall, photographed with (from left) Judith Jackson, Rosemary Rule, Jo Bond and Martin Foley MP.

Writing Competition

I'm delighted to advise we are setting up a committee to plan and oversee another Reconciliation Writing Competition this year for adults and children, encouraged by early interest from Albert Park College, Mac.Robertson Girls' High School and Avenue Bookstore. I'll keep you posted on developments.

ABC Radio Interview

On 25 January I was invited to speak with ABC Radio Melbourne's Rafael Epstein about the incident in which paint was splashed on the statue of Captain Cook in St Kilda. Stressing I didn't condone the desecration of any statue, I suggested that perhaps statues commemorating significant Aboriginal people could be mounted alongside existing ones. I referred to the Council's on-going conversations with the local Indigenous community regarding issues relating to 26 January but was disappointed that no Aboriginal person was available to take part in the conversation.

26 January

Thousands took part in the Invasion Day Rally in Melbourne and at Invasion/Survival Day concerts in the Treasury Gardens and at Belgrave, PPCfR members among them. Check out Jack Charles and Archie Roach's message for young Indigenous Australians and their song, *Be Proud of Aboriginal Australians*, on the 80th anniversary of the Day of Mourning, broadcast on ABC Radio National and NITV.

Rosemary Rule

Next meeting: Tuesday 20 March 2018, 6.30 pm, South Melbourne Community Hub, Fishley Street, South Melbourne. All Welcome.

ANDREW McCUTCHEON'S LEGACY

Shortly before his death from motor neuron disease in December, Andrew was asked if there was something he still wanted to do. He responded by saying he wanted politicians to take seriously the recommendations of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This inspired the writing of some song lyrics which were put to music. The resulting song, *Uluru - We Look to You*, was sung by members of his family and musicians at the conclusion of the memorial service held in Andrew's honour at the St Kilda Town Hall on 30 January. Thomas Mayor, a Darwin-based signatory to the Uluru Statement, held up the beautiful hand-painted and signed Statement; a poignant finale for an extraordinary man.

The service began with an engaging Welcome to Country from Gheran Steel, Traditional Owner and CEO of the Boon Wurrung Foundation. Dignitaries who spoke about Andrew included the Premier of Victoria, The Hon. Daniel Andrews; The Honourable Brian Howe, Caroline Hogg and John Cain; Martin Foley MP and COPP Mayor Bernadene Voss. They mingled with guests including current and former Victorian Governors, Labor and Liberal politicians and distinguished citizens.

Andrew's widow Vivienne McCutcheon and their adult children are keen to promote issues relating to our First Nations' People and plan to make a video of Andrew's song *'to maximise the chance for it to go viral and make a difference, and assist the call for a First Nations' Voice in Canberra,'* said Viv. *'It is a tool to get the message out.'* One possibility is to bring Thomas Mayor to Melbourne to speak about re-igniting the campaign to put the Uluru Statement from the Heart back on the political agenda. When the timing is deemed appropriate, PPCfR is happy to help, and to encourage RecVic to invite Thomas to a Reconciliation Groups' Forum, and to promote *Uluru - We Look to You* once the recording is finalised.

The McCutcheon family encourage people to become familiar with the Uluru Statement from the Heart as presented to Parliament, and to support the call for the Makarrata Commission and One Voice for First Nations' People. Check out <https://www.1voiceuluru.org>, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Questions can be emailed to support@1voiceuluru.org.

DON'T DILLY DALLY FURTHER - CLOSE THE GAP

'Don't dilly dally any further,' commented Indigenous Labor Senator Pat Dodson responding to the 2018 Closing the Gap Report. Released on 12 February, it showed that only three of the seven Closing the Gap targets were met in the past year compared with just one a year earlier, but with the national childhood mortality and early childhood education measures back on track. The updated measures of Indigenous disadvantage did apparently show the most promising results since 2011, and a marked improvement from figures released a year ago when only the goal of halving the gap in Year 12 attainment by 2020 was on track to be met.

The remaining four targets, including a key one to close the 10-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2031, are lagging. As well, three of the remaining four targets - to halve the gaps in employment, reading and numeracy, and in school attendance for Indigenous students - are due to expire in 2018. The Indigenous Affairs Minister, Nigel Scullion, said Turnbull would use the occasion to build on the government's one billion dollar Indigenous procurement policy and *'unveil a range of new measures to turbo-charge the Indigenous business sector.'*

According to figures from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, child mortality has dropped by 33% between 1998 and 2015, with overall mortality down 15% in the same period. Chronic diseases were also down with fewer Indigenous people dying from circulatory disease, which was down 45% from 1998 to 2016, respiratory disease was down 24% from 1998 to 2015 and kidney disease down by 47% from 2006 to 2015.

Senator Pat Dodson condemned the Turnbull government for not committing to Closing the Gap between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians. Speaking at the Close the Gap Campaign review on 8 February, a frustrated Senator Dodson said the government has been *'hopeless'* in its handling of Indigenous affairs. *'We're not gonna get this sorted until June on their agenda, that's the end of the fiscal year, so what's gonna be in the budget commitments to any of this? - because we don't know what we're gonna be committing to,'* he said. *'That's how hopeless this government is and how badly the Indigenous affairs portfolio's been managed.'* Mr Dodson also called out Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull for leaving the campaign review event early, saying he should've *'stayed and listened.'* *'It's indicative of the deafness, of the absolute derision, and the contempt which this government is meeting out to the Aboriginal people. We gotta get real about it,'* he said.

The Close the Gap committee gathered in Canberra in February to present Mr Turnbull with their assessment. *'After the initial funding commitments made for the Closing the Gap strategy ... it was effectively abandoned with the extensive cuts, over \$530 million, made to the Indigenous Affairs portfolio in the 2014 federal budget,'* the committee's review stated. Close the Gap Co-Chair, and Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, Rod Little says the refresh process is the last chance to get government policy right, in order to achieve the goal of health equality by 2030. *'A revolving door of Prime Ministers, Indigenous Affairs Ministers and senior bureaucrats have all but halted the steady progress hoped for by First Peoples. The Close the Gap Campaign is led by more than 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous health and human rights bodies. No other group can boast this level of leadership, experience and expertise.'*

We stand ready to work together with federal, state and territory governments. We have the solutions. You must get the engagement on this right. No half measures. No preconceived policies that are imposed rather than respectfully discussed and collectively decided,' he said.

Campaign Co-Chair and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO said the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a 'national shame.' *'The life expectancy gap has, in fact, started to widen again and the Indigenous child mortality rate is now more than double that of other children,'* Ms Oscar said. University of Canberra Chancellor Tom Calma was one of the driving forces behind creating the campaign during his time as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.

The report also urged the government to allow greater involvement of First Nations people.

'The refresh process has lacked clarity and appears to be promoting an agenda based on views within government that have involved virtually no engagement with First Peoples in their development,' the report stated. Indigenous Labor Senator Malarndirri McCarthy said no-one from the Labor party, the Greens or minor parties have been consulted on a refresh of the strategy. *'We [the National Congress] have asked for four additional targets, which are housing, justice, family violence and child protection,'* said National Congress Co-Chair Dr Jackie Huggins.

In repose to the report, Labor leader Bill Shorten said he would unveil a commitment to boost support for the families of stolen generations survivors and increase efforts to tackle the rising number of Indigenous Australians in out-of-home care. If Labor is elected, the scheme would be accessible to about 150 surviving members of the stolen generations in NT and any survivors in the ACT and Jervis Bay, and includes \$7,000 for one-off payments for funeral costs. Victoria is the only state not to have a similar compensation scheme. The Labor package would include payments of \$75,000 to stolen generations survivors who were removed from their families, responding to a recommendation in the 1997 Bringing them Home report.

Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt had earlier suggested that the government could still legislate an Indigenous voice to parliament outside the constitution, and said the government is *'committed to making a difference. Closing the Gap is not just about government responsibility, it is also the responsibility of the myriad First nations and non-Indigenous organisations that receive funding for programs designed to address targets,'* he said. These and other comments came ten years after Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generations as debate rages about the effectiveness of the Closing the Gap goals, following a report claiming the strategy has been *'effectively abandoned'*.

IMPROVED SCHOOL RATES

Recently released school statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed the Year 7 to 12 Apparent Retention Rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People continued to increase in 2017. ABS Education, Crime and Culture Program Manager Stephen Collett said the rate was 62.4 per cent nationally in 2017, up from 59.8 per cent in 2016. *'These new figures show us that more students than ever, who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, are staying at school until Year 12,'* Mr Collett said of the Schools Australia data. The increase in the rate is the most significant jump since the rate increased by over four percentage points between 2013 and 2014. Over the past ten years, the rate has increased significantly, from 47.2 per cent in 2008 to 62.4 per cent reported in 2017. The non-indigenous Apparent Retention Rate for 2017 was 86.0 per cent, up from 85.5 per cent in 2016.

VICTORIAN TREATY ADVANCEMENT COMMISSIONER

Jill Gallagher AO has been appointed as Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner. The proud Gunditjmara woman is a highly respected Victorian Aboriginal leader who has dedicated her life to advocating for self-determination outcomes on behalf of the Victorian Aboriginal community. Jill has spent the past 20 years advancing Aboriginal health and wellbeing on behalf of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), including 14 years as CEO. She was recognised for her outstanding contribution to community when she was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2009, awarded the Order of Australia in 2013, and inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll in 2015. Jill has also been advocating for the Victorian Aboriginal community as co-chair of the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group and has been closely involved in the Victorian journey to Treaty. The aim has been to strengthen independence for the Victorian Aboriginal community on the path to Treaty and ensure the community remains at the heart of the process. Its primary role is to operationalise the outcomes of the Aboriginal Community Assembly and establish the Aboriginal Representative Body. The Commissioner will work closely with the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Congratulations to Barbara Spalding who was awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division *'for significant service to public administration in Victoria, and to the community, particularly in the areas of welfare and education'* in the 2018 Australia Day Honours. Barbara, along with her husband Ian, is a long time PPCfR member, and is also a U3A life member and former U3A office manager.

REC STONNINGTON NEWS

Rec Stonnington will take part in the annual multicultural festival Flavours with an information stall. Free face and arm painting will be offered by Brianna Gyesko, the eldest daughter of Peter 'Judda' Mackay.

The Flavours festival will take place on **Saturday 17 March** from 11.00 am until 4.00 pm in the Greville Street and Grattan Gardens, Prahran, and is jointly sponsored by Rec Stonnington and the City of Stonnington. All welcome. Come along for a chat with members of Rec Stonnington and check out the body art. *Ro Bailey.*

HART AWARDS

The 2018 HART Awards (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) recognise local governments and community organisations that are advancing Reconciliation in Victoria. RecVic, in partnership with VLGA and supported by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria, presents the 5th annual HART Awards. The HART Awards will be presented in Melbourne on **Friday 1 June** during National Reconciliation Week. The community organisation winner will also be awarded a prize of \$1000 to support their Reconciliation initiatives. Download nomination forms, or complete by hand/scan, and email to events@vlga.org.au by 4.00 pm on **Tuesday 3 April**.

WILLIAM BARAK RE-INTERPRETED

For the past six years, Dr Jim Poulter has embarked on a project deciphering William Barak's brief narrative dictated in 1888. Dr Poulter's work is titled *A Contextual Understanding of 'My Words by William Barak'*. The implications of his research are quite profound: Barak clearly identifies the Plenty River at Greensborough as the site of the meeting with Batman in 1835. Dr Poulter is available for public forums on the topic during the National Heritage Festival, Reconciliation Week or Wurundjeri Week. Information: jimpoulter@bigpond.com.

DON'T TELL ME TO SMILE

An evening exploring intersectionality in feminism in relation to systems of oppression, domination and discrimination will be chaired by Wemba-Wemba and Gunditjmara artist, curator, academic and co-curator of Unfinished Business, Paola Balla. Speakers include Maddee Clark and Neika Lehman. Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Sturt Street, Southbank, **Wednesday 7 March**, 6.00-8.00 pm. Free, reservations essential.

BETWEEN THE BAYS FESTIVAL

Dan Sultan, Baker Boy, Saat Suma, Indigenous Hip Hop Project and Moose Jaw Rifle Club will be performing at the Between the Bays Festival that promotes respect, understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture within our community. All proceeds raised support Woodleigh School's Community Programs and Partnerships supporting a wide range of students including those from local and remote communities across Australia. Sunday 18 March at Penbank Campus - Woodleigh School, 460 Tyabb Rd, Moorooduc. Gates open 12.30 pm. Tickets via Ticketbo.

BUSH MECHANICS

Drawing on images, objects and footage from the much-loved *Bush Mechanics* television series (PAW Media

and ABC) this exhibition explores Indigenous knowledge and ingenuity, the importance of cars to remote communities, bush life and the humour of the outback. Through comedy and storytelling, learn more about Warlpiri and Yuendumu communities and contemporary Indigenous issues in the heart of Australia. Opens



Friday 9 March at Bunjilaka, 10.00 am-5.00 pm. The cost includes entry into Museum Victoria.

Claymation still from *Bush Mechanics*.
Photo Credit:
PAW Media

WURUNDJERI CULTURE WITH MURRUNDINDI

Healesville Sanctuary's Wominjeka - Welcome to Country - Experience Wurundjeri Culture with Elder Murrundindi will be held between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm on **Sunday 4 March**. Sit and listen as Murrundindi plays the didgeridoo; share a cultural conversation as he roves around the Sanctuary connecting you to Country, stories and language; and try your hand at boomerang throwing as you learn from a master. Event included in entry price. For more information: Healesville Sanctuary, Badger Creek Road, Healesville, E: hs@zoo.org.au

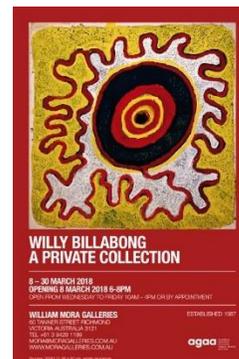
WOMIN DJEKA BALNARRING NGARGEE

This Ngargee is a great opportunity to celebrate Boon Wurrung culture at Balnarring Beach. The Festival features Indigenous Hip Hop Project, James Henry, Kutcha Edwards, Carissa, Welcome to Country with Arweet Carolyn Briggs, bush tucker walks, weaving workshops, kid's activities, storytelling and much more. **Saturday 24 March**, 11.00 am-9.00 pm. Details: womindjeka.balnarring.ngargee@gmail.com.

LAKE BOLAC EEL FESTIVAL

The 12th annual Eel Festival includes forums, workshops, dinners, talks, entertainment, kids activities, art and an art auction spread over the weekend of **23-25 March**. Camping facilities available. Ticket details at www.eelfestival.org.au; Email: festival@eelfestival.org.au or visit the Lake Bolac Information and Business Centre, 03 5350 2204.

WILLY BILLABONG AT WILLIAM MORA GALLERY



William Mora Gallery is exhibiting works by Indigenous artist Willy Billabong (1925-2005) in an upcoming show which opens on **Thursday 8 March**, 6.00-8.00 pm. Exhibition closes **Friday 30 March**. 60 Tanner St, Richmond.

