

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.

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December 2024

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Early Yarning Forum

It was a privilege to be part of our first deep cultural learning forum, and judging by the participants' reactions, this Yarn, Listen, Make and Connect forum, learning more about First Nations' culture and protocols, won't be out last. Heartfelt thanks to Bunurong Elder Uncle Mark Brown, Aunty Judith 'Jacko' Jackson, Uncle Dennis Fisher and First Nations' teacher and artist Taylah Eid for making this such a special experience and especially to Fiona Darroch for the idea and for organising everything so beautifully. Details below.



(Above) ELC educators, PPCfR members and Elder Uncle Den Fisher in the yarning circle.
(Below) Elder Uncle Mark Brown and Elder Aunty Judith Jackson.

Congratulations

To Rachel Perkins for the Distinguished Services to the Australian Screen Award at the Screen Music Awards; to *Our Flag, Our Story: The Torres Strait Islander Flag* by Bernard Namok Jnr and Thomas Mayo - winner of the 2024 Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Award in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Book category; to Victorian Tourism Award finalist the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Seasons

It's Buath Gurru Grass Season in the Eastern Kulin Calendar, warming up with Buliyong bats beginning to feast, plenty of butterflies to see, and our beautiful Victorian native grasses growing their seeds and shedding their winter coats.

Our Year

What an excellent one we've had! A big crowd at our National Sorry Day lunch, inspiring talks from Uncle Shane Charles, Uncle Charles Pakana and Kirsty Giles, welcoming new people to the group and connecting with local childcare centres. I'm grateful for the Council's support and especially thank Maggie Smith and Jordan Sutardy. I'd like to wish all our members a joyful Christmas holiday season and hope to see many of you at the We-Akon Dilynja Mourning Reflection ceremony on **Sunday 26 January**, 6.00 am, in Alfred Square, St Kilda.

Rosemary Rule

Next Gathering: End-of-Year Barbecue, 6.00 pm, **Tuesday 17 December**, Gasworks Arts Park, Richardson Street entrance. BYO food/drinks.
All Welcome. Enquiries: 0418 675 734.
Meetings resume in February, see ppcfr.org.

TREATY IN THE MAKING

Victoria's First Peoples' Assembly wants decision-making powers over how the state's Indigenous history is taught in schools but says a Treaty will not outline specific changes to the curriculum. The Assembly – the state's democratically elected Indigenous body – has begun the nation's first Treaty talks with the Allan Government, planning to tackle problems affecting First Nations Victorians. Co-Chair Rueben Berg said he was hopeful the first agreements could be struck by the middle of next year, and that curriculum changes could draw on the work of the state's Indigenous Truth-telling inquiry, the Yoorrook Justice Commission, which will hand down a final report by mid-2025.

COME YARN, LISTEN, MAKE AND CONNECT!

It was a privilege to be part of PPCfR's first deep cultural learning forum, hosted on 27 November, and judging by the participants' reactions, the group will host another such event in 2025, designed to help early learning educators learn more about First Nations' culture and protocols from respected leaders. Bunurong Elder Uncle Mark Brown's beautiful Welcome to Country, didge playing and personal anecdotes set a high bar for the evening. Guests heard Elder Auntie Judith 'Jacko' Jackson speak about the many roles she plays within the community and learned about possum-skin cloaks like the one she's making, linking it to the Possum Skin Pedagogy, authored by Auntie Dr Sue Atkinson and used for the education of children in childcare centres and schools. Talented First Nations' NGV artist Taylah Eid brought an array of simple materials including wool and coloured raffia and encouraged everyone to get creative and make raffia

animals, while Elder Uncle Dennis Fisher told stories and read some of his poems. For the guests, particularly the teachers, being able to connect informally with First Nations' Elders was particularly meaningful.

First Nations' NGV artist Taylah Eid (right) led the Early Yarning Forum which was facilitated by Fiona Darroch (left), an ELC educator and PPCfR member.



NEW SCHOOL MURAL

A new mural proudly features on the administration building at Port Melbourne Primary School. Created by First Nations' artist Merindah-Gunya, she explained that *Pathways of Belonging* "begins with a large meeting place in the bottom left, symbolising the school as a community hub on Wurundjeri land, close to the water, with Bunurong Country nearby. From this main space, a journey unfolds across seven smaller meeting places, each representing a year level. These are connected by pathways to show growth and learning at each stage. Diverse figures appear along the paths, celebrating the different cultures within the school. Surrounding these spaces are symbols of the broader community, reminding students of their place in a wider, supportive network." It is one of the projects the school has included in their Reconciliation Action Plan for 2024.

Paisley Blank – PM Primary parent and PPCfR member

First Nations artist Merindah-Gunya's new mural, connecting students to Country, at Port Melbourne Primary School.



HONOURING LOUISA BRIGGS

Community input is needed for a sculpture honouring the life and legacy of Boonwurrung nurse and activist Louisa Briggs to become a significant cultural addition to the St Kilda foreshore. Louisa's story of struggle and activism is one that resonates to this day, particularly as communities work to recognise the historical contributions of Aboriginal leaders to Victoria's history. City of Port Phillip and the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council's have a joint proposal for Louisa Briggs' story to be brought to life. The proposed site with cultural connections to the Boonwurrung people provides an ideal setting for this tribute, as visitors will be able to experience her story in a place closely tied to her cultural roots. The sculpture would also contribute to a broader movement to honour Indigenous leaders and increase visibility for First Nations women in public spaces. The Minister for Women makes the final decision in early 2025. Community members can vote until December 8 at engage.vic.gov.au

MARCIA LANGTON MEETS MACROB STUDENTS

During an unforgettable visit to Mac Robertson Girls' High School in September, Professor Marcia Langton presented the Year 9 Australian History students with powerful stories and perspectives that brought Australia's Indigenous history and lived experiences

into vivid focus. Through both personal and cultural accounts, she shed light on the painful impact of colonisation and the incredible resilience of Aboriginal peoples and communities. Reflecting on her own family's experiences, who endured racial violence, she spoke passionately about the injustices that continue to affect Indigenous Australians today. Professor Langton explicitly explained the data behind the failed recent referendum and her sadness that there is no voice for Aboriginal Peoples, and stressed the pressing need for Treaties, underscoring that Australia remains the only former British colony yet to formally acknowledge its Traditional Owners through an official agreement. She addressed various issues currently impacting Indigenous communities, from the prevalence of chronic illnesses like Type 2 diabetes to the call for raising the age of criminal responsibility. Above all, she inspired us to see our education as a force for justice. "*Education is power,*" she emphasised, urging us to shape a future founded on respect and unity. Her visit left us and the wider community present empowered, ready to stand for Reconciliation with courage and knowledge. After the formal speech, Professor Langton sat with a small group of students, identified as passionate Change Agents, and responded to questions about how to bring good change to make a fairer and more equitable Australian future. It was an honour to have such a strong, female role model to share her knowledge



and skills with us directly. We will never forget this amazing opportunity afforded us at school.
Vandana Ramesh, Year 9

Professor Marcia Langton

SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION VICTORIA

Victorians can be proud that we're at the forefront in terms of Treaty and Truth-telling in this country, but we can't be complacent. As allies, we need to play our part in educating people around us about Treaty and Truth-telling and why they're so important. If you'd like to support Reconciliation Victoria's work, *now more than ever*, the best way is by donating directly to their cause or taking out a membership as supporters, educators or association members:
<https://www.recvicmembers.org.au/home> or to learn more about RecVic's work visit
<http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/>

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HONOUR ROLL

Two celebrated First Nations women were among the 21 new people recently inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll of Women. Yorta Yorta woman Dr Julie Andrews OAM was inducted as a Trailblazer for her contributions to capturing Victorian First Nations

history and mentoring First Nations researchers in their academic research. Aunty Rochelle Patten, also a Yorta Yorta woman, was inducted as a Local Champion and is a renowned cultural practitioner and artist. Nominations for the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll 2025 close on 9 December.



Aunty Rochelle Paton (left) and Dr Julie Andrews OAM.

BALANCING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND RECREATIONAL USE

Traditional Owners of Victoria's Dyrurite Cultural Landscape, also known as the Mount Arapiles-Toooan State Park, say a land management plan will reset the balance between cultural heritage and recreational use, while peak body Climbing Victoria estimates about 48 percent of the rock-climbing areas in the world-famous Grampians National Park could close under the plan. Wotjobaluk's Stuart Harradine from Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, representing Traditional Owners of the area, said the cultural protections were more than 30 years in the making. Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network provided a detailed 54-page report to assist the formalisation of the bans.

GIFT IDEAS

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation has books - lots of books - and tote bags created together with First Nations' artists and authors, with every purchase helping continue their programs in remote communities. Artworks include packs of six greeting cards, \$34.95, created through The Torch as part of a rehabilitation process that helps build confidence and social capital and can create pathways to economic independence for Indigenous people in prisons.

CULTURE

Art

The Koorie Art Show launches on **Saturday 7 December** until **23 February** at the Koorie Heritage Trust, Fed Square, and features remarkable works by eighteen artists involved in The Torch program.
<https://thetorch.org.au/news/the-12th-koorie-art-show/>
 Free event.

Two solo exhibitions - *Life on the River - Kaantju/Umpila* by multi-disciplinary artist Naomi Hobson and *Mamu: My Story* by senior law woman from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands Angela Watson are currently showing at the Vivien Anderson Gallery, 284-290 St Kilda Road, until **Saturday 14 December**.

