

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 thank them for their ongoing support.

FEBRUARY 2025

FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Wominjeka - Welcome

PPCfR continues to attract terrific people who share ideas and interests. Together we can work to strengthen connections with First Nations people and support the advocacy work of Reconciliation Victoria, ANTaR Victoria and the Port Phillip Council. We will host a community lunch to commemorate National Sorry Day in May and another Yarning Circle for Early Learning Educators, building on the interest generated by the first yarning circle held last November, and keep an eye on Treaty negotiations between the First Peoples' Assembly and the Victorian Government. Please feel free to attend a meeting - or join the group; membership is \$20.00 (\$10.00 concession). Our website, ppcfr.org, has links to events, meetings, our *Mungo* newsletter and contacts.

We Akon Dilinja Ceremony

At 6.00 am on Sunday 26 January, as pink clouds faded, the seas calmed and parrots flocked to a tall tree in Alfred Square, St Kilda, a large crowd came together for this significant ceremony - this year themed Reflect, Respect, Celebrate. Kieran Ironfield's didgeridoo playing was a poignant beginning, followed by beautiful singing from James Henry, accompanied by the Melbourne String Ensemble, then the fabulous John Wayne Parsons; both also sang in language. We heard Boonwurrung Elder

Fay Stewart Muir's passionate, detailed homage to the Boonwurrung People and addresses from Josh Burns, Member for Macnamara, and Cr Louise Crawford, Mayor, City of Port Phillip. Willie Pepper had a big role: as MC and afterwards as Smoking Ceremony leader. It's a privilege to be able to attend this free ceremony, presented by the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council in partnership with City of Port Phillip and supported by the National Australia Day Council.



Photos courtesy of Serge Thomann.

Important Dates

This year's National Reconciliation Week's theme is *Bridging Now to Next* and will be held between **27 May – 3 June**. NAIDOC Week will be celebrated from **6-13 July**. It's theme, *Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy*, marks 50 years of honouring and elevating Indigenous voices, culture and resilience and celebrates not only the achievements of the past but the bright future ahead.

Rosemary Rule

First Meeting: Tuesday 18 February, 6.30 pm, South Melbourne Community Centre, Hall 3, Ferrars Place, South Melbourne.
Enquiries: 0418 685 734. **All Welcome!**



26 JANUARY

The celebration of Australia Day on 26 January has evolved significantly since its inception, reflecting changes in social attitudes, national identity and recognition of Indigenous perspectives. The date invariably prompts widespread protests and alternative "Invasion Day" rallies and events, with many Indigenous Australians and their supporters advocating for recognition of the impacts of colonisation. This year in Melbourne's central business district, police estimated some 25,000 people had taken to the street on 26 January for the Survival/Invasion Day march that started at Parliament House and finished at Flinders Street. Marches were also held in Torquay, Geelong, Portland, Port Fairy, Ballarat etc. Speakers at the protests talked about issues important to Aboriginal Australians, including the high numbers of Aboriginal deaths in police custody, missing and murdered Aboriginal women, land rights and the push to establish a Treaty to support Indigenous people. With the growing awareness of issues and acknowledgement of the history and rights of Indigenous people leading the wide-ranging discussions around Australia Day, calls for a date that reflects unity and inclusivity for all Australians are understandable. Discussions should also demonstrate respect and practise allyship with First Nations people and recognise that this is a difficult time for First Nations people, as well as an opportunity to find ways to bring people together with respect and with celebrations that can unite rather than exclude people.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Congratulations to the many recipients, including Professor Megan Davis who received the highest award, the Companion of the Order of Australia (AC). A lead architect of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Professor Davis has worked for the United Nations as a human rights lawyer and is currently a visiting professor at Harvard Law School and pro-vice chancellor at Sydney's UNSW. The late Galarrwuy Yunupingu, a custodian of culture and ceremony, also received the Companion of the Order of Australia. Rachel Bin Saleh, who has worked in publishing for over 20 years including as Magabala Books' publisher, received an OAM. Congratulations also to the Young Australian of the Year, Dr Katrina Wruck, scientist and industrial chemist and proud Mabuigilaig and Goemulgal woman from Queensland, who is passionate about getting the next generation engaged in science.

RECONCILIATION STONNINGTON

Several members of Reconciliation Stonnington attended Stonnington Council's 26 January Healing Ceremony. Our information stall had a constant flow of people asking about Reconciliation matters and collecting our handouts. Several 'new Australians' visited, having been naturalised at the Citizenship Ceremony that preceded the Healing Ceremony. The timing of these two events is particularly positive as it gives us the opportunity to educate new citizens

on the colonisation history of Australia. The Healing Ceremony struck a good balance, acknowledging the difficulties the day presents for many First Nations people while also showing a united way forward for all Australians. Some people attended from other suburbs because of this mature balance of views. Several hundred people heard a range of positive messages: from the Mayor's Acknowledgement, Wurundjeri man Daniel Ross's thoughtful Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony and Kiernan Ironfield's mesmerising Yidaki performance to First Nations singer John Wayne Parsons and his band's heartfelt performance. And it wouldn't be 26 Jan without a barbie, which was particularly yummy this year, thanks Council. We congratulate Council on an excellent, balanced event that shows the community's appetite to recognise what 26 January means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait



Islanders as part of our celebration of Australia.

The crowd attending Stonnington Council's Healing Ceremony.

FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY

Negotiations, overseen by the independent Treaty Authority, according to rules set out in the Treaty Negotiation Framework, resumed in January, with weekly talks and joint statements being released. Key areas will include structural measures to support Reconciliation, Truth-telling, education and healing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians. The Victorian Government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria have agreed to discuss the following topics:

- The principles and objectives for statewide Treaty
- The legal recognition and effect of a statewide Treaty
- The creation of an ongoing First Peoples' representative body, including:
 - Evolving the First Peoples' Assembly into an ongoing representative body
 - Governance and oversight of a representative body
 - The role of a representative body in decision-making, relating to Victorian Government programs and services for First Peoples
 - Work to support ongoing Truth-telling, education, healing and Reconciliation in Victoria.
 - Implementing the accountability mechanism under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
 - Dispute resolution under a statewide Treaty

- Interaction between a representative body and the Victorian Parliament and Government
- Processes for negotiating future iterations of a statewide Treaty.

Keep up to date via

<https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/news/negotiations-for-first-statewide-treaty-underway>.

INFORMING THE AGENDA - LISTENING TOUR 2025

Commencing this month, a series of Informing the Agenda engagements will be held in Melbourne, Warrnambool, Mildura and Shepparton from **3-7 February**. The Listening Tour provides an opportunity to inform the agenda of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Katie Kiss for the next five years. They aim to collate and communicate the perspectives of First Nations People across Australia on the key issues affecting their lives and to ensure First Nations voices are elevated in national conversations relevant to the fulfillment of their human rights. Engagement details are **Monday 3 February**, 10 am-1 pm, Aboriginal Advancement League, 2 Watts Street, Thornbury; **Tuesday 4 February**, 10 am-1pm, Archie Graham Community Centre, 118 Timor Street, Warrnambool; **Wednesday 5 February**, 11 am-2 pm, Community Hall, 120 Madden Avenue, Mildura and **Thursday 6 February**, 2.30-5.30 pm, Shepparton Senior Citizen's Centre, 132 Welsford Street, Shepparton.

INNOVATIVE DIVERSION PROGRAM

A national-first diversion program in western Victoria has been set up for low-level Aboriginal offenders where they speak to Elders rather than the court, and unlike Koori Court where offenders must plead guilty, the Yallum Yallum program is a chance to avoid a criminal conviction entirely. The Yallum Yallum Elders and Respected Persons Council, run by Aboriginal service provider Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative in collaboration with police, the courts and legal services, was developed due to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system and their under-representation in programs outside the courtroom that did not end in jail time. Program coordinator Mick Fowler said the program was a state and national first. According to Victoria Police data, no Aboriginal adult in the Wimmera region was offered a court diversion over the past 10 years, compared to 56 non-Aboriginal adults. Although there are requirements for participants to attend sessions including drug and alcohol counselling or anger management, the program is centred on a series of case conferences, where participants sit around a table with tea and biscuits and talk about their "whole self", not simply their offending behaviour. The Victorian Government has recognised the program's potential with an \$800,000 grant to run it for the next three years.

NARRAGUNNAWALI: RECONCILIATION IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program is a NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Recognised Provider of professional learning workshops that can be added to Elective Professional Development hours for educators. Online workshops are limited to 25 participants and are devised to learn, teach about and take action towards Reconciliation in Australia. Sessions are on **Wednesday 19 February** 1.00-2.00 pm, **Thursday 20 March** 4.00-5.00 pm and **Tuesday 15 April** 1.00-2.00 pm.

MUSIC, ART, BOOKS

Music

The iconic St Kilda Festival, **Saturday 15 - Sunday 16 February**, features some of the biggest names in Australian music. Proudly presented by City of Port Phillip, Australia's largest and longest-running free music festival features more than 70 bands and artists. Day One showcases established and emerging First Peoples artists and community events across two stages at South Beach Reserve and O'Donnell Gardens, including Jen and Troy Cassar-Daley, Amos Roach, Jess Hitchcock, MpathSoul and Canisha.



Amos Roach

Art

Artists from The Torch will be among participants in the Victorian First Peoples Art and Design Fair, a new showcase exhibition and initiative of the Victorian Government's Creative State strategy. Driven by Creative Victoria First Peoples Directions Circle, the Victorian First Peoples Art and Design Fair aims to promote and build a market for the extraordinary work of Victoria's First Nation creatives. Melbourne Convention Centre, **Thursday 20-Sunday 23 February**; <https://melbournearfair.com.au/tickets/>

Arnhem Land bark paintings, significant works on linen from Central Australia and natural ochre images from the Kimberley are on show to view or buy at The Barkly Street Salon in North Fitzroy. Contact Helen Read, 0418 137719, Palya.art@palya.com.au

Books

Murriyang: Song of Time is a book by Stan Grant. The Wiradjuri writer talks to his Country in a new way, poetic and inspiring, moving beyond the binaries and embracing a path to peace and forgiveness, rooted in the Wiradjuri spiritual practice of Yindyamarra – deep silence and respect.

