



JUNE 2021 NO. 311

Mid-year already!

Welcome to our June *Newsbriefs*.

I am thinking of all those shut in, as lockdowns continue to roll across the country. At the Asia-Pacific Regional Gathering recently, we were privy to hear of the COVID impact on many across our region and we continue to send prayers and loving energy to all our IofC friends affected.

This issue of *Newsbriefs* is jam-packed with many 'happenings' for IofCA. The Sydney IofCA visit to Myall Creek, the highly engaging 'Creative You' workshops taking place at Armagh, the AGM, the webinar on World Refugee Day, and so much more.

I wish to congratulate Anvita Bisaria in her new role on the Asia-Pacific Coordinating Group of IofC in the region, and welcome all those who have joined us lately in both paid or voluntary roles at IofC Australia—Jen Jordan, Keegan Brice, and Leela Gray.

As our work in Trustbuilding emerges and unfolds, an IofCA group will soon be traveling to Cummeragunja, led by Shane Charles, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Victoria. Shane will take us to meet and yarn with Uncle Colin Walker and other leaders at Cummeragunja, to discern and co-design local initiatives. We will be listening to and learning from their wisdoms. Barbara Burns, Aunty Marge Tucker's granddaughter, will be journeying with us, and already we can feel Aunty Marge's spirit around us. We ask for your blessings for this journey. We hope it will be the beginning of a long-term, deeply meaningful and impactful initiative with First Nations friends and IofCA.

Margaret Hepworth, Executive Officer

FROM OUR COMMUNITY



IofC community at the Myall Creek annual memorial

On a frosty morning in June, 11 friends from the IofC Australia community left Sydney in a mini-van headed to the township of Bingara, approximately 30 km from Myall Creek. The aim: to join in the annual commemoration of the 1838 Myall Creek massacre.

Graeme and Sally Cordiner, Friends of Myall Creek, gave a riveting account of history, then together the group silently walked the path following the steps of those massacred.

Participants were later treated to a concert of Aboriginal songs and dance, MC'd by **Uncle Roger Knox**. **Aunty Sue Blacklock**, a Nucoorilma elder and a descendant of a Myall Creek

survivor, gave the Welcome to Country.

Mike Brown, IofC Australia, introduced **Tanya Fox**, a Creators of Peace facilitator and NSW administrator of the network, to Aboriginal elder, **the Reverend 'Aunty' Lenore Parker**.

Tanya asked, "How is it that Aboriginal people are so ready to forgive, after all that they have suffered?"

Aunty Lenore said, 'With all that's happened, we couldn't have survived, if we didn't forgive.' Tanya responded that she could empathise with the plight of our First Nations people, because she is Jewish.

Lenore embraced Tanya saying, "My sister, you too have suffered so much!!" and gave her the warmest embrace. She then took hold of Tanya's and Mike's hands and proceeded to give a special blessing from the Creator spirit of all people.

"Aunty Lenore's embrace touched my heart deeply," said Tanya. "I have always identified myself as part of the Jewish community. But at that moment, I became Australian."



See below for Graeme Cordiner's talk about the significance of Myall Creek.

Creators of Peace Hosts Country Visitors to Sydney

For the past 14 years, **Rosemary Kariuki** has taken migrant women from the African Women's Group in Sydney on a Cultural Exchange Program to rural areas, to broaden their experience of Australia.

From 21-23 May 2021, the Creators of Peace outreach team cooperated with Rosemary and the African Women's Group to organize a return visit from their rural hosts.

Sydney hosts provided homestays, organised sightseeing tours and hosted a warm, traditional African experience with food, dancing and entertainment.

'Words can't fully adequately describe the fun, joy, tears, inspiration, love, camaraderie and warm embrace that we all felt every moment of the Cultural Exchange weekend', said **Tanya Fox**, Creators of Peace NSW administrator.

See below for our story about why Creators of Peace is supporting Rosemary's work.



Autumn Soirée

Our Autumn Soirée with **Warren Wills**, singer **Vered Harel**, and the cast from *Night of Broken Glass* brought in a packed house at Armagh on the afternoon of Sunday 23 May.

Proceeds will go towards staging the *Night of Broken Glass* musical theatre performance later this year and also support 'Our Uluru Response', IofCA's trust building project in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Creative You!

Creative workshops in music, drawing, writing, drama and film making took place on Saturday 26 June at Armagh, organized by **David Clisby, Reuben Daamon, and Rob and Cheryl Wood.**

A group of 40 participants met to brainstorm and grow new ideas, beginning with two 'primers'—a lively sketch about inter-cultural relationships, and a powerful video on the practical gestures of care being offered to a group of asylum seekers currently in detention here in Australia.

With the assistance of the workshop leaders, some new creations began to take shape and these will be developed further at a follow-up workshop in August. Outcomes will be showcased at a Creative Entertainment Evening in November, which will raise funds for Armagh and initiatives to develop positive life direction and leadership at a community level.



Governance and international connections

The AGM of IofC Australia members took place on 27 June on Zoom. **Elisse Higginbotham** was elected to the Board, having been earlier appointed to fill a vacancy in April 2021. **Paul Ntoumos, Francis Halim, and Daya Bhagwandas** were re-elected for second terms. Members heard reports from the Chair, Treasurer, Executive Officer and the various Board committees.

Asia Plateau in India, where many of us have taken part in conferences, has been badly hit by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions. At our AGM, the Board announced it will make contribution of A\$14,000 from IofC Australia to help tide through this difficult period. There will be a follow-up call for individual donations soon. Stay tuned for more news directly from Asia Plateau.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Gathering (APRG) took place in June. Congratulations to **Anvita Bisaria**, who has joined the Asia-Pacific Coordinating Group (APCG) at this recent meeting of representatives from around the region. Anvita previously [went through](#) IofC's 'Sprout' mentoring program and went on to set up her own initiative, Regenerative Roots, with fellow-alumnus **Shannon Ormiston**. Together with **Nigel Heywood**, Anvita will represent Australia in this network of IofC colleagues who maintain IofC Australia's connections with other IofC entities in the region. Our thanks to all these individuals and the many who keep our community thriving and growing in new directions.

Empowering Refugees and Migrants as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change

On Sunday 20 June, **Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi**, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, gave the keynote at a webinar organised on World Refugee Day 2021. Prof. Gandhi drew inspiration from his grandfather's choice to lead a nomadic life, following a sense of inner leading to be a peace builder and truth teller, with love and care for the needs of people. He said, of the Mahatma, "His was a life of a man without a home but with a mission." Prof. Gandhi highlighted that we are all descendants of refugees and migrants, with much potential for creating change where ever we are.



Amiel Nubaha, Board member of IofCA and initiator of the webinar, spoke of his own life experience of being a refugee from Rwanda. He spoke of his near-death experiences in refugee camps, his gratitude for his new home of Australia, the challenge of identity, and his hopes for the future of Rwanda. Drawing on his life experience, he described the strength and motivation he now has to be an agent of change for others in similar situations.

A recording of the session is available [here](#).

Introductions

Jen Jordan joined us in May as Fundraising Manager. She brings to us diverse fundraising experience, from strategy development and grant writing, to major donor and bequest programs, direct marketing, and national fundraising events. She has previously raised funds for organisations that include Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, Amnesty International Australia, the Butterfly Foundation, and Legacy. Welcome to the team, Jen!

Keegan Brice, formerly in a sessional role as Events Coordinator, is now working with us in a part-time role three days a week, coordinating events and volunteer engagement. Congratulations, Keegan!

Leela Gray joins us this week as a regular volunteer, managing our Instagram account. Leela is an alumnus of Life Matters, and taken part in various IofC events in recent years, including Creators of Peace Circles. Welcome, Leela, and look out, everyone, for our revamped instagram feed!

Wendy Vanderleest, our Operations and Centre Maintenance Coordinator, is now back at work after her 10-week holiday. Welcome back, Wendy, and we look forward to hearing about your travels!

LATEST ON au.iofc.org

After Apology to the Stolen Generations, what's next?

At the final session of the IofCA national gathering, a four-speaker panel was invited to explore the question 'How can we all be agents of change in the unfinished apology to our Stolen Generations?' First Nations leaders, **Pastor Ray Minniecon**, **Heather Shearer** and **Dr Paul Gray**, with author and IofC worker **John Bond**, explored themes emerging from the new book co-authored by Brian Butler and John Bond, *Sorry and Beyond: Healing the Stolen Generations*. Read more and watch the recording [here](#).



Finding Our Heart at Myall Creek

Ahead of the Myall Creek Memorial event on the long weekend of 13-15 June, **Graeme Coordinator**, Sydney Friends of the Myall Creek, was a guest at the Creators of Peace monthly speaker series. Graeme spoke on how embracing the memory of Myall Creek "opens a space for us to own our own history" and galvanizes the power of forgiveness across generations.

Listen to his interview [here](#).

New stories for the post-pandemic world

After three decades of sparking deep conversations through Creators of Peace Circles in more than 40 countries, **Jean Brown** has worked with a global team to develop a new approach. Born out of the 2020 pandemic lockdown, *Advocating for a New Story of Our Shared Humanity* is a guide for group conversations.

[Download](#) the 40-page booklet and begin your own conversations, starting by envisioning a shared future and homing in on actions we can take towards such a future. Organize your own group, or register [here](#) to join a New Story

conversation. They are taking place around the world, so there could be opportunity to join one that is near you.



Countering Isolation and Violence: CoP supports cultural exchanges with Rosemary Kariuki

'The way Rosemary works, she's like a Big Momma; she walks down the street, sees women and says, "How're you?" Her personality is so charismatic and she is such a bubble of life. And she has been through a lot herself to know how inner conflict feels.'

That's a direct quote from someone who has worked closely with **Rosemary Kariuki**, 2021 recipient of the Australian of the Year 'Local Hero' award. [Read more](#) about Rosemary's work to counter

social isolation and domestic violence among migrant and refugee women in Sydney.



In Conversation: Gloria Tabi on countering everyday racism

As an educated Black woman and person of faith, **Gloria Tabi** felt she should do something about 'that beast' racism, which affects people in all walks of life and around the world. Today, she hosts a podcast, 'Voicing Everyday Racism', and speaks about 'the inescapable relationship of the colonized and colonizer.' [Listen](#) to her as she shared her views at the Creators of Peace monthly speaker series.

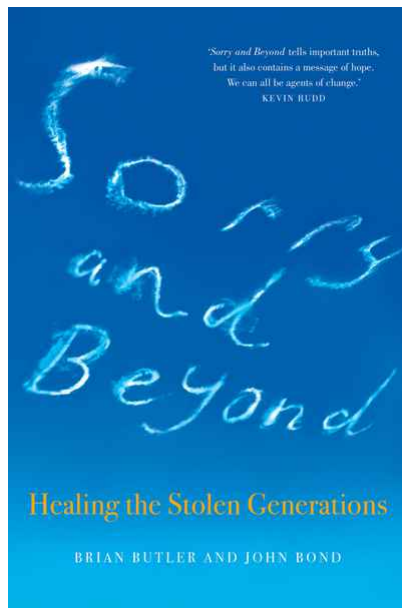


Armagh Conversations: Vipulie Iralu

Vipulie Iralu, a GIS and technology specialist, lived much of his life at Initiatives of Change conference centres and shared homes, including Armagh in Melbourne. In this [interview](#) with **Christian Hoekstra**, he reflects on the value of living in community with people from around the world — including, for a time, sharing a kitchen with members of Mahatma Gandhi's family — and tells how the values of diversity, kindness and inclusion have become part of his everyday life.

See all news

RESOURCES



Book review: Sorry and Beyond: Healing the Stolen Generations

"**Brian Butler's** honesty confronts us from the first page of the book as he writes, 'I am fortunate to live into my eighties; most Indigenous people die much younger. We die of despair.' Not only was Brian's mother part of the Stolen Generation, but his grandmother was also taken as a 12-year old girl in 1910."

Sarah Naarden's [review](#) tells us how the book inspires us all to be agents of change in the unfinished work of Apology to the Stolen Generations.

John Bond is kindly offering to gift 20 books to any of you who are willing to give or mail it to your local MP, or any Australian MP you know. You may receive one of these 20 copies by emailing [John Bond](#) with your postal address. He will arrange for you to receive a copy in the post directly from the AIATSIS shop.

GET INVOLVED

Creators of Peace Monthly Speaker Series

Saturday 3 July 2 - 4 PM AEST

The [speaker for July](#) is **Tribal Elder Kelvin Brown**. Register [here](#) to receive the Zoom link.

Creating Space July 2021 Gathering

Monday 5 July 7 - 8.30 PM AEST

A monthly gathering for learning, journeying and sharing together. At this month's gathering **Caroline Edwards** will reflect on 'Perseverance and Faith.' Register [here](#) to receive the Zoom link.

Creators of Peace Online Peace Circle

Tuesday 6 July to Tuesday 20 July

An exciting opportunity to join a group of fellow women from the comfort of your home. Expect to be transformed, empowered and engaged in peace creation. The Peace Circle will consist of six two-hour sessions that will take place over the course of two weeks. The schedule and information is available [here](#). Register via [Eventbrite](#).

Life Matters: Leadership in Practice Community

Wednesday 14 July 8 - 9.30 PM

Join our Leadership in Practice Community! Each session aims to develop skills, connection and inspiration to help meet the leadership demands of today's challenges. See more details and register [here](#).

National Monthly Meeting

Monday 19 July 7 - 9 PM

A chance to hear lofCA news from around the country and come together as a national team. If you're organising lofC activities where you are, or are thinking you would like to do so, this meeting is for you. More details to follow. Save the date!

Women's Yarning Circle: Deep listening to Aboriginal women in leadership

Tuesday 20 July 6 - 8.30 PM

We are honoured to welcome Tracey Evans, a Gunditjmarra-Bundjalung woman and an Executive Director of the First

Peoples Assembly of Victoria to Armagh for a [Yarning Circle](#) for women. Participation in the group is by invitation as group size is limited to enable participants to form meaningful connections with each other.

If you are interested to support or take part in similar events in the future, please contact Our Uluru Response project manager [Sarah Naarden](#). Please include a statement about your interest in Our Uluru Response, and your connections with First Nations communities.

Planting with Purpose: Wominjeka Memorial Garden event

Friday 23 July 11 AM - 2.30 PM

This luncheon gathering will bring together some of the lofC community in Melbourne with First Nations people and local government authorities. The event marks the planting of the Wominjeka Memorial Garden in the courtyard at Armagh. The City of Stonnington has provided us with a grant for the plants. **Barbara Burns** and **Julia Thwaites**, grand-daughters of Margaret (Lilardia) Tucker and Honor Thwaites, who planted the memorial tree at Armagh 44 years ago, will lead the planting at 11 am. Lunch will be at 12 noon, following by a yarning circle with **Uncle Herb Patton**.

Attendance at this event is by invitation. If you can volunteer to support the event on the day, contact [Keegan Brice](#).

Film screening: In My Blood It Runs

Friday 30 July, 7 - 9.30 PM

Join us for a movie night in Melbourne! The screening is organised as part of Our Uluru Response, lofC Australia's trustbuilding project.

Ten-year-old Arrente boy Djujan is a child-healer, a good hunter and speaks three languages. As he shares his wisdom of history and the complex world around him we see his spark and intelligence. Yet Djujan is failing in school and facing increasing scrutiny from welfare and the police.

This Australian documentary grew out of a long relationship of trust between the film maker and Indigenous communities. There will be discussion and networking after this community screening. Take part to hear what lofC is doing in partnership with Indigenous communities, and learn about opportunities to take part in bringing Indigenous stories to the wider Australian community.

Invite a friend, and get your [tickets](#)!

[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

We are currently raising funds to continue Our Uluru Response project, walking



with First Nations to [take forward](#) the call of the Uluru Statement From the Heart. Your contribution will go directly towards co-designing local projects in partnership with First Nations leaders, to benefit local First Nations communities.

You can 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



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