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The Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we meet, and we pay our respects to their Elders; past, present and emerging.

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August 2023

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Indigenous Voice to Parliament

With so much discussion swirling around the forthcoming Referendum for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, our members, like hundreds of others, are taking time to educate themselves, attend forums with informed speakers like Marcia Langton, Noel Pearson and N'Arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs and be involved in campaigns such as Macnamara for Yes, which includes a calendar of local activities via <https://action.yes23.com.au/macnamara>.

I'd like to thank Jann Skinner, an ANTaR volunteer who oversees their online store, for coming to our July meeting and giving us some useful training tips when we're out talking to the public about the Voice campaign. By the way, PPCfR will be presenting a community forum, **Why Yes for the Voice** at St Kilda Town Hall on **Thursday 21 September** and will support the Macnamara for Yes forum with Thomas Mayo on **Thursday 5 October**; stay tuned for details. There's more Referendum-related news below.

Federal court case

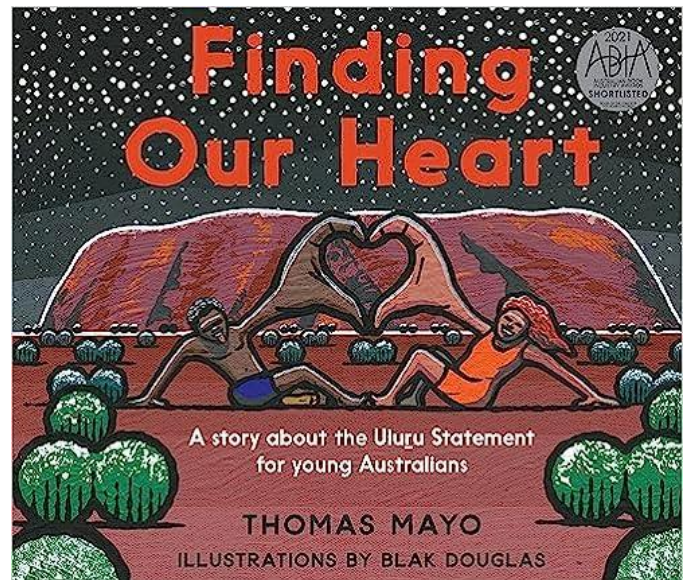
Wakka Wakka man Uncle Dennis Fisher, aka Den the Fish, who is Co-Chair of Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation, has failed in his bid to access his superannuation earlier than non-Indigenous Australians, following a landmark ruling handed down by the Federal Court in July. Den says this may not be the end. More details inside.



Dennis Fisher leaving the Federal Court with Narita Waight, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.

Book gift project

For the third year in a row, our group has elected to gift a book to every Early Learning Centre in the City of Port Phillip. Members will personally deliver copies of *Finding our Heart: A Story about the Uluru Statement for Young Australians* by Thomas Mayo, a leading advocate for the Voice to Parliament campaign and bestselling author, illustrated by Blak Douglas, winner of the 2022 Archibald Prize, and will include an explanatory letter. We're very grateful for the discount given to us by The Avenue Bookstore.



Next Meeting: Tuesday 15 August, 6.30pm,
South Melbourne Community Centre, Hall 3,
Ferrars Place, (off Park Street) South Melbourne.
All Welcome. Enquiries: 0418 685 734.

REFERENDUM PAMPHLET AND RESOURCES

The written Yes and No cases' official Referendum pamphlet, to be sent to over 12.5 million homes in the weeks before the national vote, is now available on the Australian Electoral Commission website - <https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/pamphlet>. There is no requirement for the pamphlet to be truthful. Indigenous sporting legends Evonne Goolagong Cawley and Johnathan Thurston have endorsed the Voice to Parliament in the official written Yes case. The No case argues the proposal is "risky, unknown and permanent" and will fuel activists' calls to abolish Australia Day and change the flag.

Federal government's multi-lingual resources: social media toolkits, videos and translated information in up to 45 languages other than English on referendum and the Voice; <https://voice.gov.au/community-toolkit/first-nations>.

The Yes 23 campaign asks Australians to walk together to build a better future by establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the constitution, and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for the purpose of Treaty-making and truth-telling; [Yes23.org](https://www.yes23.org)

Victorian Trades Hall Council on behalf of 500,000 Victorian union members support the First Nations Voice to Parliament campaign, sponsoring and supporting events around the State. <https://www.weareunion.org.au>
Reconciliation Australia's joint statement with over 70 organisations and groups in support of the Voice, joining over 500 organisations across Australia who have publicly pledged their support; [https://www.reconciliation.org.au/support-a-voice-to-parliament/...](https://www.reconciliation.org.au/support-a-voice-to-parliament/)

Shelley Reys, Partner KPMG, CEO Arilla Indigenous Consulting, has produced a YouTube clip dispelling some of the myths associated with the Referendum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nla61MfEtY>

The Recognise a Better Way: **No** campaign is led by Shadow Indigenous Australians Minister Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price and Nyunggai Warren Mundine; <https://www.recogniseabeterway.org.au>.

In related news, Rupert Murdoch's pay TV channel, Sky News Australia, has launched a dedicated new channel promising to "*canvass all angles*" of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, called Sky News The Voice Debate. Sky will also screen a documentary *The Voice: Australia Decides*.

DENNIS FISHER'S FAILED COURT BID

Uncle Dennis Fisher, 66, Wakka Wakka man, Melbourne resident and Co-Chair of Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation, failed in his bid to access his superannuation earlier than non-Indigenous Australians, following a landmark ruling handed down by the Federal Court. Den sued the commonwealth last year, arguing that he should receive the aged pension earlier than non-Indigenous Australians on the grounds of a shorter life expectancy. He claimed that, according to the ABS, an Indigenous man aged 65 had a remaining life expectancy of 15.8 years, while a non-Indigenous man of the same age could expect to live for a remaining 19 years.

The Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act requires that Aboriginal people receive the pension for the same duration as other people, he argued, and he should have been eligible for the pension at 64, three years earlier than it is currently available. In July, Justices Anna Katzmann, Debra Mortimer, Hilary Charlesworth, Wendy Abraham and Geoffrey Kennett found the current system did not breach the Racial Discrimination Act. Den said he was "*frustrated with this white system. It doesn't give us a say. White people are living longer because they haven't lost what we have lost. I've seen too many people dying at a very early age; we're lucky to get to fifty. This case was about telling the truth, asking the government to work together with us, to give our people the same chance in life as everyone else.*"

Note: According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2018, the average life expectancy for male Indigenous Australians was 71.6 years, 75.6 years for women.

NAIDOC WEEK

There were some wonderful events held during NAIDOC Week, 2-9 July. Highlights included the gala ball, widespread media coverage including on ABC, SBS and NITV and the 2023 NAIDOC Awards. Lifetime Achievement Award: Aunty Dr Naomi Mayers OAM; Person of the Year: Professor Kelvin Kong; Female Elder: Aunty Dr Matilda House-Williams; Male Elder: William Tilmouth; Sportsperson Award: Donnell Wallam; Youth Award: Courtney Burns; Creative Talent Award: Rachel Perkins; Caring for Country and Culture: Lala Gutchen; Education: Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre; Innovation: Daniel Motlop - Contribution in community-controlled services and Aboriginal health-care.



Victorian NAIDOC 2023 winners included Aunty Ada Peterson, Female Elder of the Year, and Uncle Alan Thorpe, Male Elder of the Year, pictured here with Aunty Pam Pedersen, Yorta Yorta Elder and former NAIDOC sportsperson of the year.

EDUCATION REFORM HELPS INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

All Indigenous students will be guaranteed a commonwealth supported place at the university of their choice, regardless of where they live, as part of a set of reforms designed to make higher education more accessible for all Australians. Federal Education Minister Jason Clare said the government was also taking action to boost the number of students from regional areas or poorer backgrounds who attend university. Currently, only

15% of young people from poor families have a university degree along with only 18% of young people in the regions. First Nations students made up just 2.06% of domestic university enrolments nationally, well below population parity, with census data showing 3.8% of Australians are Indigenous. For Australia's most prestigious institutions, the figures are even lower, with Indigenous students representing little more than 1% of domestic students at the Elite Group of Eight universities. The funding guarantee previously only applied to First Nations students in regional and remote areas, but the government will expand it to all Indigenous people who are eligible for the course they apply for.

RECONCILIATION STONNINGTON'S 25th

The Reconciliation Stonnington group's Annual General Meeting, which also marks their 25th anniversary, will be held on **Wednesday 9 August**, 6.00 pm, Grattan Gardens Community Centre, Prahran. Guest speakers are Ian Hamm, MAICD FIPAA, Yorta Yorta man with extensive board and government experience and Cr Jami Klisaris, Mayor, City of Stonnington. Light refreshments afterwards. All welcome. RSVP by 5 August to Ro Bailey: ro.celebrant@ozemail.com.au.

PAINTING ON CARS AND TUNNEL WALLS



First Peoples' Assembly says this car from Wurundjeri artist Vegas Fitzmaurice is "lookin' real fresh!" And as part of the Metro Tunnel's Creative Program, 30 Torch artists are presenting a captivating @metrotunnelart installation in the CBD, near Franklin Street, across from the Melbourne City Baths.

CLOSING THE GAP - WORK STILL NEEDED

The latest Closing the Gap Report confirms the government is failing in its efforts to reduce the structural disadvantages holding back First Nations' people. The Productivity Commission is gathering data from within First Nations' communities on seventeen socio-economic measures: four are currently on target and three are showing improvements at twice the required rate; land rights, employment, pre-school enrolment and the number of young people in detention all met or exceeded expectations. But adult imprisonment, suicide, children in out-of-home care rates, an early development targets all took a backwards step. The remaining measures, ranging from health, education, employment, housing, safety and strength in culture and language, either had insufficient data or were improving too slowly.

ARTS NEWS

Music

First Nations artists and researchers from the University of Melbourne and Deakin University have produced a new album of songs in Gunditjmara language, empowering communities to reclaim and celebrate culture. *Gunditjmara Alive* brings together Indigenous musicians, composers and vocalists to write, translate and reclaim Gunditjmara language through song. The *Gunditjmara Bundiya* album is available on IndigiTUBE and Bandcamp.

Mitch Tambo's new song *Yugal Yulu-gi* has a theatrical and cinematic feel and is performed entirely in Gamilaraay.

Books

This book things ya deadly! by Corey Tutt with illustrations by Molly Hunt is an inspirational compendium for younger readers and celebrates Indigenous success across all aspects of life – politics, education, literature, sport and the arts and features 80 First Nations people.

TV

The First Inventors with Rob Collins and a team of First Nations' investigators, delves into 65,000 years of Aboriginal Australian invention, looking at how landscapes were transformed, how events were recorded, the use of navigation tools and how societies were organised -<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/the-first-inventors>.

The Dark Emu Story with Bruce Pascoe is available on ABC iView as is *The First Weapons* series.

INTERLUDE BAR OPENS

Kakadu plum martinis and native produce feature at Interlude Bar, a 100% Aboriginal, female-owned and operated business, at 44 Chapel St, Windsor. Apryl Day and Kayla Truth describe it as "*Blackfulla dishes spun in a fine dining way*". Aimed to be a culturally safe, fun and flash place for mob, while also honouring the achievements of their ancestors. <https://interludebar.com.au>

