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Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation Inc.

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June, 2008

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

For the tenth year, Sorry Day has been commemorated in the City of Port Phillip. This year, PPCfR organised, at very short notice, a free lunch at the South Melbourne Community Centre on Saturday May 24 (before the official Sorry Day). More than 60 people attended, including our special guest speakers Maria Starcevic, indigenous elder and a member of the Stolen Generation who was in Parliament House for the National Apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on February 13, Mayor Janet Cribbes and poet and broadcaster Den the Fish, aka Dennis Fish who read some of his poems, in the process educating us in his inimitable entertaining and forthright manner. Local guitarist, singer/songwriter and Gunditjmarra man Lee Morgan, provided the entertainment, singing and playing superbly a selection of songs, some of his own creation. One of these was about reconciliation which together with Den's poems beautifully captured the atmosphere in the room.

Holding a Sorry Day event was a recommendation of Bringing Them Home, a report detailing the removal of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, tabled in Federal Parliament on May 26, 1997. The theme for 2008 is 'Unfinished Business: Reparations, Restitution & Rehabilitation'.

Our event was a special occasion for our community, giving those present the chance to catch up with friends old and new, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, enjoy the food provided by Australian Aboriginal Catering company and platters of cheese and fruit provided by PPCfR members Gael, Liz and Clare. Among the guests were COPP Councillors Janet Bolitho and Peter Logan, President of the St Kilda Historic Society Meyer Eidelson, Greens candidate Phillip Walker, elder Judith Jacko Jackson and Kokwam Wapau and Naomi Prior from Inner South Community Health Services. Thanks to all those who helped, particularly Gael, Liz, Clare, Steve, Fran, Beverly and Noellen and Harry who set up and looked after the

information table, meeting and greeting guests - and signing up several new members. The event concluded around 2.00pm as there was another booking for the same room shortly afterwards. However this gave people time to get into Federation Square for The Long Walk to the G and the AFL Dreamtime@The G, Essendon versus Richmond match that unfortunately Michael Long's old team, Essendon, did not win.

PPCfR members were amongst those who attended the Council's official Sorry Day flag-raising ceremony on Monday May 26 at St Kilda Town Hall lawn. Holding a Sorry Day was a recommendation of Bringing Them Home, a report detailing the removal of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, tabled in Federal Parliament on May 26, 1997. This year's theme is 'Unfinished Business: Reparations, Restitution'. How lucky are we that the City of Port Phillip is so committed to honouring this day, and to supporting the local Indigenous community. PPCfR certainly appreciates their support, which includes an annual grant that helps us with our work and being to organise events, such as the lunch for Sorry Day and 'Reconciliate 08: Dreaming Together'. This was a big public event in Federation Square on Friday on 23 May, organized by the City of Melbourne that attracted a number of schools from around the state as well as tourists and the general public. Many thanks to Gael Wilson and Liz Gallois for hosting our stall for the day.

The Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation will continue to work with the community and the reconciliation movement and support initiatives of organizations such as Reconciliation Victoria, ANTaR Victoria and the Stolen Generations Committee. These include the establishment of a compensation fund for the stolen generations, the Get Up campaign to close the 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous & non Indigenous Australian and to push for a treaty.

If you would like to learn more, or become involved, you are most welcome to come along to our informal monthly meetings, or if that's not possible, please feel free to contact our office.

Rosemary Rule

Next meeting

Tuesday, 17th June, 2008, 6.30pm, 195 Bank Street, South Melbourne.
Everyone most welcome.

Reconciliation Week Activities

Many activities are taking place throughout Melbourne and Victoria between 27 May and 3 June. For details, contact Reconciliation Victoria, 9662 1645, www.reconciliationvic.org.au, or ANTaR Victoria, 9419.3613, www.antar@antar.org.au.

NAIDOC Week

Is celebrated from July 6-13 and PPCfR will be having a stall and providing boomerangs for children to paint at the Children's Day being organised by Inner South Community Health Services. More details in the next issue.

Clinical Research and Services in Alice Springs

Indigenous doctor Dr. Alex Brown joined the Baker Institute (located at the Alfred Hospital) in 2006. Dr Brown and his team concentrate on diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease, which are common in the Indigenous community. Life expectancy in the community is 20 years less than for non-Indigenous Australians. Dr Brown and his team are working on establishment of a clinical research facility in Alice Springs -- the Baker @ Alice. They are committed to research and service, working with communities to provide clinical services meeting their needs and also increasing understanding of the disease problems within them.

Harry Ward

Open letter by Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation:

NO COMPENSATION, NO JUSTICE

Once again Port Phillip Citizens for Conciliation (PPCfR) congratulate Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. On Saturday 5 April, Australia heard the news that our Mr Rudd, in London at the time, had announced that he would open Parliament every year with a report on progress on 'closing the gap' between white and Aboriginal Australians, in life expectancy, health, employment and education. It was indeed exciting to hear this announcement from Mr Rudd while he was on the world stage.

Back to the issue of compensation: PPCfR wish to bring to your notice Julian Burnside's Manning Clark Lecture 2008, heard recently on Radio National. Mr Burnside QC first of all spoke about the successful case brought by Bruce Trevorow in South Australia. Bruce got sick when he was 13 months and was taken to hospital. Later his parents were told he had died. Bruce was given to a white family to be

fostered. He did not adjust to his white family and when he was 13 he was returned to his parents, but he did not adapt after such a lapse of time to his Aboriginal family. He remained all his life a person who had no sense of his identity; he worked seldom, he became an alcoholic. His brothers grew up in poverty with their parents but they became strong individuals in contrast to their brother Bruce. Bruce Trevorow's case took 8 years to come to trial. His case was fought all the way by the SA government. Bruce was the first Aborigine to mount a successful case for compensation for being removed from his Aboriginal family. He was awarded \$800,000 and costs.

As Julian Burnside remarks, mounting such a case is not for the faint hearted, with the outcome uncertain and costly to all concerned in time, money, energy and emotion. Julian Burnside proposes, instead of long drawn out civil actions, the setting up of a National Compensation Scheme. Claimants would be able to receive copies of all relevant governments records. Mr Burnside identified four categories of people who were removed from their parents. At the most extreme end of the scale where children had been removed without welfare justification, without the consent of their parents and who did not flourish under their new circumstances, a substantial compensation of something between \$25,000 and \$70,000 would be allocated depending on the circumstances.

The advantages of such a scheme are that it would be lawyer free and comparatively cheap to set up and administer, compared with lengthy and acrimonious civil claims, and much more equitable. Schemes of Compensation to Indigenous people have been set up in Queensland, Tasmania and Canada in attempts to be sure that justice is done in setting wrongs right

PPCfR recommend people read the text of Mr Burnside's address (easy to google via: Manning Clark Lecture 2008), consider the issues and then contact your members of parliament know your views.

PPCfR supports the setting up of a National Compensation Scheme. Without compensation, Mr Rudd's apology to our Aboriginal peoples are words without the necessary element of justice. While the PM has said the major priority of government is 'closing the gap' it is our view that there is still a legitimate case for setting up a compensation scheme where individual concerns can be appropriately dealt with.

PPCfR will continue to raise our concerns with politicians, support indigenous organizations such as the Stolen Generations Committee, until a National Compensation Scheme is set up.

Rosemary Rule, Co-Chair, PPCfR. 14 May 2008

Actions to take:

Please let your Federal Member of Parliament know what your views are on this matter by writing to the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin:

The Hon Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: Jmacklin.MP@aph.gov.au

Also contact:

Michael Danby, MP, Federal Member for Melbourne Ports
Email: Michael.danby.MP@aph.gov.au
Phone: (03) 9534 8126

and

Martin Foley, Member for Albert Park, 357 Clarendon
Street, South Melbourne 3205
Email: martin.foley@parliament.vic.gov.au
Phone: (03) 9699 6755

(Thanks to Liz Gallois for preparing this important letter in
consultation with PPCfR members.)

Citizens Get Together for Reconciliation in St Kilda

Local residents in St Kilda were part of an innovative
national program of reconciliation conversations on the
evening of Tuesday, 29 April that involved thousands of
Australians across the country. In a meeting organised over
the internet, locals shared their personal stories and hopes
for Indigenous reconciliation. PPCfR member Steve Pennell
hosted one of these GetUp events at the Port Phillip
EcoCentre. 'This is the beginning of the end of denialism',
said Sue Taffe, Steve's was one of three such meetings in
Port Phillip alone, which gives some idea of the strength of
local feeling on the issue. For more information contact
Steve Pennell at stevep3182@yahoo.com or GetUp
National Mobiliser Sam Mclean on (02) 9264 4037.

**Koorie Heritage Trust Exhibition on Sir Pastor Doug
and Lady Gladys Nicholls**

An Elder gave the Welcome to Country, then another
woman introduced herself for a while in words from her
language (this was illegal last century), then another woman
thanked everyone for attending saying the Elders, Aunties
and Uncles are important and loved...all the people here are
loved. Family tree of Doug and Gladys is on the wall with
his footy jumpers and family memorabilia in display cases
dotted around with gum leaves beneath, a possum skin
cloak nearby. Words describing their lives with photos are
on panels along the walls. Words (that are legal from last
century) that linger after leaving: dark times, homeless;
these are up to us.

Steve Pennells

Sacred Heart Mission Concert

An Indigenous emphasis was obvious throughout the Heart
of St Kilda concert, on Friday May 23, at the Palais Theatre,
St Kilda. The concert was a fundraiser for Sacred Heart
Mission, which offers a meal service to around 500 people

every day and provides many services to people who are
homeless or living in poverty as well advocating on their
behalf. Archie Roach welcomed the audience to country,
and Indigenous musicians Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter, Kev
Carmody and Dan Sultan joined an impressive lineup
including Paul Kelly, Renee Geyer, Peter Rowsthorn, Dave
Hughes, Deborah Conway, The Models, Tex Perkins and
the Choir of Hard Knocks, which was supported from its
very beginnings by Sacred Heart Mission. The finale of the
concert was Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody's Land Rights
anthem, 'From Little Things Big Things Grow', sung by
Paul Kelly, Kev Carmody and Dan Sultan joined by the
Choir of Hard Knocks and other performers. What a night!
Clare Bradford

A Journey to the Art of Reconciliation

The Reconciliation Exhibition at Lumina Fibre Arts
Gallery, 89 Waverley Road, East Malvern, runs until June
3. The Stonnington Citizens for Reconciliation worked with
Aboriginal artist Peter Mackay, the Lumina Gallery and
City of Stonnington to develop an exhibition to raise
awareness of the Aboriginal heritage of the area.

City Gallery

The City Gallery is on the ground level at Melbourne Town
Hall in Swanston Street and is open:

Monday: 10:00 – 2:00

Tuesday to Thursday: 11:00 – 6:00

Friday: 11:00 – 6:30

Saturday: 11:00 – 2:00

Current exhibition: **Moomba – what's in a name?**

How Moomba came to be called Moomba and what the
word really means has kept the wheels of urban mythology
turning for decades. This exhibition features an audiovisual
by the artists Virginia Fraser and Destiny Deacon on one of
Melbourne's most interesting semantic conundrums. The
exhibition is open until Saturday, 14 June.

Watch Gary Foley, Kylie Belling and other Indigenous
speakers explain what the word Moomba *really* means.
You'll leave chuckling.

Upcoming exhibition: June to August 2008-05-25 'An
Aboriginal Moomba: out of the dark', the 1951 play re-
visited.

The Healing Place, Dilthan Yolngunha

In May 2007, a group of East Arnhem Land Indigenous
leaders set up Dilthan Yolngunha, a ground-breaking trial
community respite and rehabilitation service at Gulkula,
outside Nhulunbuy. At the Healing Place, Yolngu women
will treat people through proven traditional healing
practices, used in conjunction with prescribed long-term
mainstream medicines. The traditional healing uses
medicines from the 'bush pharmacy' and cultural practices
and traditions. Dilthan Yolngunha has been set up on a trial
basis and is being coordinated by the Yothu Yindi
Foundation. Donations are sought to establish and maintain
Dilthan Yolngunha. For more information, see:
<http://www.healingplace.com.au/index.html>