

Mungo...



Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation Inc.

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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.

This newsletter is supported by a Community Grant from the City of Port Phillip, and we acknowledge Nina Taylor MP, State Labor Member for Albert Park, for their ongoing support.

MARCH 2023

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

First Meeting

We had an excellent meeting on Tuesday 21 February, welcomed a first-timer and happily re-connected with other members, and there was great energy in the room as we talked about plans for an exciting year ahead. We canvassed ideas on ways to inform and engage people about the Referendum for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. I welcome your input and ideas, so please get in touch. I'm encouraged that MP's Josh Burns and Nina Taylor are supporting the campaign and that there may be opportunities to support their events and activities as and when appropriate. Also, we will host a lunch for Sorry Day on **Thursday 25 May**, the day prior to the National commemoration, and will maintain connections with local schools and early learning centres as best we can, so stay tuned for updates.

Council

Todd Condie, the City of Port Phillip's well respected Indigenous Policy Officer, is taking a year's leave of absence for family reasons, and I'll miss his counsel, insightful help, support and friendship. I'll continue to liaise with Jordan Sutardy, COPP's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community broker, and with Ned Valent, Gathering Place Development Officer. (Ned will continue to email *Mungo* out). In other news, this year's St Kilda Festival was well attended, particularly on the First



Peoples' Day, which included many tributes to the late Archie Roach, along with a heart-warming appearance by his surviving sister Myrtle.

Elder Judith 'Jacko' Jackson and Todd Condie.

Forums

I was among the group representatives taking part in Reconciliation Victoria's (RV) local reconciliation groups network forum on 16 February. Members from around the State talked about what their respective groups have achieved and are planning – it was an impressive list! We also considered "*how we can connect threads in the lead-up to National Reconciliation Week: Be a Voice for Generations, and the Voice for a Referendum*," as CEO Nicole Findlay suggested. RV also presented a Maggolee webinar, focusing on the From the Heart campaign, aimed at those involved in local government. There's more Referendum-related news below.

Congratulations

To the Federal Government's nomination for United Nations World Heritage listing of the Burrup Peninsula and surrounding areas, home to the world's largest collection of rock art; to West Australian senator Dorinda Cox, appointed First Nations representative for the Australian Greens; to Eddie Betts, whose book *Lil Homies* is being turned into a TV series on Netflix and NITV.

Dennis Fisher's Campaign

See inside for a report about the court case PPCfR's Co-Chair has lodged against the Commonwealth to have the pension age lowered for Indigenous Australians.

Membership

After 25 years without any change, our membership fees will be increased to \$20 and \$15 Concession, taking effect from **1 July**. Until then, the fees remain at \$10 and \$5 respectively.

Rosemary Rule

Next Meeting: Tuesday 21 March 6.30 pm
South Melbourne Community Centre, Hall 3,
Ferrars Place, (off Park Street) South Melbourne.
All Welcome. Enquiries: 0418 685 734.

INDIGENOUS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Late February, after two days of workshops with volunteers from community, business and faith groups, the Yes23.com.au campaign was announced. *"The campaign aims to simplify the debate ahead of the vote, hoping to keep people focused on the issues of recognition and consultation,"* said Yes Alliance campaign leader, Dean Parkin. A range of resources, including toolkits for schools, businesses and community groups along with merchandise, are available on the Campaign from the Heart website. Volunteers are invited to engage with grassroots organisations to host community-led events and kitchen-table conversations. Local groups and politicians have already begun holding forums, including one at Monash University with Josh Burns, Member for Macnamara, and Attorney General Mark Dreyfus. Mr Burns has plans for other events to help inform the broader community about the Referendum. The Prime Minister continues to encourage his parliamentary colleagues not to stand against the Voice. *"I say to those in positions of political leadership, do not miss this opportunity this time,"* Mr Albanese said. *"It's about recognition and it's about consultation, that's what it's about and that's what we need to deliver."*

The Government has been forced to bow to Opposition pressure for pamphlets making cases for and against the Voice to Parliament but is holding firm on another Coalition request to fund the official Yes and No campaigns equally. The Paul Ramsey Foundation has pledged \$5 million to the Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition (AICR), which will oversee the fundraising for the campaign and support its advocacy efforts. Two of the bodies running No campaigns, Recognise a Better Way and Advance Australia, have not announced if or when there will be an official launch for their campaigns. The Prime Minister has said that the Referendum is expected to be held between October and December this year.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart and the From The Heart campaigns have produced a mini online course (10-15 mins) exploring what a Voice to Parliament is, what it isn't and why a Referendum is required to make it happen. For resources and toolkits, visit <https://fromtheheart.com.au/resources/campaign-toolkit/>

VOICE FORUMS

Indigenous Voice to Parliament - Kooyong Info Night, **Thursday 2 March**, 6:30 - 8:00 pm, Hawthorn Town Hall, with Marcus Stewart, Thomas Mayo and Monique Ryan, presented by Reconciliation Boroondara. <http://www.trybooking.com/CFPRM>

Steps to the Referendum - Initiatives of Change Australia is hosting an online event about the Uluru Statement from the Heart in the lead-up to this year's Referendum. Six IofCA members have completed both *Walking Together* and *Train the Trainer* courses run by Inner West Sydney Council. Hosted by Uncle Shane Charles, Margaret Hepworth, Mike Brown and Kathryn Farrell, the session will map strategies toward this decisive moment

and brainstorm ideas of how your community can raise awareness. **Wednesday 8 March**, 7.00-9.00 pm. Zoom; registration required. <https://au.iofc.org>

CLOSE THE GAP PLAN 2023

In February, on the 15th anniversary of then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's historic apology to the Stolen Generations, the Federal Government released its Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, with \$424 million in new money to address Indigenous disadvantage across areas such as housing, food, education and water infrastructure. Key points:

- The 2022 Closing the Gap Report showed limited progress on key targets for improving life outcomes for Indigenous Australians
- Part of the Government's plan will provide clean drinking water for remote communities
- Indigenous Australians Minister Linda Burney says a Voice to Parliament will also be 'fundamental' to closing the gap. She said the implementation plan was aimed at delivering real change, with \$150 million over four years going towards creating water infrastructure for communities that do not have access to clean drinking water. There is also federal funding of about \$112 million for a one-year partnership with the Northern Territory Government to accelerate the building of new remote housing and almost \$12 million to make essential food more affordable and accessible in remote communities. Continued funding of \$68.6 million over two years will go towards delivering legal and non-legal support to women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.

COURT CASE TO LOWER PENSION AGE

Dennis Fisher, PPCfR's Co-Chair, is suing the Commonwealth in the Federal Court to have the pension age lowered for Indigenous Australians, arguing he should receive the pension from the age of 64 because of his shorter life expectancy. Australians are only eligible to receive an age pension once they turn 67. Australian Bureau of Statistics show a 65-year-old Indigenous man will live for a further 15.8 years on average. In comparison, a 65-year-old non-Indigenous man will have another 19 years to enjoy his retirement. The life expectancy gap was shaped by a range of structural, social, cultural and health determinants, including the historical and ongoing consequences of colonisation, according to Ron Merkel KC who led Den's legal team. He argued that the shorter life expectancy was therefore a function of race, and Mr Fisher's case was about correcting the historical disadvantage. Representatives for the Commonwealth made submissions.



"I've seen too many of my people dying at a very early age," Dennis said. *"White people are living longer because they haven't lost what we've lost. We are lucky to get to 50 years old."*

RECONCILIATION NEWS

Reconciliation Week:

The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2023, **27 May-3 June**, is Be A Voice For Generations: Act Today for a Reconciled Future, calling on all Australians to act today to tackle the unfinished business of Reconciliation. nsw.reconciliation.org.au

Awards:

Narragunnawali Reconciliation in Education Awards **Australia's first and only national Reconciliation in education awards for Australian schools and early learning services are now open.** Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine, said the bi-annual awards are an uplifting time for the organisation. *"It's a very special time for Reconciliation Australia when we get to see the best of Reconciliation efforts happening in our schools and early learning services now,"* she said.

Schools including primary, secondary, senior secondary and combined schools within the Government, Independent or Catholic sectors and Early Learning including early childhood education and care, preschool, family day care and out of school hours care services are eligible. Cash prizes of \$10,000, media and special engagement and networking opportunities are on offer to the winning school and early learning service, judged to display outstanding commitment to Reconciliation. Applications close **Friday 5 May**. <https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/awards>

Reconciliation Victoria (RV):

RV liaises with government, business and local groups, publishes a monthly newsletter and is a credible source of information and resources. In step with their sister states, the organisation has released its Voice position statement. *"The weight of responsibility now rests with the Australian public and if ever there was a time for Reconciliation supporters to remain steadfast in our compassion and commitment to support truth, fairness and justice for and with First Peoples – it is now!"* said CEO Nicole Lindsay. RV's Measuring Stick Survey is designed to help them understand the state of Reconciliation in Victoria.

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS

ABS data compiled from the last census in 2021 shows there are almost 18,000 registered Indigenous 'owner managers' – which, unfortunately, is not a wholly representative way to count the true extent of the sector's entrepreneurs. There is limited data on Indigenous businesses in Australia, and there are around 19,000 people registered as directors of Indigenous corporations. Researchers recently noted, in a paper for the Reserve Bank of Australia, about the lack of data. *"The best available evidence suggests that the number of registered Indigenous businesses and corporations grew at around four percent per year between 2006 and 2018,"* reported Michelle Evans and Cain Polidano from the University of Melbourne. They noted that one of the big factors pushing growth in the sector has been the Commonwealth's Indigenous procurements policy. In the 2020-01 financial year, it led to 10,920 contracts worth \$1.1 billion.

Separate data from Indigenous business organisation Supply Nation shows that, last financial year, its 700 members spent \$3.8 billion with verified First Nations' suppliers, a 62% increase from the previous financial year, including spending from government, not-for-profits and corporate buyers.

ARTS

Music: In honour of Uncle Archie Roach, there will be a massive line-up for this year's Archie Roach Foundation on stage at the Port Fairy Folk Festival, **March 10-13**. Uncle Archie's family will be attending, along with Emma Donovan, Sally Dasty, Dave Arden, Radical Son, Fred Leone, BUMPY, Deline Briscoe Music, Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse. There will also be cultural art workshops and a tribute to Uncle Jack Charles.

Goanna's Shane Howard has brought in Moss, Tasman Keith and William Barton to bring a new energy to his most famous track, *Solid Rock*, newly released and out now.

Stage: The First Peoples' Young Artists Program is an engagement initiative for young First Nations people from across Australia to learn more about the performing arts industry and also develop their own creative work. MPavilion MMeets Intertwined, **Sunday 12 March**, 2.00-3.00 pm.

MPavilion in conjunction with Melbourne Theatre Company present *The Art of Incarceration* – a documentary narrated by the late Uncle Jack Charles which follows three Fulham Correctional Centre prisoners and the work of The Torch. Netflix and YouTube.

Exhibition: *Second Skin: Essence of Country* opens **Saturday 4 March** at the Koorie Heritage Trust, Federation Square, bringing together 22 artists who present works and cultural belongings that relate to the use of animal pelts in cultural practices.

Books: *Tell Me Again* by Dr Amy Thunig is a remarkable memoir, described as the most inspirational and important memoir of 2022. The author narrates her journey through childhood and adolescence, growing up with parents who struggled with addiction and incarceration.

Dropbear is an innovative collection of poetry and prose from a vibrant new Indigenous voice on the Australian literary scene - award-winning writer Evelyn Araluen.

This All Come Back Now by Mykaela Saunders is the first-ever anthology of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speculative fiction.

A collection of four books by Sally Morgan celebrates Australian animals and the habitats in which they live. Includes *The Last Dance* and *Where is Galah?*, illustrated by Morgan, alongside *Joey Counts to Ten* and *Bush Bash*, illustrated by Ambelin Kwaymullina.

Koori Princess by Anita Heiss is an insightful and humorous story of a young girl's determination to be who she wants to be - for 7 to 12 year olds.

MEDIA

AWAYE!, ABC's national Indigenous arts program, has turned 30. Radio National on Saturdays at 6.00 pm, Tuesdays at 9.00 pm.

