

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.



Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation Inc.

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April 2022

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Meeting

Last month we held our first face-to-face meeting, and it was so good to see members in person at the South Melbourne Community Centre, rather than via zoom. I welcome people to our meetings to exchange ideas and share news.

Sorry Day

I'm delighted that once again we are able to host a lunch to commemorate National Sorry Day, **Thursday 26 May**, 12.30 pm, at the South Melbourne Community Centre, with PPCfR Co-Chair, Dennis Fisher, aka Den the Fish, as the MC. There will be a Welcome to Country and entertainment - more details next month. It's a special day with members of the Indigenous community coming together with non-Indigenous friends in an informal, Covid-conscious atmosphere. It's free, open to anyone interested, so please save the date.



Dennis Fisher, left, PPCfR's Co-Chair, will MC the Sorry Day lunch.

Reconciliation Writing Competition

Our group has begun planning the 2022 Reconciliation Writing Competition, open to adults and Year 9-12 students anywhere in Victoria, with cash prizes for the first three winners in fiction and non-fiction (including poetry) categories. More details will be available shortly.

Congratulations

To Antoinette Braybrook, CEO Djirra, Victoria's Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service, for 20 years' service and for being the 2022 Victorian recipient of the Australian Awards for Excellence in Women's Leadership; to *Firestarter-The Story of Bangarra*, winning the Documentary Award at the 66th Walkley Awards; to Nathan McGuire, First Nations culture and safety consultant, Mob in Fashion program, Melbourne Fashion Festival, who launched his new Solid Ochre label; to Kent Morris's new work, *Systems of Sustainability #2*, installed at the Glenroy Community Hub; to Katie Aspel, winner of the inaugural Ruby Hunter Award; and to Sydney Swans superstar, Lance Buddy Franklin, kicking his 1000th career goal.

Flood relief

PPCfR contributed to the Koori Mail's flood relief program, which raised over \$500,000 for local Indigenous communities, particularly Cabbage Tree Island and Coraki. Wholly owned by five Bundjalung Aboriginal community organisations, the paper is based in Lismore. Their premises were flooded and, for the first time in 30 years, no hard copy edition was published.

Rosemary Rule

Next Meeting: Tuesday 19 April, 6.30 pm
South Melbourne Community Centre, Hall 3,
Ferrars Place, (off Park Street) South Melbourne.
All Welcome. Enquiries: 0418 685 734.

YOOROOK COMMISSION LAUNCH

The country's first 'truth-telling' commission was launched in Melbourne late March with a ceremonial hearing, or wurrek tyerrang. In a formal process, the Yoorrook Justice Commission will investigate the injustices visited against Aboriginal people since colonisation. Commissioners, counsel assisting, and Elders from across Victoria attended the opening with a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Wurundjeri WoiWurrung Elder Uncle Colin Hunter. The scope of the commission was outlined, as well as the 'Yoorrook Guidelines and Practice Directions on Truth-Telling'. Commission Chair Professor Eleanor Bourke, a Wamba Elder, noted that *"the stories of Victoria's First Peoples must be told. In telling their stories, all Victorians can share the history and help create a better future – based on truth."* There are five distinct phases of the process, including a series of informal and formal truth-telling yarning circles and formal sittings which will document historical and ongoing injustices, such as cultural violations, massacres, policing and criminal justice, child protection and welfare. The Yoorrook Commission, which has the authority to subpoena documents and past officials, was given \$44 million as part of the State Government's 2021/22 budget and will welcome all forms of truth-telling including art, cultural artefacts, written submissions and other forms of expression. The Yoorrook's interim report, due on 30 June 2022, aims to establish an official public record of experiences of First Nations people since colonisation, and determining the causes and consequences of systemic injustices to assist in recommendations towards a Victorian Treaty process. Victoria is the only state or territory that has enacted both the Treaty and truth elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a 2017 manifesto that demanded a commission to supervise a process of "agreement-making" between governments, widely understood as a reference to Treaties, and a truth-telling process.

LANDMARK REPARATION SCHEME

Aboriginal Victorians removed from their families in the state before 1977 can now access payments of \$100,000 from the Victorian Government as part of a landmark reparation package for Stolen Generations survivors. The \$155 million package is recognition of the suffering caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families before 1976. They will be able to access amounts of \$100,000, as well as a personal apology from the government, access to healing and reconnection to Country programs and an opportunity to share their story. The scheme will only be open to those removed prior to 31 December 1976, and it is understood that more than 1000 people will be eligible. Terminally and critically ill applicants will be prioritised and may be able to access interim payments.

BLACK 'JUSTICE'

Guns should not be carried by police officers in Indigenous communities, according to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June

Oscar, endorsing calls from the Yuendumu community and Warlpiri people for police officers to cease carrying firearms in their communities, following the fatal shooting of Kumanjayi Walker two years ago. Elders and Indigenous liaison officers should hold decision-making positions in policing matters, Oscar said, and the government must make substantial investments in community supports and trauma-informed responses to counteract the over-policing of First Nations people. In March, Constable Zachary Rolfe was found not-guilty of Walker's murder in 2019, following a five-week jury trial in the NT. The NT's anti-corruption commissioner is considering an inquiry into Rolfe's arrest after Walker's death. The commissioner also called for the implementation of all recommendations made by the 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody from 30 years ago. More than 500 Indigenous people have died in custody since those recommendations were made. First Nations people have been the victim of several recent police shootings, with another young Indigenous man in a critical condition after being shot six times by a police officer near Darwin. The NT police association has rejected the calls for a gun ban in remote Aboriginal communities.

NAIDOC 2022

There is a call out to find people who have empowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their communities and beyond, who have promoted First Peoples issues in the wider community, and/or who have shown excellence in their chosen field, to be nominated for the 2022 National NAIDOC Awards. Categories include NAIDOC Person of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award, Male & Female Elder Award and Sportsperson Award. Nominations close **11 April**.

RECONCILIATION STONNINGTON NEWS

Reconciliation Stonnington members took part in a community event, Pets in the Park, organised by the City of Stonnington, on Sunday 20 March, and had no idea what to expect or how we might be received. Previously we have taken part in Flavours Multicultural Festival on Harmony Day, but sadly, this has been discontinued by council. Because we were missing our previous opportunity to present to the public, we decided

to give it a go on the basis that it was better than nothing and we might engage with members of the public we may otherwise not have the opportunity to meet with. In an attempt to fit in with the pets theme, we purchased wooden



Rec Stonnington members set up an information and activity booth at the recent Pets in the Park community day.

cut-outs of native animals and appealed to Office Works, South Yarra, for a donation, subsequently granted, of textas, for an art activity for children, which proved to be very popular. So thankfully, we had quite a busy day, many people took our information handouts and nearly 20 people signed up to our list to be kept informed. We prioritised a handout with The Uluru Statement from the Heart on one side and comments explaining it on the other and asked people to be thoughtful about it when voting at the next election. Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 13 April** and will focus on public speaking on behalf of our group with the aim of increasing the number of our members who can take part in educating the rest of Stonnington on Reconciliation matters. All welcome. Enquiries to Ro Bailey, 0438 285 588.

CLOSE THE GAP CAMPAIGN REPORT

In March, 55 members who form the Close the Gap Steering Committee and the Lowitja Institute produced the *2022 Close the Gap Campaign Report*. The report's recommendations mirror those of previous years and again utilised a strengths-based framework to demonstrate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing present culturally safe, place-based and appropriate solutions. For the Committee, self-determination is not just an abstract idea that we talk about in a rights-based framework, it is the primary mechanism that enables us to take control of our lives; to determine the outcomes of our futures; to make heard the voices of those in our communities – those who are the most vulnerable and marginalised. “*This is how we and our communities transform, by elevating and empowering all of our voices.*” On the release of the 13th annual Close the Gap Report, we ask you to engage with the stories, to hear our voices, to see the work carried out by our communities and in our communities, to witness the strength of our determination to see a better future for ourselves and our children. The report was released by Close the Gap Campaign Co-Chair, June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner; Karl Briscoe CEO, National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) Co-Chairs – Close the Gap Campaign.

RACISM REGISTER

A new research program has been launched aiming to give First Nations people a platform where they can record their experiences of racism in everyday life. The *Call It Out* register asks Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to anonymously log such incidents in order to build a better understanding of the scale of racial intolerance in Australia. The first Indigenous-led racism register is a joint venture between the National Justice Project and Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney, inspired by similar report systems established by Jewish and Muslim groups in Australia.

YURRUK - TRUST BUILDING AND TRUTH HEARING

A series of six cultural intelligence workshops will be led by First Nation leaders, enabling diverse and inclusive trust building through truth telling and truth hearing. The first half of the session will be led by leaders including Uncle Shane Charles FROM Initiatives of Change, N'arweet Carolyn Briggs, Glen Loughrey and Alana Marsh. In the second half, a masterclass tool will be explored in smaller groups with IofC facilitators including Uncle Shane Charles, to unpack the content of the yarn. Dates: weekly from **Thursday 28 April** to **Thursday 2 June**, 10.00 am-1.00 pm, in person at Armagh, Initiatives of Change, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak. info.au@iofc.org, 9822 1218.

INDIGENOUS LITERACY BOOK SWAP

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation's Great Book Swap celebrates reading locally and team building while raising much-needed funds for remote Communities. Workplaces, book clubs, individuals and all kinds of organisations can host one. The idea is to swap a favourite book in exchange for a gold coin (or fiver) donation. The campaign aims to be able to gift 5,000 books to children in remote communities. For details visit <https://go.greatbookswap.org.au/>

ARTS NEWS

Exhibitions

pakayn marree weerrath (bone, stone, string) Women's Tools Gunditjmara sisters Dr Vicki Couzens and Lisa Couzens have brought ancestral artefacts back to country for display at the Warrnambool Art Gallery. Selected artefacts from the Leonhard Adam Collection in collaboration with the Grimwade Centre, University of Melbourne, explore socio-political perceptions about ownership and artisanship of tools in contemporary practice. Runs until **Sunday 12 June**.

Music

Wominjeka Song Cycle featuring Deborah Cheetham with Melbourne's leading choral and orchestral musicians, Melbourne Recital Centre, **Tuesday 12 April**, 7.30 pm. Diddgeridoo healing session with Uncle Shane Charles on World Earth Day. The broad range of harmonic sounds produced by the didgeridoo vibrate in an ancient and universal tone and are used as a sound therapy or sound healing tool that affects a person on all levels. **Friday 22 April**, at Initiatives of Change, Toorak.

Film

Wash My Soul in the River's Flow is a poignant and beautiful film that celebrates the love, lives and creative collaboration of artists Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter as they prepare and perform at the premiere of Kura Tungar—Songs from the River in 2004, the result of a two-year collaboration with Paul Grabowsky and the 22-piece Australian Art Orchestra. Sublime music, singing, funny and heart-breaking storytelling. Check cinemas screenings including The Nova.

