

Mungo...



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The Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation respectfully acknowledges the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boonwurrung 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 2020

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Boonwurrung Word of the Month:

Naarm – Port Phillip Bay

First meeting

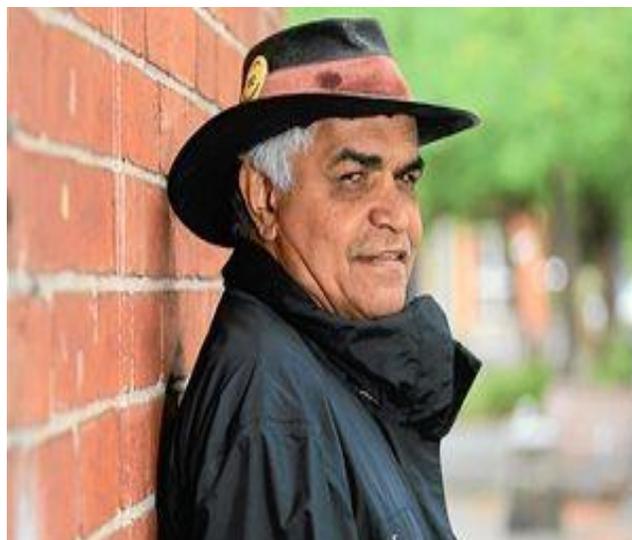
In spite of a torrential downpour, accompanied by hailstones, we had a terrific turnout on 18 February and welcomed a newcomer for what was our first formal meeting since November. Following Todd Condie's Acknowledgement of Country (he's COPP's Indigenous Policy Officer) we discussed plans for the year ahead. They include finalising judges and sponsors for our Reconciliation Writing Competition, organising guest speakers for our meetings, and planning our public Treaty-focused forum to be held later in the year. Todd talked about the success of the Council's two Reconciliation Action Plans, and about their proposed 'stretch RAP'. It is encouraging to know that 'our' Port Phillip Council is so supportive and forward looking. It has adopted several plans and strategies to explore employment opportunities, built awareness and understanding, and enhanced cultural and economic development for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I'll post updates as they occur.

Congratulations



Our warmest congratulations to Noel Tovey AM, (left) dancer, actor, choreographer and author, who was recently appointed Honorary Doctor of Letters at Flinders University.

The Royal Botanic Gardens held a small ceremony last month to celebrate Dennis Fisher's 10 years' work as an Indigenous guide. Den is also PPCfR's Co-Chair and a presenter on 3KnD.



PPCfR Co-Chair Dennis Fisher has celebrated ten years of work with the Royal Botanic Gardens as an Indigenous guide.

Stall

We have been invited to host a stall at South Port Community Housing Group's festival on **Saturday 21 March**. It's being set up at Marshall and Daly Streets, South Melbourne, (behind the town hall) between 11.00 am and 4.00 pm. Please come along and say hello and have a chat to Dennis Fisher, aka Den the Fish, my Co-Chair, who will be helping out during the day. To find out more, contact SPCHG 9696 1128 or shai@sphcg.org.au

Rosemary Rule

Next meeting: Tuesday 17 March, 6.30 pm, South Melbourne Community Hub, Fishley Street, South Melbourne. **All Welcome**

12th CLOSING THE GAP REPORT

The 2020 report card – the 12th report since targets were set in 2008 – finds that just two of the seven targets designed to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have been met; four targets expired in 2018. The two areas that are on track are early childhood education attendance and Year 12 attainment for Indigenous Australians aged 20 to 24. But while the target to have 95% of Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 was achieved in 2017, the latest report card shows this has slipped backwards to 86.4% in 2018, compared to 91.3% of non-Indigenous children. The report also notes that attendance in inner regional areas is almost 17% higher than the lowest attendance rate in very remote areas. There has been little progress against the other five targets, which include employment, school attendance, life expectancy, child mortality rates, and literacy and numeracy. A key target to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under the age of five within a decade is not on track, with a slight improvement in the mortality rate for Indigenous children outpaced by the improvement for non-Indigenous children, which has caused the gap to widen.

Responses: Prime Minister Scott Morrison pointed towards the promising new partnership with First Nations people and said the government must remain positive. *'We must be careful not to adopt a deficit mindset,'* he cautioned, and criticised the targets themselves. *'There are shortcomings in the process as a whole that mask real progress and fail to build lasting partnerships with Indigenous communities. The targets don't celebrate the strengths, achievements and aspirations of Indigenous people; they don't tell you what's happening on the ground, or stirring under it, and don't tell you how realistic or achievable these targets were in the first place. They reinforce the language of failing and falling short, and they mask the real progress that has been made.'* Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese put the onus back on those in charge. *'The problem was not that the targets were too ambitious,'* he said.

The poor results appear not to have surprised some members of the Coalition of Peaks, a body made up of more than 50 community-controlled peak Aboriginal organisations. Last year, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to working with the Coalition of Peaks as part of a Closing the Gap 'refresh' - a move aimed at involving First Nations people in decision-making and preventing yet another failed report.

CEO of First Nations Media, Catherine Liddle, said the next steps are crucial in breaking the cycle. *'The governments say that they are listening, and certainly you would have heard that today. What we haven't seen is real action,'* she said. Ms Liddle says the future depends on a meaningful partnership. *'We must support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to control and deliver the programs and services that our communities need, in recognition that we are the*

experts in what we need – which is these programs designed by us, and not for us,' she said.

The head of the Coalition of Peaks and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation's (NACCHO) chief executive, Pat Turner, said she is frustrated that the federal government will end funding of Indigenous housing, leaving a \$6 billion gap. *'We have to change the way we are working to improve the life outcomes of our people, and governments must rapidly increase their investment in Aboriginal housing, because the gap can't close without doing that.'* Ms Turner said she understands the federal government will withdraw its national funding for Aboriginal Housing, and instead rely on state-based agreements. *'It is just a unilateral decision taken by the government, and surely they can't expect states to pick up a \$6 billion backlog.'* Ms Turner said the next steps could be the circuit-breaker that is needed. *'However, if they view this process as little more than window dressing for the status quo, the cycle of failure evident in today's report is doomed to continue.'*

The Coalition of Peaks has put forward structural priority reforms to the way governments work with and deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which will set out the priorities over the next ten years, is expected to be finalised in April and then go to COAG for consideration.

FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA



First Peoples'
Assembly of
Victoria

Following a competitive quote process involving six Aboriginal providers, PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting (PIC) has been appointed to deliver services to facilitate the operational transition from the Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission to the recently elected First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. On 10 January, Jill Gallagher completed her appointment as Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner. The PIC appointment decision, made by the Assembly's CEO Recruitment Committee, will see PIC's Jodie Sizer lead a 100-day transition project from **13 January to 22 April 2020**. Jodie will assume responsibility for managing areas such as risk management and strategic planning. Her role will also be the provision of assistance in the recruitment of an ongoing Assembly CEO. The transition team will also consist of Clinton Benjamin who will provide direct support to Jodie, and Jason Mifsud who will operate as the point person for Assembly Co-Chairs and staff on a day-to-day basis. Details www.firstpeoples.vic.org

RECVIC NEWS

Nominations for the 7th Annual HART (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) Awards are open, continuing to recognise fantastic local work through two permanent award categories - Local Governments and Community Groups, and this year introducing a new category -

Schools and Early Years. Winners in each category receive a handcrafted HART Award, and winners of the Community Group category and Schools and Early Years category receive a \$1000 cash prize to support their future work in the Reconciliation space.

Nominations are sought in all categories from initiatives that demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal people working together, and initiatives that have contributed to strengthening relationships, respect and understanding while demonstrating a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination. Nominations close 4.00 pm, **Sunday 22 March**. Submit to <http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/portfolio/hart-award>.

RecVic and the Victorian Local Governance Association work in partnership to present the HART Awards, supported by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria. Since the success of the inaugural Awards in 2014, each year has seen an impressive number of quality nominations. The stories of the finalists demonstrate that when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and organisations commit to meaningful, long-term two-way relationships, tremendous change can be achieved. Past winners and finalists details: <http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/hart-previous-winners>.

In other news, RecVic are letting local groups know that they will not be holding a forum in April as in past years, and hope to be able to host a forum before the second half of 2020.

STONNINGTON RECONCILIATION REPORT

Several RecSton members attended the Share the Spirit Festival in Treasury Gardens on Invasion Day. It was very well attended and is always a great celebration of First Nations' culture with a vast array of talent represented there. It began with a heartfelt Welcome to Country by Auntie Joy Wandin Murphy followed by



various acts including the Djirri Djirri dancers and Kutcha Edwards, who got us all up to dance while he sang.

Sharing the Spirit Festival on Invasion Day. Photo courtesy of Keith Gove.

There were also many and varied stalls showcasing paintings, jewellery and other craft works of high quality and creativity. Our member, Michael Sullivan, helped out on the ANTaR stall and said that sales were non-stop for his entire shift. He felt that this indicated a growing interest in First Nations' culture by the public. If you missed it this year, be sure to get along next year, it is such an enjoyable way to spend this controversial day.

Ro Bailey.

YOUTH B-BALL TOURNAMENTS

The popularity of the 3on3 Youth B-Ball Tournaments held on the beach near St Kilda Life Saving Club continues, attracting competitors in the 12-15 and 16-19 age groups. The success of the tournaments has spawned funding for a new basketball court, new stakeholder partnerships and some great pathways for the community. The City of Port Phillip's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Broker, Jordan Sutardy, helped initiate the events, working with Stewart Taylor, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Southern Metro, and Access Health. The 2on2 program sponsored by the City of Port Phillip was a finalist in the 2019 Vic Health Awards and HART Awards, which Council is entering again this year.

Background: To help revitalise the community nature of St Kilda Beach following incidents of white supremacist activity over the previous summer period, City of Port Phillip and over a dozen community groups came together to create a six-week 2on2 basketball event featuring local Aboriginal and Sudanese Australian youth. Over fifteen organisations and community groups pooled their respective resources to enable local youth to have a culturally safe environment to develop their own working relationships. This pilot project has been evaluated as successful and will be replicated in upcoming school holiday periods. Over 200 youth and families participated over the six-week period. An opening and closing ceremony featured a smoking ceremony from the Boonwurrung Foundation. The project aligns with Action 3 of City of Port Phillip's Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019.

LAKE MUNGO DEEP LISTENING WORKSHOP

A one-day professional development workshop focusing on developing further knowledge and teaching tools based on the digital resource *Mungo Explorer* will be held at Victoria University, 300 Flinders Street, Melbourne, **Monday 17 March**, 8.45 am-3.30 pm, \$198 (including lunch). Speakers are Alan Harris - Noongar Elder; Professor Jim Bowler - the geologist credited with discovering Mungo Lady and Mungo Man; Jenny Bowler - Digital Learning Coordinator at Cultural Infusion and daughter of Jim Bowler; Lisa Daly - Director, Cultural Minds; and David Tacey - Emeritus Professor of Humanities. Enquiries: Jenny.b@culturalinfusion.org.au

DEBORAH CHEETHAM AO

It was such a privilege to be in the audience for *Woven Song*, a program blending music, art and tapestry presented as part of the Asia TOPA 2020 program in February, featuring Yorta Yorta soprano Deborah Cheetham AO, who has composed a series of contemporary chamber music pieces inspired by the Embassy Tapestries, a vibrant collaboration between Indigenous artists and master weavers at The Australian Tapestry Workshop (ATW) in South Melbourne. The large-scale pieces are on loan to selected overseas embassies and to the concert. For the South Melbourne concerts, Deborah invited a Tabla Master from India,

a mezzo-soprano from Singapore and a Shakahachi Master from Japan to the stage, joining musicians from her Short Black Opera and Australian groups Rubiks Collective and Plexus, to perform three evocative pieces for what was a creatively exciting evening.
Rosemary Rule

Exhibition and Talk: The spectacular gowns worn by Deborah Cheetham for her *Woven Song* project created by Melbourne couturier Linda Britten are on exhibition at ATW, 262-266 Park Street, South Melbourne, until **Friday 17 April**. Deborah and Linda are *In Conversation* at the ATW, **Wednesday 11 March**, 5.30 pm for 6.00 pm. Tickets available via www.austapestry.com.au or call 9699 7885

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS EVENTS

Seasons is a multi-part sound work that explores the integral role of plants in the Kulin seasonal calendar. Through the time-honoured practice of deep listening, *Seasons* invites audiences to experience climatic and seasonal variation less as a weather event and more as a cultural phenomenon. *Seasons* is curated by highly respected Aboriginal broadcaster and radio journalist Daniel Browning. An Auslan performance will take place on **Sunday 22 March**, 6.00 pm. Proudly supported by the Australia Council for the Arts and City of Melbourne and presented as part of Melbourne Design Week 2020, an initiative of the Victorian Government in collaboration with the NGV.

Bush Food Experience explores the delights of bush foods and discovers amazing edible plants growing in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens with a First Nations Guide, followed by delicious tastings inspired by the native plants. Presented by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in association with Charcoal Lane and William Angliss Institute. Further information: <https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/>

ARTS NEWS

The History Salon stars Caroline Martin, a proud Yalukit Willam woman of the Boonwurrung and an equally proud Koorie Victorian. Caroline is *In Conversation* with Kerri-Lee Harding, aka Blak Betty, sharing her stories, career highlights and journey as Creative Director of Yirramboi Festival. Arts Centre, **Wednesday 11 March**, 6.00 pm. Free, bookings essential: <http://bit.ly/2NINoTp>. Yirramboi is presented by the City of Melbourne; yirramboi.net.au.

Returning our Ancestors shows what we can do as a Victorian community to work together for the rightful and respectful return and protection of Aboriginal ancestors, now and into the future. Public launch on **Saturday 28 March**, screened at Fed Square, 4.00-8.00 pm, hosted VAHC. Other events and screenings will occur around Victoria during 2020. To host a screening, contact VAHC, vahc@dpc.vic.gov.au

2Worlds Festival includes performances by Kutcha Edwards, Emma Donovan and The Putbacks, Yirramal, Djirri Djirri Dancers; Charcoal Lane cooking demonstration. **Saturday 14 March**, Birrarung Marr, (nr Fed Square), Noon till late. Details: www.2worldsfestival.org.au

Destiny is the largest retrospective work of Destiny Deacon - one of Australia's boldest and most acclaimed contemporary artists. *Destiny* marks her first solo show in over fifteen years. Featuring more than 100 multi-disciplinary works made over a 30-year period, the exhibition includes the premiere of newly commissioned works created with artist and long-term collaborator Virginia Fraser. Early video works created with the late Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi photographer Michael Riley and West Australian performance artist Erin Hefferon are also on display. NGV Fed Square, until August.

In My Blood it Runs is a new Australian film about a ten-year-old child-healer, and focuses on themes of family, resilience and resistance. Now screening. Info: www.inmyblooditruns

Fire Country: How Indigenous Fire Management Could Help Save Australia is a new book by Victor Steffenson - out now.

MEDIA

Community radio station 3CR, 858AM, presents a great range of informative programs, such as *Blak Block* on Mondays, 11.00 am; *Fire First* on Wednesdays, 11.00 am; *Black n Deadly* on Fridays, 11.00 am; *Blaknoise Radio* on Mondays, 1.00 pm; *Billabong Beats* on Tuesdays, 11.00 am. Find out more via their program grid: 3cr.org.au

