

Mungo...



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The Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation respectfully acknowledges the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boonwurrung Nation who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

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March 2021

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Boonwurrung Word of the Month:

Murnong – Yam daisy

First Meeting

We'd planned to have our first meeting for 2021 in the Koolin-Ngal Family Centre in South Melbourne but then we had the snap lockdown so, instead, we met online. My thanks to Deb Stewart for organising this well-attended zoom meeting at short notice. In view of the current health situation, we decided to postpone our Reconciliation Writing Competition till 2022, and instead canvassed an idea to donate books to local schools and childcare centres. We decided to go ahead and host a Sorry Day lunch on **Wednesday 26 May** in the St Peter and Paul's Church Hall, South Melbourne (I'll update details as they unfold) and to organise a Treaty and Truth-Telling public forum later in the year.

Yaluk-ut Weelam Ngargee

Everyone is welcome to come together for an exciting extended edition of Yaluk-ut Weelam Ngargee, a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creativity and culture, featuring Australia's leading First Peoples talent and rising stars in live music, food and fashion, traditional dance, workshops, food tastings, competitions and activities for all ages, **Thursday 25-Sunday 28 March**, various locations. Presented by the City of Port Phillip; see <https://www.ywnf.com.au/>

Deadly & Proud

A new online campaign funded by the state government, Deadly & Proud, introduced last month, features twenty-one Indigenous people from across the state telling true stories, and is seen as a significant path towards a Treaty with Indigenous people. Details below.

National Apology

Thirteen years ago, on 13 February 2008, the Australian Government formally apologised to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and in particular to the Stolen Generations. The Apology was born out of the Bringing Them Home report. There was no Closing the Gap update this year so what is the legacy? Summary below.

Inspiring Words

"We learnt to speak your English fluently. For years, we have walked on a one-way street to learn the white people's way...now is the time for you to come closer to understand us and how we live."



Read more inside about the inspiring 2021 Senior Australian of the Year, Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, and her connections to a local childcare centre.

2021 Senior Australian of the Year Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann – Aboriginal activist, educator and artist.

2021 Themes

Reconciliation Australia's 2021 theme is More Than a Word - Reconciliation Takes Action. It urges the Reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action, with National Reconciliation Week celebrations being held **Thursday 27 May - Thursday 3 June**. Heal Country is the theme for this year's NAIDOC Week - **Sunday 4 - Sunday 11 July**.

Congratulations

To Archie Roach, winner of the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Indigenous Writing, and to Nova Perris OAM, appointed to the board of The Torch.

Rosemary Rule

Next Meeting

Tuesday 16 March, 6.30 pm, held via zoom.

Please contact Deb Stewart – deb.stewart33@gmail.com

- if you would like to participate. **All Welcome**

DEADLY & PROUD

A new online campaign funded by the state government, Deadly & Proud, launched in February by Victoria's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams, features twenty-one Indigenous people from across the state telling true stories, plus an interactive map, and is seen as a step on the government's path towards a Treaty with Indigenous people. Those featured include Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung Elder Aunty Fay Carter who says her ancestors were punished for speaking their language or conducting ceremonies before their 1939 walk-off from the Cummeragunja mission in southern NSW. When dozens of Indigenous people were shot dead at Warrigal Creek in 1843, the water turned red with their blood says Stephen Thorpe, a member of the same Gonnai tribe, nephew of activist Robbie Thorpe and cousin of Senator Lidia Thorpe. Today, few Victorians know about this slaughter of as many as 150 people – a crime for which no-one was arrested. There are no plaques at the now peaceful spot on a farm 40 km south of Sale and 200 km east of Melbourne. Gunditjmarra/Boandik Elder Uncle Johnny Lovett and Tyson Lovett-Murray tell of the Convincing Ground massacre at Portland Bay in Victoria's west, and of their ancestors' resistance to attacks. Tracey Rigney, a Wotjobaluk and Ngarrindjeri woman, speaks of her pride that her ancestor Jungumjenanuke, a Wotjobaluk man from Victoria's north-west, was a member of Australia's first international cricket team in the 1860s. The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is working towards forming a Treaty with the state government by helping tell stories of Aboriginal cultures, resilience and communities, part of a new campaign urging all Victorians to feel pride on our path to Treaty, truth and justice.

NATIONAL APOLOGY

On 13 February 2008, the Australian Government formally apologised to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and in particular to the Stolen Generations. The Apology was born out of the Bringing Them Home report. The original report contained some 54 recommendations for redressing the wrongs done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and healing the great pain suffered by many survivors of the Stolen Generations. On 13 February 2021, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt AM, said the government is committed to working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – *"because we know that the best outcomes occur when governments and Indigenous Australians work together."* He said the Prime Minister has made clear that the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is a whole-of-government priority. *"The targets and reforms agreed to in the National Agreement require governments to change the way we work, and we as a government are changing the way we do business.... Our ministers are working together and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to deliver a Commonwealth Implementation Plan that will achieve better life outcomes in partnership with our people, including work to develop the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy, in concert with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, as part of the strategy."*

The Prime Minister will deliver the plan and report on progress made against targets using the Productivity Commission's data review, mid-year.

INSPIRING WORDS

At the presentation of her award as 2021 Senior Australian of the Year, Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann called for non-Indigenous Australians to come closer to First Nations communities. *"We learn to speak your English fluently. For years, we have walked on a one-way street to learn the white people's way,"* she said. *"I've learnt to walk in two worlds and live in towns and cities, and even worked in them. Now is the time for you to come closer to understand us and how we live. When you come to visit or work in our communities and leave your comfort zones, I ask that you bring your knowledge and wisdom. But we ask you also to learn and understand how we live and function in our communities and listen to what [our] needs are."* In her amazing career, Miriam was the Northern Territory's first fully qualified Aboriginal teacher and in 1975 founded the Miriam Rose Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation working to empower Indigenous youth through education, art, culture and opportunity.



Elders Dennis Fisher and Aunty Jacko with Fiona Dorroch (right) at PPCfR's end-of-year barbecue in December.

Fiona Dorroch, kindergarten teacher at Children's Garden Kindercare, Albert Park, writes of their connection to the Miriam Rose Foundation.

It was at a SNAICC conference that Amy Saia-Berridge, director of Children's Garden Kindercare, saw a promotion for the film *Dadirri* and was drawn to the work of the Miriam Rose Foundation and to the powerful words of Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Elder of the Nauiyu Nambiyu (Daly River, NT) who spoke of the crucial factor in the strength and longevity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture which is *Dadirri*, meaning inner deep listening, quiet stillness and awareness. *"We cannot hurry the river. We have to move with its current and understand its ways. Dadirri is quiet stillness and waiting...our culture has taught us to be still and to wait."* We began to connect Miriam's words to our own Steiner philosophy which guides us to practice at being still, patient and present for each child in our room. Our interest in the Miriam Rose Foundation grew and we learned that our best efforts could be directed at raising funds for a film Miriam and friends have been working on

since 2014 called *DadirrDadirri - A Gift to the Nation*. After many months of our own practice in time and patience, we held a Gala Ball at South Melbourne Town Hall to celebrate 100 Years of Steiner Education and to support the work of Miriam-Rose and were honoured with the presence of Auntie Jacko and Rosemary Rule from PPCfR. Musicians and members of Miriam's community, Troy Mardigan and Dylan Minggun, flew down to perform and graced us with a short stay. We raised a hefty sum for *Dadirri* and on the way made deeper connections to her Daly River community. How utterly wonderful to then hear Miriam's work with youth acknowledged at such a high level, receiving both NT Australian of the Year 2021 Award and Senior Australian of the Year 2021!

Fiona Dorroch

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia's theme for 2021 is More Than a Word - Reconciliation Takes Action. It urges the Reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action. 2021 marks twenty years of Reconciliation Australia and almost three decades of Australia's formal Reconciliation process. We are seeing more people speaking up, speaking the truth, asking the hard questions, seeing the hard facts, and informing themselves about issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The 2021 theme calls on others to follow their lead by reflecting on their own contributions and striving to do more. <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

RECVIC NEWS

The HART Awards (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) recognise local Victorian initiatives and champions that make a real difference in their community by contributing to local Reconciliation outcomes, and recognise local governments, community organisations, and schools/early years centres that are Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together. Nominations are sought for initiatives that demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal people working together and programs that have contributed to relationships, respect and understanding, and demonstrate a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination. Nominations close **Sunday 21 March**; winners announced **Friday 4 June**.

RECSTON NEWS

Several members of RecSton attended City of Port Phillip's Morning of Mourning on 26 January, as did Stonnington's Mayor Cr Kate Hely, the city's CEO Jacqui Weatherell and Cr Mike Scott. Some comments from our members were: "*Fantastic ceremony! The Torres Strait Islander songs were beautiful and very moving too,*" "*The event was incredible, I loved every minute of it.*" It is to be hoped that this ceremony will continue to develop into a multi-city community event covering the traditional country of our joint Traditional Owners; well done City of Port Phillip on initiating a most worthwhile event and congratulations to the Mayor for inviting bordering cities' councillors. Looking to the future, we have been invited to take part in a community event on **Saturday 27 March** called Regenerating Kooyongkoot

(Gardiners Creek). It will run from 10.00 am-3.00 pm with several workshops, many with an Indigenous focus. RecSton will hold an information stall and provide free children's art activities and would love to see you there.

Ro Bailey

DEMAND FOR MELBOURNE INDIGENOUS TRANSITION SCHOOL (MITS) GROWS

Funded six years ago, MITS helps Indigenous students moving from remote regions of Victoria and the Northern Territory to attend school in the city, running a boarding program and its own Year 7 campus in Richmond. MITS supports students moving to one of twelve government and private partner schools from Year 8 onwards. The school has been steadily growing and currently has 82 students, and places are in high demand. The federal government has announced \$10 million in funding to build a new Richmond boarding house over three levels, with boarding facilities for up to forty boys. MITS executive director Edward Tudor said the school was led by its students and their families and communities, and its success was because of them. Half of the school's funding comes from government sources while the other half is from donations. Learn more at www.mits.vic.edu.au

TORCH APPOINTMENT

Nova Perris OAM has been appointed as a Director on the board of The Torch. Nova was Australia's first Aboriginal woman elected to Federal Parliament, the first Aboriginal Australian to win an Olympic gold medal and was recently awarded the 2020 Women in Leadership Award. Nova is currently patron for the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) and the Firestick Alliance Indigenous Corporation, and sits on the boards of The Torch, The Long Walk Foundation and AFL Sports Ready.

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART TALK

Initiatives of Change Australia (IofC) invites people to walk with First Nations people in truth telling and truth hearing, building respect and inclusivity in their country through their Our Uluru Response initiative. The IofC has invited Thomas Mayor, a signatory of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, to speak on how the Statement was formed and the invitation from First Nations people, "*to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.*" The evening will include a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country. Attend in person (or online) **Friday 19 March**, 6.00 pm at Armagh, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak.

GRINDING STONE DISCOVERY

Cloggs Cave near Buchan in eastern Victoria's alpine region has long been known by the Gunaikurnai people, but a recent archaeological discovery has opened up a window into more of its history. Researchers from Monash University collaborated with Traditional Owners from the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Corporation (GLaWAC) to excavate the cave for the first time in fifty years, finding microscopic remains of Bogong moths on a small grinding stone, believed to be up to 2,000 years old, providing insight into historic Gunaikurnai food practices.

