

Mungo...

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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FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Truth & Justice

I found the recent ABCTV's *Four Corners* program on the Yoorrook Justice Commission's hearings thought-provoking and emotional. Many non-Indigenous people appearing before the Commission said they knew nothing about the massacres, removals and other indignities suffered by Victoria's First Nations population. As it's on the public record that First Nations People have suffered massive human rights' abuses, surely we all need to educate and inform ourselves and support First Nations People?

Sorry Day

Right now, we're planning the lunch to commemorate

National Sorry Day on **Monday 26 May**. It will be in the St Kilda Town Hall and feature a Welcome to Country, wonderful MC-ing from Co-Chair Dennis Fisher, entertainment, lunch and some surprises. Open to all. Details next month.



[Click here to Book for our Sorry Day Lunch:](https://www.trybooking.com/DAFTY)
<https://www.trybooking.com/DAFTY>



(Above) Official Welcome to Country with Bunurong Elder Uncle Mark Brown
(Left) Sorry Day Lunch Master of Ceremonies, PPCfR Co-Chair Elder Uncle Dennis Fisher.

Congratulations

To Elder Aunty Alma, receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Victoria University for her invaluable contribution to Aboriginal health and self-determination in Victoria; to First Nations leaders recognised for their outstanding

achievements at the 26th Ricci Marks Awards: Kobe Atkinson, Tanisha Lovett, Braydon Saunders and Djakira Hope; to Thomas Mayo's *Always Was, Always Will Be*, shortlisted for the ABIA Awards General Non-fiction Book of the Year and Social Impact Book of the Year; to Nukgal Wurra writer Wanda Gibson, whose *Three Dresses* won the \$100,000 Victorian Prize for Literature.

Impromptu Catch-up

I was delighted to catch up with Todd Condie during his recent visit to Melbourne. Todd, the Council's Indigenous Policy Officer until 2023, is now Editor of the *Koori Mail*. Elder Aunty Judith 'Jacko' Jackson, Maggie Smith, COPP's Community First Peoples Lead, and Jordan Sutardy, COPP's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Building Broker were also there.



Catching up with Elder Aunty Judith Jackson, COPP's Jordan Sutardy and Maggie Smith and Todd Condie.

Rosemary Rule

Next Meeting: Tuesday 15 April, 6.30 pm,
South Melbourne Community Centre, Hall 3,
Ferrars Place, South Melbourne.
Enquiries: 0418 685 734. All Welcome!

Yoorrook is the Wemba Wemba word for “truth”. The Commission is well underway investigating and unearthing Australia’s long-buried history, hidden from the national narrative. This truth-telling inquiry has spent years collecting testimony from hundreds of First Nations and non-Indigenous people, revealing the scale of atrocities and the failure of governments to reckon with the past. It is not a criminal investigation; it won’t bring charges or punish those who benefited, but it will answer the call of communities who have wanted to finally document the crimes of the past. In June, a final blueprint on redressing injustices in education, health and housing, and the theft of land and water will be issued. Yoorrook has already called for a major overhaul of the criminal justice and child protection systems. *“We’re not asking people to say sorry, but we’re asking people to open their minds, to open their hearts to the full story,”* Travis Lovett, Yoorrook Commissioner.

CAMPFIRE STORIES IN ST KILDA

On 20 March during Cultural Diversity Week, the City of Port Phillip invited residents to come along to hear ‘Campfire Stories’ at the St Kilda Library, featuring First Nations speakers. Bunurong Elder Uncle Mark Brown, Elder Aunty Judith ‘Jacko’ Jackson and Elder Uncle Dennis Fisher spoke about their lives, and later, MC Miss Katalyna introduced James Seow, a community leader and advocate; Noe Harsel, CEO, Jewish Museum of Australia; George Kyriakou, author and Rohini Vij, a Hindi educator and storyteller. Several PPCfR group members were in the audience.

L-R: James Seow, Noe Harsel, Rohini Vij, Miss Katalyna, Elder Aunty Judith ‘Jacko’ Jackson and Elder Uncle Dennis Fisher.



FIRST PEOPLES’ ASSEMBLY GATHER

Powerful conversations were on the agenda at the second Statewide Treaty gathering on Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country last month. Assembly Co-chair Rueben Berg said: *“From my perspective, it’s really key that we make sure that our community understands that, when we talk about those aspirations... our conversations with government, it’s not about if we’re going to make those things happen, it’s how we’re going*

to make those things happen. That’s what’s really key from my perspective...as it relates to the truth-telling work and the accountability mechanism.”

Kaley Nicholson has joined the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria as the Reserved Seat Holder for the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.

LOUISA BRIGGS PUBLICLY CELEBRATED

Boonwurrung nurse and activist Louisa Briggs is one of six trailblazing women advocates/artists/agitators being celebrated in new public artworks as part of the \$1.2 million Victorian Women’s Public Art Program. A statue is to be erected on the St Kilda foreshore. Over 10,000 Victorians voted on which women they would like to see immortalised through public art. Louisa Briggs was born on the south coast of Melbourne in the 1830s. As a young girl she was kidnapped by sealers and taken to Preservation Island in Bass Strait. In the 1870s, she joined Coranderrk Aboriginal Station (near Yering) with her family, working as a nurse and midwife. She became the first Aboriginal woman to be paid for her services, a groundbreaking achievement during a time when government policies actively marginalised Aboriginal communities. Despite these early hardships, Louisa became a force for change and



justice, dedicating her life to improving the lives of First Nations People. Louisa had nine children and died in 1925. N’Arweet Carolyn Briggs is her great-granddaughter. Other Public Art Program winners include Aunty Margaret (Lilardia) Tucker MBE and Aunty Dorothy Peters AM.

Louisa Briggs with grandson William.

SHOCKING CHILD REMOVAL STATS

Almost 24,000 Indigenous children were placed in care at least once in the last financial year, new data has revealed. Figures show 23,956 First Nations children were in at least one out-of-home care (OOHC) placement in 2023-24, over 43% of all children Australia-wide. Nationally, Indigenous children aged 0-17 were placed at least once in OOHC in the last financial year at a rate of 60.6 per 1,000, 10.4 times higher than non-Indigenous children. In Victoria, there have been improvements in many areas; however, the rates of Aboriginal children in OOHC continues to climb. Indigenous children 18 times more likely to be placed at least once in OOHC throughout 2023-24 than non-Indigenous children. A number of legislative reforms have been introduced to promote self-determination, such as \$191 million in funding for the Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement and support for Indigenous-led pilot health programs.

RECONCILIATION STONNINGTON NEWS

A team of six from RecSton enjoyed taking part in a Trivia Night at Murnong First Nations Gathering Place and Art Gallery - which we won! The night was organised by Murnong staff and volunteers in the hope of raising their rent for the year, and though they didn't quite succeed, it certainly went some way towards it and a silent auction also added to the total. I was able to donate eight of my individually designed and handcrafted necklaces, adding \$410 to their coffers; not bad, considering the attendees didn't expect to be buying necklaces. Two were made with centrepieces that said "*Deadly*" and another with "*Always was and always will be*", each with red, black and yellow beads and black and gold letters. I was thrilled they all sold. Having been in the Reconciliation movement for a long time and having read books and seen films related to Australian history was definitely a help answering the questions. One that stumped us all was "*What is the name of the Aboriginal man on the \$2.00 coin?*". In case you ever need to know for a trivia night, it is Gwoya Tjungurrayi; see if you can remember! We recommend becoming involved in Murnong functions in future; you'll enjoy them.

Ro Bailey



L-R: Winners! Ro Bailey, Tom Moloney, Kaye Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, Jett Mahoney and Keith Gove at the Trivia Night.

ARTS & CULTURE

Music

Acclaimed vocalist Emma Donovan unites with pianist Paul Grabowsky and a collection of Melbourne's best jazz musicians to pay tribute to a rich musical legacy.

Wednesday 2 April, 6.30 pm, Melbourne Recital Centre. <https://www.melbournerecital.com.au/whats-on>

Comedy

Deadly Funny National Grand Final brings together national finalists and special guest performers, showcasing talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedians. Arts Centre, **Wednesday 2 April-Monday 14 April**.

<https://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/whats-on/2025/comedy>

Weaving Workshop

Learn traditional weaving techniques from Central and Eastern Arrernte artist Georgia Anne in a hands-on weaving workshop. Linden Gallery, Acland Street, St Kilda, **Sunday 13 April**, 1.00-3.00 pm.

www.lindenarts.org/community/events-rsvp

Exhibition

Stitchin' Stories: Blak and Threadly features creations by eight visionary First Peoples designers from the Koorie Heritage Trust's Blak Design Program 2025, including Matty Chilly, Arts Officer at The Torch. Koorie Heritage Trust, Fed Square, until **mid-May**.

MERCHANDISE

Celebrated tennis players Evonne Goolagong Cawley and Ash Barty have been immortalised as one-of-a-kind Barbie dolls. The Ash Barty Barbie wears a replica of her iconic 2021 Wimbledon outfit, celebrating her historic victory as the third Australian woman and second Aboriginal woman to win Wimbledon. The Evonne Goolagong Cawley Barbie features an outfit inspired by the moment in 2022 when Goolagong Cawley surprised Barty on the tennis court after her win at the Australian Open, presenting her with the winner's trophy.

Welcome to Country is a First Nations led and operated social enterprise with a vision for more prosperous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Their collection features beautifully crafted First Nations-inspired scarves, tea towels and birch-wood journals, each designed with First Nations artwork that celebrates culture and storytelling as well as native Australian botanical candles, nourishing lip balms and thoughtfully curated gift sets. <https://www.welcometocountry.com> for the full produce range.

FIRST NATIONS THEME FOR \$5 NOTE

The theme for the new \$5 banknote, selected from more than 2,100 public nominations, will honour First Nations Peoples connection to Country, following the RBA's announcement that King Charles would not feature on the banknote following the Queen's death. The reverse side of the new \$5 note will continue to feature the Parliament House. The new note will be the first to not feature a monarch. Before selecting the theme, the RBA engaged with First Nations organisations across the country to encourage submissions, and the redesign panel included First Nations representatives.

