

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 Martin Foley MP, State Labor Member for Albert Park, for his ongoing support.

November 2021

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Annual General Meeting Report

I was pleased to see so many people attending this year's AGM - including some newcomers - via zoom on 19 October. We were privileged to hear Judith 'Jacko' Jackson's Acknowledgement of Country before my Chair's report (reprinted below) and the Treasurer's report were read out. Most of the expenditure was associated with making donations to local service providers, to Linden Gallery's Postcard Show and to gifting copies of the book *Respect* to every Early Learning Centre in Port Phillip. Expenses were balanced out through our Council grant and a record amount of new and renewed membership fees, which is encouraging. The following were unanimously re-elected to the Executive Committee for another year: Co-Chairs - Dennis Fisher and myself; Treasurer - Fiona Olney-Fraser; Secretary - Deb Stewart; Committee Members - Jo Bond and Denis Frankel and to be joined by Penelope Demos. This terrific team maintains the group's strong presence within the community, and I'm very grateful for their support.

Deb Stewart then introduced our Guest Speaker, Ian Hamm, a Yorta Yorta man with a depth of experience working in leadership roles within federal and state governments as well as the not-for-profit sector. Part of the Stolen Generation and growing up in Yarrawonga, Ian said he began meeting other Aboriginal people at college in Bendigo, then moving to Melbourne to start his career spanning 30+ years in the public service. He's witnessed a big shift in attitudes towards Aboriginal people, largely through a change of emphasis and attitude to ask Aboriginal people what they want to do, how they see themselves in the 21st century, how they want to fit into the wider community, what it takes to reconcile and the importance of equity on all levels, but without compromising culture. Ian painted a promising picture for the future, demonstrated by the fact that Victoria is taking a leading role in cultural heritage and matters relating to Treaty and a truth-telling commission. An engaging, informative speaker, Ian thoughtfully answered questions. He was very generous with his time and left us all with much to reflect on.



Ian Hamm was a wonderfully engaging AGM Guest Speaker, shown here with some of the guests.

Dennis's Campaign for Earlier Pension Access

Indigenous men and women do not live as long as non-Indigenous Australians; many will die before they finish working which, as you'll read inside, is why Uncle Dennis Fisher, aka Den the Fish and PPCFRs Co-Chair, is taking on the fight to get earlier access to the age pension.

RecVic and ANTaR combined AGMs

Members are invited to these combined AGMs via zoom on **Saturday 27 November**. The theme will be Social Media Slacktivism into Activism: Youth Allyship in the Reconciliation Movement. Details below.

Congratulations

To Traditional Owners who, following the release of the Juukan Gorge report, have the right to withhold consent for the destruction of cultural sites; to Eddie Betts, appointed as a development coach at Geelong as well as Indigenous liaison officer at other AFL clubs; to Kali Bellar, the First Aboriginal Pilot with Virgin Airlines.

Farewell

Diana David will be leaving her role as CEO of RecVic, effective 31 January 2022. Since 2018, she has played a critical role in the development, growth and success of the organisation. RecVic's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CEO, Diana brought a wealth of knowledge, passion and expertise to the role and championed community engagement, working tirelessly so that RecVic always had 'a seat at the table'. She will be missed.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 16 November, 6.30 pm
via zoom. To participate, contact Deb Stewart – deb.stewart33@gmail.com.

BLACK PARLIAMENT POSSIBILITY

The Victorian Government is discussing options for a permanent Indigenous voice in the state's political and legislative framework, which the Aboriginal community hopes could include a 'Black Parliament' or new seats in the existing one. This option proposes that the 32-person Assembly that represents Victoria's Indigenous clans would gain constitutional power to pass laws on Aboriginal affairs. This controversial model would require changes to the state's constitution. The Assembly agreed on the Treaty negotiation framework to feed into discussions with the government. The framework includes references to a 'meaningful voice', the prospect of seats in Parliament and a 'permanent representative body with meaningful decision-making powers'. "These are big steps on the journey to Treaty, but they are early steps, and we want and need more community guidance about many of the details," said Assembly Co-chair and Bangerang and Wiradjuri Elder, Geraldine Atkinson. Preliminary conversations have begun with First Nations people about reforms to help influence government decision-making.

PUSH TO CHANGE HERITAGE ACT

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC) has released a report making 24 recommendations to amend the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* to support self-determination. Recommendations from *Taking Control of our Heritage* convey three key themes: furthering self-determination of Registered Aboriginal Parties, increasing the autonomy of the VAHC, and recognising, protecting and conserving Aboriginal cultural heritage. "The steady and significant annual increase in development impacting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and its ongoing casual destruction and salvage must be acknowledged," Taungurung Elder and VAHC Chairperson, Mick Harding, said. One of the fundamental issues under the current Act is the lack of power Traditional Owners have to stop harm to their cultural heritage, according to Mr Harding. The recommendations would place responsibility in the hands of its Traditional Owners, recognising them as the authority and rightful owners. Victoria's Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Gabrielle Williams, stressed that Victoria is the only state that gives Traditional Owners the "final say in decision-making" about heritage protection. Under the Act, Aboriginal Heritage, whether registered or unregistered and on freehold or public land, may not be harmed unless authorisation is given. The Government is not currently reviewing the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* but is open to feedback.

NATIVE TITLE CLAIM

A massive native title claim involving large parts of Melbourne and Gippsland is to go ahead in the Federal Court, but the Indigenous group behind it says that State Government Aboriginal bodies are trying to deny its claim

by recognising another group as the rightful representative of the area's Aboriginal people. Covering about 13,077 square kilometres, the claim area extends from Melton to Wilson's Promontory including 22 metro council areas ranging from Wyndham to Greater Dandenong. The Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council took the claim to the Federal Court after the Native Title Registrar refused to register it. Boonwurrung Elder Dr Carolyn Briggs accused state officials of trying to "hamper and sabotage our claim by bankrupting our community by appointing an interstate group as a Recognised Aboriginal Party over our Country. By lodging this claim in the Federal Court, we can be assured that the claim will be determined on the facts rather than the prejudices of particular interest groups and public servant fiefdoms." Dr Briggs said the VAHC - a state body comprising 11 Traditional Owner representatives appointed by the government - had "ridiculously" appointed a group called the Bunurong Land Council as representative of the Boonwurrung people. In July, the VAHC formalised the boundary in Melbourne between the Bunurong Land Council and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation after the parties spent years negotiating but couldn't agree on the issue.

CAMPAIGN FOR EARLIER INDIGENOUS ACCESS TO AGE PENSION

Uncle Dennis Fisher, aka Den the Fish, is 64. In the 1960s, under the control of the Queensland government, he was sent out to work on a dairy farm at age ten. He now has two jobs; broadcasting on Koorie radio station 3KND and as an Indigenous Heritage Guide at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Indigenous men and women don't live as long as other Australians; many will die before they finish working. On average, life expectancy is 71 years for Indigenous men and 75 years for Indigenous women; that's 8.6 years less than non-Indigenous men and 7.8 years less than non-Indigenous women. This is why Dennis is taking on the fight to give Indigenous retirees earlier access to the age pension; the current pension age has been gradually increasing from 65 to 67, and by 2023, Australians born after 1957 will need to be 67 before they are eligible. Aboriginal health and legal experts say that this will lock too many Indigenous Elders out of a system designed to give people dignity in their later years. For years, Indigenous health and legal organisations, even some superannuation funds, have argued that First Nations people should be able to retire sooner, given their shorter life expectancy. Now, a coalition of legal services will try a different tack - launching legal action with Dennis to push the Federal Government to lower the pension age by three years for Indigenous Elders. The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, the Human Rights Law Centre

and law firm DLA Piper have filed the case in the Federal Court of Australia. This action is thought to be the first time the Commonwealth has been challenged over its failure to close the life-expectancy gap for Indigenous people. Stay tuned for updates.



Campaigner for earlier Indigenous access to the age pension, Dennis Fisher, aka Den the Fish, who is also PPCfR's Co-Chair.

RECVIC/ANTAR AGM AND FORUM

RecVic and ANTaR are thrilled to be able to announce the theme for their 2021 AGM and Forum, *Social Media Slacktivism into Activism: Youth Allyship in the Reconciliation Movement* on **Saturday 27 November**, 12.30-3.30pm. Young Victorians are increasingly passionate about First Peoples' rights and greater self-determination. However, many young people are unsure how to be more involved in the movement beyond social media. The forum will unpack ideas about how to be a better ally to First Peoples, and how to put words into actions in everyday life. There will also be an opportunity for community groups seeking more youth participation to hear from youth leaders about how to encourage action in their local communities.

<http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/>

ANTAR'S NEW DIRECTION

Tomorrow Australia encompasses ANTaR Victoria's new direction as they walk towards the future which is a home for all without negating history and truth, sharing the strength and resilience of First Peoples past and present as we move to Tomorrow Australia. Uncle Richard Frankland, Gunditjmara man and ANTaR Victoria patron, has helped to guide the early stages of ANTaR Victoria's new direction. <https://antarvictoria.org.au/tomorrow-australia>

REC STONNINGTON NEWS

Rec Stonnington members have been considering council's proposed new RAP. We have forwarded our comments to council and to the Wurundjeri/ Woi Wurrung, our newly proclaimed Traditional Owners, for their information. We have also been planning our AGM, and after positive yarning with the Wurundjeri to introduce ourselves, have decided to invite their representative to be Guest Speaker. We are delighted to hear that Charley Woolmore, Special Projects Manager, will inform us about

services they can offer to the public. The AGM will be via zoom on **Wednesday 10 November** at 6.00 pm. As well as our Guest Speaker, the City of Stonnington Mayor, Cr Kate Hely, will address the meeting. All welcome, please contact me at ro.celebrant@ozemail.com.au to join us.

HELPING STAMP OUT RACISM WITHIN THE AFL

Former champion Carlton player Eddie Betts has been appointed as a development coach at Geelong after calling time on his decorated 350-game career. He'll have a part-time role next year, balanced with a welfare job working with Indigenous liaison officers at other AFL clubs. *"I feel like I've got a bigger role to play, now that I'm not playing AFL football, within Australia, to use my voice to help stamp out racism,"* Betts said. *Note:* At the suggestion of member Jim Richardson, PPCfR wrote to AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan about the racist treatment endured by Betts; see pages 4 & 5.

THE ARTS

Exhibitions: The Torch's *Future Dreaming - Visions of the Future* is an exhibition created by Indigenous artists within Victorian prisons during 2021. Over 150 participants across 14 correctional facilities embraced this challenge and painted a brighter future for themselves and their families. The exhibition goes live at 8.00 am, **Thursday 11 November**. All artworks are for sale between \$200-\$300 and can be purchased [online](#).

Films: Every year, Common Ground Australia works with different First Nations creatives and communities to film five Dreaming stories, shared online. *First Nations Bedtime Stories* is for everyone. Sign up to take part **Monday-Friday 22-26 November:**

Books: *William Cooper - an Aboriginal Life Story* is an important tribute to the work and life of an extraordinary Aboriginal activist, by Bain Attwood. Melb Uni Press.

Somebody's Land picture book introduces First Nations' history and the term 'terra nullius,' from community leader Adam Goodes, political adviser Ellie Laing and Barkindji illustrator David Hardy. Allen & Unwin.

Music: Paul Kelly's new song *Every Step of the Way* pays tribute to the challenges faced by Eddie Betts. Baker Boy's *Gela* LP features appearances by Uncle Jack Charles. 'Gela' refers to Baker's skin name.

SOLAR FARM SETS UP

The Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corp has won over \$1 million in funding from the Victorian Government for the development of a 4.9 MW solar farm and \$26,000 to install solar arrays atop the Heyfield and District Museum, Coongulla Community Hall and Heyfield Golf Club and Tennis Club. This funding will result in the first solar farm wholly owned and operated by an Aboriginal Corporation and the first on Aboriginal-owned land in Victoria.

HELPING STAMP OUT RACISM WITHIN THE AFL



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For the attention of Gillon McLachlan, CEO, AFL

29 September 2021

Dear Mr McLachlan,

On behalf of members of the Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation, I am writing to you to ask: what more can be done to stamp out racism in the game?

The question has arisen in the aftermath of racial slurs against acclaimed seventeen-year veteran player Eddie Betts.

As Betts himself said: "I'm sick of it, I'm sick of fighting; it's draining.....And when it comes to racism, we're not moving forward – we're going backwards," he has said. "The sad thing is that I'm used to it. We, as Aboriginal people, are used to it. And we keep fighting, but it's hard."

How is it that incidents of racial vilification from fellow footballers still abounds in 2021?

And why do our First Nations players, most recently endured by Betts, have to endure slurs focused on racism throughout their careers?

We are aware that Tanya Hosch is the AFL's Executive General Manager, Inclusion and Social Policy, and has a strong knowledge and understanding of Indigenous society, culture, history; that the AFL celebrates the annual 'Indigenous Round' – and yet in spite of this, players are still regularly being abused because of their Indigenous heritage.

Surely, as the body responsible and representative of AFL in this country, when it comes to racism, you - like everyone else - should be held accountable.

We would like to be reassured that more steps can be taken to reduce the incidence of racism that leads to profound, long-lasting, effects on these players.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Rule

Rosemary Rule,
Co-Chair
Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation



7 October 2021

Rosemary Rule
Co-Chair, Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation
PO Box 1446
St Kilda South VIC 3182

Via email - rosemary.rule@gmail.com

Dear Rosemary,

Thank you for your letter. I write in response to your comments around incidents of racism within our game.

Racism in football, as it is in society, is a problem. This is a primary matter of concern for our league and we have been working towards dealing with this for some time, as evidenced by our extensive work undertaken with the Peek Rule review. Please be assured it is a key priority with our commission, with work led by Tanya Hosch, our Executive Team member who heads Inclusion and Social Policy.

Tanya's team has developed an initial 90-day plan to consolidate actions and increase focus on priorities the AFL has already committed to in dealing with racism and cultural safety, including:

- Cultural awareness training for clubs and AFL and establishment of a preferred providers system;
- Recruitment of Indigenous Liaison Officers for clubs supported through soft cap and standardised selection criteria; and
- Review of our Sanction model – designed to assess effectiveness and variables across all code breaches to improve comparative weighting of sanctions handed down.
- Engaging with the Australian E-safety commissioner to deal with matters of social media and online trolling.

Early planning is also under way on an anti-racism campaign for the football community with discussions held with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council in their meeting in Grand Final week.

On a personal note, during September I met with the senior indigenous player cohort of Shaun Burgoyne, Eddie Betts, Stephen May, Neville Jetta, Karl Amon, Chad Wingard, Jarman Impey, along with Tanya and Paul Vandenberg from our team, to discuss these matters directly.

We will continue to take the counsel of our players and I assure you that these matters are front of mind for both our executive and our commission as the treatment of Eddie Betts and others is not what our code stands for.

I appreciate your views in this area and am reassured it is of equal importance to our community that we seek to take strong action whenever such incidents occur and that we improve our standards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gillon', written in a cursive style.

Gillon McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer



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2020-2021 Annual Report

Wominjeka – Welcome

Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we meet and pays our respect to their Elders; past, present and emerging.

Annual General Meeting

Due to Covid restrictions, our last AGM on Tuesday 20 October 2020 was held via zoom with some 25 attendees. Elder Judith 'Jacko' Jackson set the tone with her warm Acknowledgement of Country. My Chair's Report and Fiona Olney-Fraser's Treasurer's Report were read, moved and accepted. Each of our officer bearers agreed to stand for re-election and, I'm pleased to report, were unanimously elected as follows:
Co-Chairs - Dennis Fisher and myself;
Treasurer - Fiona Olney-Fraser;
Secretary - Deb Stewart; and
Committee Members - Jo Bond & Denis Frankel.
Their support is never taken for granted and is very much appreciated.

Respected Elder Fay Stewart-Muir, a cultural educator, language specialist and author, was an engaging Guest Speaker. She's spent 15 years learning and teaching the language of her Wemba Wemba father and stressed the need for protocols to be observed when using words, checking with the relevant Traditional Owners. Fay's willingness to share her knowledge and her love of teaching and talking to groups, schools or children in libraries shone through, and she kindly read from her book *Family*, one of the three children's books she's written. Deb suggested we buy Fay's books for the winners of our 2022 Reconciliation Writing Competition and asked Fay if she'll present a workshop for the group next year; she said "Yes"!

Activities

Covid put a dampener on all the planned events but one: our traditional end-of-year barbecue gathering in Gasworks Park, South Melbourne, held on 15 December. It was great to see Jacko and Dennis Fisher and to meet some new members and catch up with others.



Members and friends get together for an end-of-year barbecue at Gasworks Park, South Melbourne.

We had to cancel our Sorry Day Lunch on 26 May 2021, our 2020 Reconciliation Writing Competition, a community lunch to celebrate the World Day of Indigenous Peoples on 9 August and a proposed Treaty-related forum. On the plus side, our regular monthly meetings were via zoom and attracted newcomers. I'm grateful to Deb for arranging and managing the meetings so efficiently.

Children's books: We gifted a copy of Fay Stewart-Muir's book *Respect* to each of the 43 Early Learning Centres within the City of Port Phillip, along with a useful teachers' resource list compiled by members Fiona Darroch-Green and Victoria Edwards. Feedback has been very positive, and several centres have contacted us.

Supporting artists: At the request of Linden Gallery, St Kilda, we sponsored a \$500 cash prize for 'Best Artwork by an Indigenous Artist' and provided funds and support for several Indigenous artists to enter the Linden Postcard Exhibition. Jacko and I presented the PPCfR prize virtually to the winner, Kent Morris. Fiona Olney-Fraser did a really wonderful job overseeing every aspect of this rather complex project.

Networking

Holy Trinity Church, Port Melbourne
Dennis Fisher and I were invited to address the congregation on Sunday 20 June and speak about what Reconciliation means to each of us and were warmly received. Member Jim Richardson arranged the invitation.



Dennis Fisher, Reverend Noel Whale and Rosemary Rule.

Ngwala Willumbong, St Kilda

A group of members were privileged to hear Viv Parry talk about the exhibition she'd curated at the Carlisle Arts Space by residents of Gaiamble and Winja Ulupna rehabilitation centres. Her insightful, personal and detailed comments about the paintings were a wonderful education.

Children's Garden Kinderoare, South Melbourne
PPCFR member and early childhood educator Fiona Darroch-Green invited Elder Judith Jackson to meet staff and children at the kinder and has plans for future visits.



Fiona Darroch-Green, Judy Chow-Fairhall and Fanny Chen with a copy of *Respect* at Children's Garden Kinderoare, South Melbourne.

Reconciliation Groups

We maintain strong links with our nearest neighbour, RecStonnington, and include their reports in *Mungo*. Elsewhere, I was personally invited to participate in RecVic's members' questionnaire and have attended forums organised by RecVic and ANTaR Victoria, sharing news of our activities, and like to hear what other groups are focusing on - issues such as racism, racial literacy, white privilege, cultural humility, deep listening and initiatives to engage with the broader community. It is encouraging to learn that strong and significant links are being made through the groups, whose members are mostly white, connecting with First Nations people in communities throughout Victoria.

Local service providers

Being unable to host events, our members decided to reach out to some local organisations, particularly those that help women. Thanks to Penelope Demos, Chemist Warehouse donated 50 bags of toiletry and cosmetic items which we topped up with some basic items, gifting them to Winja Ulupna, Star Health's Indigenous Access Program, Grey Street Medical Centre and Uniting Vic/Tas's South Melbourne Centre. The packs were all gratefully received.

People

Two long-time friends have passed away. Jude Hanley, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Health Worker with the Salvation Army who had a strong association with Grey Street Medical Centre in St Kilda, died unexpectedly mid-year. Dr Henry (Harry) Ward, a long-time and highly respected member, died in September, aged 95.

Communications

Mungo, our monthly newsletter, provides news about relevant events large and small. Electronically and via snail mail, it reaches over 3,500 people including RecVic and RecStonnington members. I acknowledge the help received from the staff in Martin Foley's electoral office who print out copies and warmly thank Jo Bond who does the collating and mailouts. I'm grateful to Todd Condie, the City of Port Phillip's Indigenous Policy Officer, who emails *Mungo* out to members each month on our behalf.

Website: I want to thank Joe Malignaggi who so ably managed the ppofr.org website for many years and to pass on my gratitude to Nick Margiolakis who has taken on the role, refreshing the design.

City of Port Phillip (COPP)

In spite of rain, over 460 people - our members among them - turned out at 6.00 am for the second We-Akon Diliija, Morning of Mourning Reflection, event hosted by COPP on 26 January in St Kilda's Alfred Square. Speakers included Boonwurrung Elder Farbin-ata Dr Carolyn Briggs AM, Josh Burns MP, Father Turi Hollis, Rabbi Yaakov Glassman and COPP Mayor, Cr Louise Crawford. Congratulations to the Council for presenting this significant and moving ceremony.



We Akon Diliija, Morning of Mourning Reflection, held for the second time on 26 January in St Kilda.

PPCFR is a founding member of COPP's Reconciliation Action Plan working group, engaged on their third RAP. I value our ongoing relationship with Todd Condie and with Jordan Sutardy, Aboriginal Health and Reconciliation Officer, and appreciate their advice and support. I am also grateful to the Council for supporting the group via an annual grant enabling us to continue our work within the community.

So, Looking Ahead

Hopefully, in 2022, we can present a Reconciliation Writing Competition for adults and students, host a National Sorry Day lunch and a public forum, invite special guest speakers to meetings and reach out to and welcome newcomers.

I work alongside a wonderful group of people whose support and enthusiasm provides a really strong foundation for everything we undertake. A big thank you to Jacko, Todd, Jordan, Fiona, Deb, Sushena, Jo, Gael, Moira, Joy, Janine, Fiona, Helen, Judy, Maureen, Vicki, Iain, Mary Anne, Tom, Kirsten, Penelope, David, Jim, Desleigh and Denis, as well as to the new people I've connected with over the past year.

Rosemary Rule, Co-Chair, 19 October 2021



