

Mungo...



Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation Inc.

ABN: 444 16 152 998

P.O. Box 1446, St Kilda South, Vic 3182

Phone: (03) 9699 8804

Mobile: 0418 675 734

Email: rosemary.rule@gmail.com

www.ppcfr.org

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.

February 2024

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Wominjeka - Welcome

This, our 27th year, is sure to be interesting, and I welcome ideas to build on the goodwill generated by Yes Voice campaign supporters. We'll listen to the Elders, support Victoria's Treaty process (now hindered by the National's support backflip, see below), host events and maintain ties with peak organisations including the City of Port Phillip. I'm encouraged by the number of enquiries from people wanting information about the group and look forward to connecting with newcomers and our wonderful members over the coming months.

We-Akon Dilinja Ceremony



Willie Pepper conducts the smoking ceremony at the Mourning Reflection ceremony. Photo courtesy of Serge Thomann.

Congratulations to the organisers of this special 26 January 'mourning reflection' ceremony, the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council, City of Port Phillip and National Australia Day Council, who together enticed hundreds to be at Alfred Square, St Kilda, by 6.00 am. We heard from Boonwurrung Elder Parbinata

Dr Carolyn Briggs AM, MP's Zoe Daniels (filling in for an unwell Josh Burns) and Nina Taylor, Mayor Heather Consulo and Chair of the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council, Jason Briggs, who also spoke out against the desecration of a nearby statue the previous evening. Jason said the vandals had failed in their attempt to overshadow the gathering of unity taking place and did not speak for us. (His comments received widespread media coverage.) We listened to didge player Kieran Ironfield and gifted singers John Wayne Parsons, Shauntai Sherree Abdul-Rahman and James Henry. Willie Pepper was the MC and was later the smoking ceremony master.

St Kilda Festival

There's a fabulous line-up of bands and artists appearing at this year's First Peoples First festival day, including Mo'Ju, Birren, Eleanor Jawurlngali Triad, John Wayne Parsons, Pirritu and Richard J Frankland. **Saturday 17 February**, O'Donnell Gardens, St Kilda. www.stkildafestival.com.au



Congratulations

To Yalmay Yunupingu, named 2024 Senior Australian of the Year. Several other Indigenous leaders also won awards; details inside.

Key 2024 Dates

National Sorry Day - **Sunday 26 May**; National Reconciliation Week - **Monday 27 May-3 June** - with the theme *Now More Than Ever*; NAIDOC Week - **Sunday 7 July-14 July**, themed *Keep The Fire Burning! Blak, Loud & Proud* and National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, **Sunday 4 August**. News about local commemorations will be featured in *Mungo*.

Rosemary Rule

Next Meeting: Tuesday 20 February, 6.30 pm, South Melbourne Community Centre, Hall 3, Ferrars Place (off Park Street), South Melbourne. All Welcome. Enquiries: 0418 685 734

NATIONALS DROP SUPPORT FOR TREATY

The Victorian Opposition has dropped support for a Treaty with First Nations' peoples. Nationals leader, Peter Walsh, and Coalition spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs, admitted to a policy reversal that meant they would not back the process currently underway while they still had concerns about cultural heritage laws. He said property developers had raised concerns with him that the current cultural heritage system was resulting in higher construction costs for Victorian homes. *"The Traditional Owner groups have a monopoly under government legislation,"* pointing in particular to concerns about the functioning of the cultural heritage system and delays stemming from the collapse of the Bunurong Land Council as an example of problems in the current system. The opposition backed legislation in 2022 to set up a Treaty authority, overseeing negotiations between the state government and Victoria's Aboriginal representation, and has not made a submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission. First Peoples' Assembly Co-Chair, Reuben Berg, said they were *"disappointed, but not surprised"* by the Coalition's change in policy, agreeing the current cultural heritage laws *"were not a perfect system"*. Many of the delays and costs flowed from a lack of people with the qualifications to give cultural heritage advice. *"I think it [Victoria's cultural heritage laws] is a strong model of a system where we've empowered Traditional Owners to be able to be decision makers in cultural heritage, but sadly they haven't been actually resourced to undertake this important role they're supposed to do."* Treaty is 'definitely' not over, he said.

SHARING THE SPIRIT

How encouraging to see the growing number of special events being held across Victoria on Survival Day, 26 January, to acknowledge and respect the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Ceremonies were held in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Stonnington, Mount Martha, Castlemaine and Shepparton to name some. The largest, *Share the Spirit* held at the Sidney Music Bowl, presented by Songlines Aboriginal Music Corporation, attracted hundreds and featured Coloured Stone, No Fixed Address and Blackfire with performances from contemporary artists Dave Arden, Kutcha Edwards, Deniece Hudson, Stray Blacks, Robbie Bundle, Naretha Williams, Yambra, Richard Frankland, Yung Warriors, Madi Colville-Walker, Canisha and the Djirri Djirri Dancers.

RECONCILIATION STONNINGTON NEWS

During January, Reconciliation Stonnington members were busier than usual with group activities. On 14 January, a dozen members enjoyed a tour of Bunjilaka, the First Nations' gallery at Melbourne Museum, which I led in my role as a museum volunteer tour guide. On 26 January, several members set up an information stall at Stonnington Council's Healing Ceremony that was led by the Deputy Mayor - and our member - Mike Scott. There was strong

interest in our stall at the well-attended event. Many people came by for a chat, took our information sheets and left their name on our mailing list, and a few expressed interest in becoming members. Senior Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Diane Kerr spoke engagingly and movingly about her family's history and struggles in the past. Sadly, she announced her upcoming retirement due to ill health and age. We wish Aunty Di all the best and thank her for her commitment and service, always carried out with such a pleasant manner, and will look forward to meeting her successor.

*Ro Bailey,
Secretary*



Reconciliation Stonnington's stall at the Council's Healing Ceremony on 26 January.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS CALL FOR SPECIAL LAND RIGHTS

Victorian Traditional Owner groups are calling for special land rights to prevent land they own from ever being repossessed by the government, as the state prepares for nation-first Treaty talks to begin this year. Indigenous Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal advocacy organisations have submitted major land reform proposals to the state's Indigenous truth-telling commission which is investigating housing and land inequality facing First Nations' Victorians. The inquiry's recommendations could inform Treaty negotiations. The Taungurung Land and Waters Council called for the Yoorrook Justice Commission to recommend that the state government enact legislative changes to protect freehold title land, currently owned by Traditional Owner groups, from being repossessed by the state or subjected to mining licences, granted by external parties. Matthew Burns, CEO of the Council, which represents large parts of central Victoria, hopes the recommendations could be on the negotiating table for its Traditional-Owner Treaty and the state-wide Treaty.

Note: The state's Traditional Owners Settlement Act formally recognises Traditional Owners and allows them to enter into out-of-court settlements with the government outside the federal native title scheme. Aboriginal Housing Victoria called for the state government to return unused public land to Traditional Owner groups for the purpose of building housing. Yoorrook's focus is on injustices affecting First Nations' Victorians in secondary and tertiary education and health, alongside housing. Victoria's First Peoples' Assembly begin negotiating a state-wide Treaty with the Victorian Government this year.

WISDOM OF THE KULIN PEOPLE CELEBRATED

The City of Melbourne's new suite of public artworks and commissions celebrates Kulin culture at the newest community hub, narm ngarrgu Library and Family Services, Queen Victoria Market precinct. The council collaborated with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, artists and community members to reflect their knowledge and lore in the curation of the narm ngarrgu art program, with a series of culturally significant immersive works by artist Maree Clarke, a Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Boonwurrung and Wemba Wemba woman. Clarke's works include a coolamon, cast from a giant eucalyptus burl for smoking ceremonies, made in collaboration with Palawa man Nicholas Hovington, and a six-metre-long eel trap artwork surrounded by cultural patterns and Kulin graphics in the playground area. The sixty contemporary artworks and heritage items reflect the site's layered history from artists including Josh Muir, Kelly Koumalatsos, Leah King-Smith, Hayley Millar



Baker, Clinton Naina, Brian Martin, Naomi Hobson, Kent Morris, Julie Gough, Lisa Waup and Sonja Hodges.

Maree Clarke's giant eel trap in the playground of the new narm ngarrgu library.

2024 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR

Five First Nations' people received 2024 Australian of the Year awards: Janine Mohamed, named Victoria's Australian of the Year; Mechelle Turvey, named WA's Australian of the Year; Yalmay Yunupingu, named Senior Australian of the Year; Naarah, named Tasmania's Young Australian of the Year and Witiyana Marika, named Northern Territory's Local Hero.

WILLIAM BARAK PAINTING AND SHIELD RETURNED

A painting and traditional shield by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung man William Barak were lost to private collectors overseas for many decades. Through crowd funding and advocacy, they have been reacquired and returned to Victoria in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung ownership. Barak was a leader known, among many other things, for the establishment of the Aboriginal community known as Coranderrk. The two artworks are on public display at the State Library.

PATRICK DODSON RETIRES

Yawuru man Senator Patrick Dodson has left politics due to ongoing health issues. Known as the 'Father of Reconciliation', his contribution to Australia and particularly the First Nations' community is immense. He has served as a Commissioner on the Royal

Commission into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, was the first Chair of Reconciliation Australia and a Director of the Central Land Council and the Kimberly Land Council. Patrick was a member of the ANU Council, Adjunct Professor at the University of Notre Dame (Broome), Co-Chair of the National Referendum Council and the first Aboriginal person to become a Catholic priest in Australia.

GALKANGU - BENDIGO'S NEW HUB

The new GovHub, Galkangu, is a state-of-the-art building which aims to support the creation of jobs, boost the local Bendigo economy and deliver a range of local and state government services. Galkangu provides the community with a single point of access for government services in the heart of the city. The design features an incorporation of Dja Dja Wurrung language which comes from a partnership between the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (known as DJAARA), Regional Development Victoria and Development Victoria.



The \$133 million project is the third GovHub after Morwell and Ballarat.

Galkangu's facade artwork: Giramal (shield) Buri-Gutang Djaa (journey) by Natasha Carter.

THE ARTS

Drama

Total Control, a not-to-be missed TV series, stars Deborah Mailman, Rachel Griffiths and Wayne Blair, ABC TV, Sundays 8.30 pm and ABC iView. *Always Was, Always Will Be* - SBS's collection of Indigenous movies.

Exhibitions

Unfinished Business photographic portraits of 30 First Nations' people with lived disability experience at Bunjilaka Centre, Melbourne Museum, until April. Koorie Heritage Trusts' Koorie Art Show showcases 140 First Nations' artists. *Wurrdha Marra - Many Mobs*, a breathtaking exhibition of art and design, Ian Potter Centre, NGV, Fed Square. Brian Martin's new work, *Gadubanud Country*, features at the Melbourne Art Fair, **Thursday 22 February-25 February**, sponsored by William Mora Galleries.

Books

Women & Children by Tony Birch; *Right Story, Wrong Story* by Tyson Yunkaporta; *Returning* by Kirli Saunders.

Music

Ninganah Lullaby is Troy Cassar-Daley's beautiful lullaby, set on Gumbaynggirr Country. Listen on the ABC Kids app or ABC iView.

Mungo Newsletter

If undeliverable, please return to:

PORT PHILLIP CITIZENS FOR RECONCILIATION

P O Box 1446

ST KILDA SOUTH 3182