

APRIL 2021 NO. 310

New beginnings, new Newsbriefs.

We look a bit different this month. *Newsbriefs* now includes snippets about recent doings in the Initiatives of Change (lofC) community of supporters in Australia—that's you! We're aiming to support the person-to-person ties that have made this such an amazing community of changemakers to be part of. So, [tell us](#), any time, what you've been doing to make our world more just, peaceful and sustainable.

This month, we welcome the return of Life Matters after the long COVID lockdown in Melbourne, with its March workshop that introduced 10 people to the tools, practices and life skills to 'be the change you want to see in the world.' Participants have already had one reunion, and will take part in follow-up workshops that will support them on their chosen paths towards [practicing ethical leadership](#).

We will soon be moving to pilot a new program for Ethical Leadership: watch this space! A second new program is being co-designed with Hazara women, and will be piloted with the Afghan Australian Initiative. This will focus on equipping people with tools and skills for building harmony in the family, the community and the workplace, countering the risks and social isolation often experienced by first-generation migrant women.

Our Australia-Pacific Centre for the region, Armagh, stands on Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri country. In the past couple of months, we have been building our ties with traditional owners, as well as with local, state and Federal government representatives. After speaking at the [launch of Our Uluru Response](#) at Armagh last month, Dr Katie Allen, Federal MP for Higgins, and Michael Scott, Mayor of Stonnington Council, will be visiting Armagh at different times for a deep dive into our work. I am looking forward to the opportunity to share how we can grow in strength when working together for social harmony.

Finally, thanks to everyone who has responded to activist and author [Thomas Mayor's call](#) to take more action and write your own submissions supporting a constitutionally-enshrined Indigenous Voice to Parliament. You can track progress via the 'From the Heart' [Facebook page](#) and [website](#).



Whether you are a long-standing member of the lofC community, or have newly signed up to the mailing list, I warmly invite you to be a part of our upcoming [Bi-Annual National Gathering in May](#). It's a chance to get to know others in the community and learn more about our global network for ethical leadership, community-based peacebuilding, and sustainability. I look forward to seeing you there!

Margaret Hepworth, Executive Officer

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Dialogue with First Nations

Mike and Jean Brown, with **John and Helen Mills in South Australia**, are organising [monthly gatherings](#) to hear historical truth from First Nations friends. Word is spreading about this work, as local government invited Mike Brown to be a panelist at a public event this month. Mike spoke alongside three First Nations leaders, including Nolan Hunter from the University of NSW Indigenous Law Centre.

If you'd like to take part in one of our regular dialogues, or can host a similar group where you are, contact Trustbuilding Project manager [Sarah Naarden](#).



Peacebuilding practice

Shoshana Faire in New South Wales facilitates the Creators of Peace Community of Practice (the CoPCoP!), a community of women who have experienced a CoP Circle, and have been meeting regularly for the last three years. Fourteen women came to a 31 March gathering to explore 'deep listening', hosted by Mojgan Vafaei, with the pleasure of a delicious multicultural shared lunch. 'Being face-to-face after a year of Zooming also had its own special flavor,' said Shoshana.

In South Australia, Anna Stanley carried out her new year resolution to host a CoP Circle in her home on a glorious estate on the Fleurieu Peninsula. The circle of 14 who met in March included teachers, a farmer, and a mental health worker. Jude Thomas and Jean Brown facilitated the discussions. Outcomes included commitment to inner listening, tackling prejudice in the community and putting peace into daily practice. Members of CoP SA met subsequently to plan for the year, which will include regular peace-focused gatherings, and a retreat at a member's riverside home.

To join in Creators of Peace activities around Australia, contact program coordinator [Alex Childs](#).

Introductions

Sarah Naarden joins us as the new Trustbuilding Project Manager, after already serving for some time on the coordinating team that has been driving Our Uluru Response. Sarah is an architect, educator, mother and member of the Victorian Design Review panel with the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In 2015 she founded Design Think Lab for intercultural and intergenerational inclusion, with the intention to collaborate with First Nation leaders.

Keegan Brice joined us in the sessional role of Events Coordinator, prior to the OUR launch event. He will continue to help us with other upcoming events, as needed.

Tom and Chau Duncan and **Gabby Harcourt** have joined the live-in community at Armagh for three-month stays, and **Rebecca Nalwanga** will reside for at least a year when she comes in May. All four have been engaged with recent events, helping with the OUR launch and supporting the March Life Matters workshop.



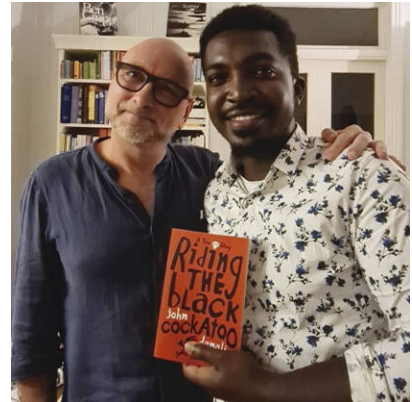
Vipule Iralu and **Viv Cronin** have stepped forward to serve on the small group that manages matters relating to Armagh, our Australia-Pacific Centre. Vipulie was a long-term Armagh resident and Viv has visited many times with her parents, Jim and Tui Beggs. Both join us with a real heart for Armagh and its future.

A big welcome to you all!

LATEST ON au.iofc.org

Trustbuilding, one small step at a time

Much of IofC's work takes place in small groups. In South Australia, descendants of white settlers have gathered to hear first-hand from a Stolen Generation survivor, and learn about First Nations leadership and practices in wetland restoration. In Brisbane, one couple hosted a group to hear from author John Danalis, who is on a mission to return a special Aboriginal artefact. Read about how we are [walking with First Nations community leaders](#) for a better future together.



Launch of Our Uluru Response

From the Smoking Ceremony, to the dancing, to the memorial to two strong women—one back, one white—the project launch at Armagh was awesome. In case you missed, or just want to reminisce, catch the highlights of the action-packed evening [here](#).



Keynote speech: Thomas Mayor

Speaking at the launch of Our Uluru Response, Thomas Mayor, writer, unionist and First Nations activist, [explains why](#) a constitutionally-enshrined Indigenous Voice to Parliament is essential to achieve justice for First Nations in Australia.



In conversation: Tui Beggs

Taking Peace Circles to Kosovo

An online Creators of Peace Circle led Janine Farah in Sydney to collaborate with Gena Sturgen in the Balkans. Together, they are [bringing peace practice](#) to women and teens in Kosovo the same way — online.

IofC Elders Jim and Tui Beggs are stalwarts of IofC's peacebuilding work. While Jim worked for industrial peace and cooperation on the Melbourne docks, Tui was always part of the equation: hosting, caring and sharing with workers' families. She recently spoke with the Creators of Peace network in NSW about [her own life and faith](#).

Ethical Leadership workshops are back!

The regular IofC workshop, *Life Matters* which focuses on ethical leadership and changemaking are running again now, after the COVID-19 lockdown. In the [March workshop](#) 10 participants of seven different ethnic and cultural backgrounds had an action-packed, thought-provoking weekend at Armagh.



See all news

RESOURCES



A trip through history

Initiatives of Change has been active in Australia since the 1940s. Community-based peace builders and volunteers, inspired by the desire to make positive change in the world, have worked to bridge differences in labour relations, promote multicultural understanding, and trained others in effective leadership.

Click through for some [snapshots from history](#).

GET INVOLVED

Fundraising event for Uncle William Cooper's story

Join us for an [Autumn Soiree](#) at the Armagh Ballroom, **Sunday afternoon, 23 May** at 3 pm. Songbird Vered Harel, and virtuoso pianist Warren Wills will perform traditional, cabaret, folk and popular songs. This is a fundraiser and a ticketed event: \$35 will include coffee, tea and nibbles—plus surprise guests!

Proceeds will go towards production of 'Night of Broken Glass' later this year, and our trustbuilding activities with First Nations leaders. 'Night of Broken Glass' is the story of Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, who lodged a formal protest against the treatment of European Jews in Nazi Germany in 1938.

It was one of the first protests in the world against Nazi actions—an extraordinary gesture of solidarity by a man from a much-mistreated community, who recognized the humanity we all share.



Your ticket not only supports 'Night of Broken Glass', it helps IofC Australia widen our outreach so that more people can take part in the work that Uncle William began more than 80 years ago. Your further donation will also support us to co-design local projects in partnership with First Nations leaders to benefit local communities. Help us bring this process to communities across Australia! Book your ticket [via Eventbrite](#).

Not free on the day? You can still make a donation. [Click for details](#), or contact the [Treasurer](#) to send a cheque or make a bank transfer.

Creators of Peace Monthly Speaker Series

The [speaker for May](#) is Gloria Tabi from Western Sydney University on the topic 'The Inescapable Relationship of the Colonised and the Coloniser.' On Zoom, **Saturday 1 May 2021 1.30pm-4pm AEST**.

Advocating for a New Story of our Shared Humanity

Join a Creators of Peace five-conversation series to explore the stories that we live out of, and how we can create joyous new stories together. Sessions are open to both women and men. Interested? Let us know through this [expression of interest](#) form or contact [Jean Brown](#) directly for more information. You could join a group or host your own group. [Download the conversation guide](#).

Bi-Annual National Gathering

By popular demand, the long-standing annual national gathering is now a twice-yearly event. A special line-up of five sessions is being planned for our May gathering; meanwhile save the dates, **15, 17, 19, 21 and 24 May**. All sessions will be on Zoom, starting at 7pm AEST.

One highlight: On 24 May, we will be celebrating Brian Butler and John Bond's new book giving the most comprehensive history of the Stolen Generations and the Sorry Day movement. The message is that we can all be agents of change—and the time for action is now. The book is available for pre-order through [Booktopia](#) and other online booksellers.

Creating Space

All are welcome to the next [monthly gathering](#) online on **Monday 3 May 2021 7pm AEST**. This is a regular time to build our community, renew our sense of shared purpose in the world, and deepen our practice as changemakers. We will hear a speaker and have a shared Quiet Time together. Register to get the Zoom link.

[See all events](#)

JOIN US

Show up. Take part. Volunteer. Give.

Help us build momentum for change.

Join our monthly [Creating Space](#) sessions for mindfulness and mutual support. **Take part** or help out with an upcoming program or event. **Follow us** on social media: more people will get to know us when you share and comment on posts—we want to hear from you!

You can always [contact us](#) to learn about opportunities to volunteer.

DONATE



With the launch of the new trust building project, 'Our Uluru Response', IofC Australia is focusing our fundraising efforts on ensuring that work can roll out in as many communities as possible around Australia. We have seed funding but more is needed. You can help by supporting our upcoming Autumn Soiree, 'Songs of Hope and Love' at Armagh in Melbourne. Tickets are available [here](#).

Can't attend? You can still donate [here](#) or contact the [Treasurer](#) to send a cheque or make a bank transfer. **Every donation**, large or small, will go towards co-designing projects with First Nations community leaders, to benefit their own communities.

Donate Now



Newsbriefs is published by Initiatives of Change Australia (ABN 22 004 350 789)

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Contributions, news and comments are welcome, and can be sent to delia.paul@iofc.org.