

Mungo...



Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation Inc.

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September, 2007

FROM THE CHAIR

This is a special month. Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th September at 6.00pm in the Community Room at St Kilda Library, Carlisle Street, (opp. the Town Hall). It is open to all members and anyone else who'd like to become involved with this small, but active community group and even if you don't have a whole lot of time available, there is always something you could do. A new Executive Committee will be elected and nominations are welcome. If you are not able to attend the AGM, you can complete the Proxy Nomination form included in Mungo and return it to our office.

At 6.30pm, celebrations for our 10th birthday begin! Ten years is quite a feat for a small group and its survival is certainly testament to the commitment of some very dedicated and loyal people. I'd like to extend an invitation to past and present members and friends to join us. As well as speeches and special guests, there will be a screening of the award-winning documentary "My Brother Vinnie" (with cast members present), entertainment from the wonderful singer/songwriter/ actor Kutcha Edwards, plus delicious refreshments. We have produced colour invitation posters and if you can help put them up in your area, please let me know and I'll forward some.

On 10 August, the City of Port Phillip and PPCfR was among the key sponsors of the day-long event to commemorate the landmark 1967 Referendum in Federation Square's Atrium and BMW The. Edge, an aptly named program was called "Their Spirit Still Shines." It included stirring speeches, performances by Ilbijerri theatre, cultural dancers, music from Kutcha Edwards, his nephew Tjimba Possum-Burns, Lou Bennett & The Sweet Cheeks, Richard Frankland & The Charcoal Club as well as an elder's panel, displays and information stalls. Several school groups were among the many on hand to witness this significant commemoration.

PPCfR is now connected to the World Wide Web. You can visit us at www.ppcf.org. Grateful thanks to Rachel Reilly for all her help to get us 'connected'.

Rosemary Rule

Next meeting - AGM & 10th birthday celebration

Wednesday, 26 September, 6.00pm, St Kilda

Reports from members...

The 'Open Letter' our group wrote in response to the Howard government's emergency intervention in the NT, now passed into legislation (Mungo August) was sent to the media and picked up by the Emerald Hills Weekly. Over the past weeks, many prominent indigenous and non-indigenous people have voiced their opinions and concerns. Below is a summary of random facts about the legislation in response to the 'Little Children are Sacred' report, compiled from a variety of sources.

- The Bill is not in response to the Report; it's an extremely complicated piece of legislation and has been prepared over the previous year.
- The Report documented 97 recommendations but not one of them is being implemented in the Bill.
- Only a small part of the Bill relates to the problem of child abuse - in fact the words "child" or "children" do not appear at all.

- Informed legal opinion considers the Bill will reverse all the gains won by Aboriginal people over the past one or two decades.
- The reason that the problems identified in every report of the past 20 years have not been addressed has been due to bureaucratic inefficiency and indifference and lack of funds.
- The impression that Aboriginal schools and health centres have money thrown at them is completely false. For example, the five or six "mission schools" in the Northern Territory - of which Wadeye is one - have each received \$19 million less funding over past years than comparative schools throughout the Territory. The Federal Government does not intend making up the past shortages.
- The Bill takes control away from indigenous communities and allows government bureaucrats to force themselves into Aboriginal boardrooms.
 - Police are allowed to enter private homes, without a warrant, if they suspect someone is drunk - in their own home!
- The Government can compulsorily acquire indigenous townships for five years, scrap the permit system for parts of Aboriginal communities, and quarantine welfare payments. It will not guarantee that property will be acquired on "just terms" as required under the constitution but on "payment of reasonable compensation". Mal Brough has suggested some communities might get infrastructure as part of compensation. Hardly just terms when all other communities receive infrastructure as a matter of course.
- Legal experts say the legislation is discriminatory which is why the Government has exempted it from the Racial Discrimination Act.

My personal opinion is that at the federal election, everyone should vote for the Senate below the line and not give preferences to any Senator who did not seriously push for amendments to this legislation.

Beverley Broadbent.

Note: ANTaR Victoria is one of many organisations urging members and supporters to contact their local Federal Member and Senators to seek meetings and air their concerns. Useful background material is available at www.antar.org.au. Elsewhere, the Federal Government has set up a hotline for "those wishing to contribute assistance to the Government's response" – 1800 333 995, 02 6243 4855. Email: jointtaskforce@facsia.gov.au

Reconciliation lecture series

For the final of the lectures on Reconciliation at the Australian Catholic University, Robert Manne addressed the subject "as an historian of Australian political culture."

In a wide ranging talk, he spoke of reconciliation as a social movement, grass roots between blacks and whites climaxing in friendships which continue today in such

places as churches and with aboriginal footballers.

The political movement for reconciliation was once greater than it is today and he remembered a time when Bob Hawke with other Australians like Judith Wright and Nugget Coombes promised a treaty. The Reconciliation Council was formed in '91 but Mr. Howard was not interested and Robert sees this as "dying in late 2000." In the time of Robert Menzies and Paul Hasluck, there was a policy of assimilation with Mr Hasluck believing there was "no future as a distinct and separate people." In the 60's and early 70's, the idea of assimilation was abandoned as the west talked about racism and the question of civil rights took off in the USA and South Africa.

As with previous speakers, Robert mentioned the important work of the anthropologist Professor Bill Stanner "who never felt superior to the people he was studying". He suggested that Stanner's portrait of his friend Dumagan was perhaps one of the greatest essays ever written in Australia. He also mentioned the importance of his 1968 Boyer Lectures in which he strongly opposed assimilation.

Nugget Coombes, who was a close friend of Stanner's, "hoped for a renaissance of aboriginal life" he imagined a future for the "Homeland communities." McKnight (Mornington Island) published in 2002, has described a situation for aboriginal people of "from hunting to drinking.

"In present times left and right factions hold opposite views, the left being committed to "rights" and the right responsive to "responsibilities. "Reports on "Aboriginal Deaths in Custody" and "The Stolen Generation" shook the nation."

In closing, Robert talked about "Noel Pearson's gamble" which he felt had broken a stalemate on the question of reconciliation. Whilst not agreeing with all of Pearson's views, he was gracious in his comments and highly commended Pearson's recent article in the Griffith Review. Robert felt that most people blame Mr. Howard for making reconciliation a "dead issue," but Manne likes to believe that "perhaps it is not dead but in hibernation."

I ask readers to excuse this all-over-the-place report, but I have tried to give a taste of what was a thoroughly wonderfully prepared paper and have passed on some of Robert's information about past articles and talks that people might like to research for themselves, e.g. the 1968 Boyer Lectures."

Gael Wilson

Rec Vic News

Reconciliation Victoria recently recruited for the CEO position and is pleased to announce that the interim CEO, Frank Hytten, has been appointed to the permanent role. Frank will lead the organisation as it firmly establishes its internal governance structures and positions itself as a strong force working towards Indigenous rights and just and respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

Victorians. More to come in Rec Vic's next newsletter on this front.

Rec Vic recently co-hosted the 'Their Spirit Still Shines in Victoria' event at Federation Square, which featured a jam packed program of Indigenous artists, musicians, and dancers, as well as an Elders panel on the '67 Referendum, a mock ballot by the Victorian Electoral Commission asking whether Indigenous people should be recognised as First Nations Peoples in the constitution, and a premiere screening of the Department of Education funded documentary – 'Reflections on '67: The Fight for Justice'. This day was a great success and a real partnership event between Rec Vic, the City of Melbourne, the City of Yarra and the Victorian Department of Education, with involvement from more than 10 Local Metropolitan Councils. Full details will be available in our upcoming Annual Report.

Also coming up, Rec Vic's AGM will be held in October this year so make sure your membership details are up to date to be involved. The Rec Vic/ANTaR Local Reconciliation Groups conference will be held on November 10 at the Aborigines Advancement League, Northcote. Keep your eye on our website for updates on both of these events.

Recent media releases in regard to the Northern Territory intervention legislation and the recent South Australian High Court ruling granting compensation to Bruce Treverrow, a member of the Stolen Generations, can also be viewed on the Rec Vic website.

Lastly, we are looking to reinvigorate our website content, so please send through any details on news or events in your community that you would like to see either on our website, or in our monthly e-bulletin or newsletter to donna.morabito@reconciliationvic.org.au. To ensure you receive our newsletters and bulletins, send through any updated contact details to info@reconciliationvic.org.au or call our office for inquiries, 9662 1645 or visit www.reconciliationvic.org.au

Eastern Region Referendum Forum

'Stepping Up! Walking Together-40 years as "Citizens? Where to next?" Forum on 18-19 September to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the '67 Referendum, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place is hosting a forum and dinner at Hawthorn Town Hall. Speakers include Julie McCrossin, Joy Wandin Murphy, Andrew Jackomos, and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Dinner from 5pm on 18th, forum next day from 8.30am. For details, costs and bookings (by 7 Sept), contact: Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, 9725 2166, or admin@mnigp.com.au

Kutchas play reviewed

It was a powerful, raw and emotional night at the theatre watching Kutcha Edwards' perform his "Songlines of a Mutti Mutti Man" (George Fairfax Studio, Arts Centre, August 9-11). With the help of family, friends and

acquaintances who shared the stage, he unraveled his life's journey. It began with an idyllic-sounding big-family childhood and moved to being stolen, institutionalized, meeting his father, making a mark in football, becoming a father, battling alcoholism, singing, traveling the world with his music, educating people about injustices, working in the prison system - and much in between. Quite a few tears were shed, on the stage and in the audience, as he unfolded his story, not always according to script, but always poignant and heartfelt. Shining through it all was Kutcha's sublime singing voice, backed up by a terrific bunch of musicians, some of whom had journeyed with him over the years. Was it theatre, musical or an oral history lesson? Whichever, it was most certainly a night to remember.

Rosemary Rule

Arts & other news

This year's Melbourne International Arts Festival, 11-27 October, includes a couple of performances by indigenous artists. Lou Bennett and The Sweet Cheeks perform 12 & 13th, and Mark Atkins, a most amazing didgeridoo player, in 'Grungada, a journey of music and song', 14-16th. Bookings: 1300 136 166, www.melbournefestival.com.au.

"Chopped Liver", Ilbijerri's story about Lynne and Jim is touring again and will be performed in Victoria metro and regional theatres, 10 September-5 October. Information: 9329 9097, www.ilbijerri.org.au

Joe Geia, best known as a singer/songwriter, has recently taken up painting. He's having a joint exhibition with Hugh Wayland at Kerala Gallery, 283 High Street, Northcote, 26 September-13 October. Details: keralagallery@ipriumus.com.au

'Strange Fruit: testimony and the uncanny in the art of Julie Dowling', Perth-based indigenous artist, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, until 14 October. Enquiries: 8344 5148.

Gallery artist talk

Kelly Gellatly, curator, talks about the Gordon Bennett exhibition. NGV, Federation Square, 6 September, 12.30pm. Free. The exhibition runs until January.

Melbourne Writer's Festival

Saturday, 1 September, 11.3am, Spotlight on Alexis Wright. 2nd Sept: 4-5pm, Breakdown, Robert Manne and Bruce Pascoe talking about 40 years of government policy. Festival guests are encouraged to bring along children's books to give to the Indigenous Literacy Project run by the Fred Hollows Foundation. And Wednesday, 5 September 2007 is [Indigenous Literacy Day](http://www.indigenousliteracyday.com.au). On this day, participating booksellers all around Australia will donate 5% of their takings to The Fred Hollows Foundation to buy books and other literacy resources for remote Indigenous communities in Northern Territory and New South Wales. In 2007, The Fred Hollows Foundation will work hand in hand with the Jawoyn communities located east of Katherine in the

Northern Territory (Barunga, Eva Valley and Wugularr) as well as in Wilcannia in New South Wales.

New film - Liyarn Ngarn,

Liyarn Ngarn, in the Yawuru language of the West Kimberly region around Broome in Australia's far north-west, means "Coming Together of the Spirit". It epitomizes a thirty year long mission of Indigenous leader and Yawura man, Patrick Dodson, to bring about a lasting and true reconciliation between the original owners and the immigrants. This compelling new documentary tells of the devastation and inhumanity brought upon Indigenous people in every aspect of their daily lives. Personal stories of injustice are recounted by renowned English actor Pete Postlethwaite, as told to him by Patrick Dodson and Bill Johnson, an old English school friend, whose Indigenous son Louis died tragically. Respected song man, Archie Roach, adds his powerful lyrics and voice to this often painful, yet inspiring, journey of strength Liyarn Ngarn aims to change peoples' perception and attitude to Indigenous people and to assist with the process of true and lasting reconciliation. It is also offers some kind of meaningful epitaph to the Indigenous lives lost through sheer inhumanity. For further information, visit antar.org.au

"Liyarn Ngarn had me riveted and moved me to tears, anger and shame. It's the most culturally significant film I've seen in years ... Pete Postlethwaite, Archie Roach and Patrick Dodson are superb ... it's an absolute 'must see' for ALL Australians." - David Lightfoot, Film Producer, "Wolf Creek", "Rogue."

Kin

'Kin, - it's where you're from, where you belong, pass it on, devised and directed by Stephen Page, is a play that tells the story of his family. Includes break dancing, singing, yarns and much more. At the Malthouse, 27 Sept-6 October. Note: Not recommended for children under eight.

Children's festival

"Once Upon a Story" festival at Gasworks Arts Park, Saturday, September 9, 10am-3pm. Heaps of children-friendly activities including author readings, theatre shows. Free. Details: 8606 4200, www.gasworks.org.au

Indigenous Health Day

Learn more about the Close the Gap indigenous health campaign at Federation Square, 18 September, 12 - 2pm. Details: Oxfam 9289 9444.

Book

A fund raiser was held in August to help progress Arena Publications' proposal to publish 'Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia'. The book is a critical response to the Howard government's policies towards Aboriginal Australia. It includes essays by people such as Patrick Dodson, Jon Altman, Larrisa Behrendt, Raimond Gaita and Rex Wild (co-author of the Little Children are Sacred report). For more information, contact: billabud@ozemail.com.au

Deadly Awards

Voting for the 2007 Deadly Awards is now open. They celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island achievement in the areas of sport, music, entertainment and the community. Talented singer/songwriter Dan Sultan is worthy of a vote we reckon! Visit [www:deadlys.vibe.com.au](http://www.deadlys.vibe.com.au) to cast your vote.

Aboriginal cultural tours

'Spirit, connection, land' is the name of the Aboriginal Heritage Walk at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, providing understanding and respect for the customs and heritage of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung people. Thursdays, Bookings required. 9252 2300. www.rgb.vic.gov.au

Australian Dreaming Bushfoods Tour with Wurundjeri Elder Vicki Nicholson-Brown as guide, are held at the Australian Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne, every Wednesday. Bookings required. 5990 2200.

Protect Victoria's Wetlands

Northern Victoria river red gum wetland forests and associated ecosystems need protection. The forests are vital for the survival of Indigenous peoples culturally and spiritually. Since the mid '80s, traditional owners have called for better environmental protection and conservation measures over the Murray and floodplains. Environmental groups are working with 10 Indigenous Nations along the Murray, supporting a handback-leaseback of parks and a joint management structure to offer the best environmental and cultural protection solutions. To learn more, visit www.saveredgum.org.

PORT PHILLIP CITIZENS FOR RECONCILIATION INC.

Annual General Meeting & 10th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Wednesday, 26 September 2007
Community Room, St Kilda Library,
Carlisle Street, St Kilda

6.00pm: AGM

6.30pm: Birthday celebrations -
Including screening of the award winning
documentary "My Brother Vinnie" with cast
members, music from Kutcha Edwards
and refreshments

Gold coin donation.

Note: At the AGM, a new Executive Committee will be elected.
Nominations are welcome. Afterwards, past and present members and
friends are invited to come and join our birthday celebrations.

Enquiries: 9530 3245, 0418 675 734
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PROXY VOTE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**To be held at 6.00pm on Wednesday, 26 September 2007, in the
Community Room, St Kilda Library, Carlisle Street, St Kilda.**

**A Member may appoint another person to be a proxy to vote on their
behalf. The proxy must be in writing signed by the Member.**

I,.....

.....

hereby appoint

.....

**Or failing which, the Chair, as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the
Annual General Meeting of the Association to be held on 26 September
2007 and at any adjournment.**

Signed:

Dated:.....

Unless otherwise indicated, a proxy holder may vote as he or she thinks fit.
The proxy form must be sent to the Association or given to the Chair of the
meeting at or before commencement.