



Initiatives of Change
Australia

newsbriefs

Building trust across the world's divides

MARCH 2022 NO. 315

A New Year

When my phone rang in late January, and the voice at the other end was Federal MP Dr Katie Allen's PA informing me that the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians was visiting next week, and 'he wants to come to Armagh,' I nearly fell off my chair.

Sue, the PA continued, 'Hon Minister Ken Wyatt has heard about the work that lofCA is doing and wants to come to listen.' It was a very composed, yet inwardly outrageously excited, response from me, 'Sue, that will be wonderful.'

Within a week of the Hon Minister's set date, we were already busy preparing for Thomas Mayor's return to Armagh. As you are well aware, Thomas is a signatory to the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, and a strong voice for the future of a more harmonious Australia. Thomas helped us launch our Trustbuilding Project in truth telling and truth hearing last year. We were preparing two key events with him as our guest speaker, the first an invitation to 30 Community leaders for an intimate forum, the second a larger and more open group in the evening.

You can imagine the movement at Armagh, preparing for these two visits - 'flurry' seems to be an appropriate word, yet tailored with well discussed and considered approaches. What was it that we wanted the Hon Minister to hear from us? How could we support both Thomas Mayor and Hon Ken Wyatt in their respective journeys for change?

The two stories are continued below by **Mike Lowe**, lofCA Lead Facilitator Ethical Leadership and by **Sarah Naarden** lofCA Trustbuilding Project Manager.

Special thanks to everyone involved in making these occasions insightful and meaningful for all who attended.

Since this auspicious beginning to the new year, many other impactful workshops and events have taken place through lofCA, including the *Life Matters* workshop and the Aboriginal Art Auction. Please read on.

Cheery blessings,

Marg

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Charity Fundraising Art Auction 2022 - Painted stories: Women of the Central Australian Desert

The lofCA Aboriginal Art Auction 'Painted Stories' held on the evening of Thursday 24 March featured 21 artworks by

women of the central Australian desert. The vibrant hues and kinetic textures of the artworks popped with illumination under the spot lights.



Ethically sourced by long term IofCA friend and volunteer Margo Birnberg, the paintings express the beauty of

women's business: ways of knowing, healing and loving Country. Margo graced the stage speaking of her lifelong love of First Peoples' culture and calling us to treasure it with all our hearts. Margo Inspired the audience to embrace First Nation culture and the women's stories communicated through the art work.



The art auction vision and aim to raise funds for the Trustbuilding program came to life with meticulous execution and skilled event implementation, made possible through seamless collaboration and volunteer management.

IofCA Executive Officer, Marg Hepworth spoke succinctly and with deep purpose about the work of Initiatives of Change, enticing new friends and Toorak neighbours to follow the emerging First People's Pathway.

Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy was charmed by IofCA's compelling history and warm hospitality. With deep presence she spoke before joyfully watching her great nieces dance the *Djirri Djirri*, willy wag tail dance.

Guests enjoyed the Torres Strait Islander food including crocodile crumbed with coconut, a sensational talking point. Same for The Lilly Pilly Mocktail made from Koori super berries which has promoted collagen production in First Womens' hair and skin for thousands of years.



With an all-female line up, the auctioneer Jenny Gibson humoured the audience whilst skilfully selling all artworks.

The Art Auction's success has put Armagh on the map as an event space. Future collaborations bubbled and new friendships formed inspiring first steps for changemaking with First Peoples leadership.

Thank you to everyone who supported this event.

Life Matters

The IofCA *Life Matters* workshop was held from Friday 11 March to Monday 14 March 2022 at Armagh in Melbourne. LM organiser **Rob Wood** writes:

We had a sense right from the start that the prospective participants were going to make the most of what was on offer and indeed they did! Here are a few of the parting comments as individuals assessed their experience of the



"I am trusting that new doors will open for me and watching out for opportunities to fulfil long held dreams."

The keynote speaker at the workshop was Desh Balasubramanian, Founder and CEO of *Ondru*, a Melbourne-based non-profit humanitarian organisation working towards a more connected, compassionate and equitable society. Desh challenged everyone present to think beyond their comfort zones and find how, in ways large or small, they could contribute to this vision.

We look back at this especially meaningful and memorable LM Workshop and it gives us the belief and encouragement to get ready for the next exciting Workshop which will happen over the Cup day weekend at the end of October. If all the participants recommendations following this last LM Workshop are taken up, we are likely to have a very large number applying for the next one!

program.

"My day one and day four were completely different, it is like I was transformed into a new and better version of myself – and it feels so great."

"I am looking forward to being a part of Initiatives of Change and contributing to this amazing organisation in any way possible."



Thomas Mayor

On Thursday 10 February 2022, Thomas Mayor, signatory and advocate for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, joined a Zoom audience to share news on the Uluru Statement from the Heart and next steps for the Voice in the Constitution. An audience of over 100 gathered to hear him. [Click here](#) to listen to a recording of the evening session.

A recount of his morning deep listening circle with community leaders, local council and indigenous organisations is available in the next section of the newsletter below.

Creators of Peace join 2022 Harmony Day "Everyone Belongs"

14 CoP Facilitators supported MECA Community Services, Sydwest, Blacktown CC and TAFE on Tuesday 22 March, by participating as facilitators at an online community Story Sharing event - 'Everyone Belongs' celebrating Harmony Week 2022. The event celebrates inclusiveness, respect, and a sense of belonging for all who live in Australia.

IofCA CoP facilitator Shoshana Faire introduced IofCA and CoP to the Zoom audience and explained the story sharing process before sending attendees into breakout rooms to share their story in answer to two questions: "What is your connection to this land?" and 'What is an experience that has brought significant change in your life.'

CoP facilitators were honoured to collaborate with this program and make use of their facilitator skills to create the space for people to share their stories.

Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Pilgrimage



The Myall Creek Massacre Memorial is held in mid-June every year. Last year a group led by the lofCA Sydney team gathered to journey to the memorial. Their experience was life altering. This year we are inviting many more of you to join this journey, a pilgrimage of honour and reconciliation.

Graeme Cordiner, who sits on the *Friends of Myall Creek* Committee, writes:

Myall Creek is a place of national pilgrimage. Out of hundreds of massacres during the Frontier Wars, it was the only time some justice was done when some of those directly involved were hung.

Every Australian needs to engage this history. We are often hesitant to do so for it is such a dark story. However, Myall Creek today demonstrates that this journey leads us all into a much larger space, a place of love made possible through the Aboriginal gift of forgiveness, and for the recipients in accepting that gift and in so doing accepting the truth of our history, and our shared responsibility down to today.

A free gift, yet not without cost - 60,000 years of Dreaming, 230 years of nightmares for Aboriginal people.

So in this astonishingly healing context we can gain the courage to walk this path. In doing it together with others there is a much heightened sense of a shared journey.

lofCA CoP facilitator **Prashanti Hagare** writes:

Going to Myall Creek is the highlight of my 29 years of life in Australia. It was a very spiritual experience for me. I felt the healing, the love and welcome by our indigenous people. I do feel now I have the permission to seek and learn more about Aboriginal culture. The way the dancers invited us to dance with them, and the way Auntie Sue and Clayton Blacklock welcomed us on both days felt like a warm embrace ... I commit to spread the message to every Australian I know so they get inspired to go on this journey to learn and heal and move forward together.

Join the lofC Sydney Team on our Annual Pilgrimage to The Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Site.

Dates: Friday 10 - Monday 13 June 2022

Cost: Pay your own way - travel and accommodation.

Plan - to meet in Sydney on Friday 10 and travel together by bus returning to Sydney on Monday 13 evening. You may also make your own way there.

Please respond via **email** with an expression of interest as soon as possible. Details of cost will be shared soon.

Staff changes:

Resignations

Saheem Wani, Marketing and Communications Manager. Saheem had only planned to stay with us a few months and will remain happily connected to lofCA. She returned as a volunteer for the Art Auction. We thank her for her guidance with Marketing and Communications during her brief stay. We wish her well in her new role at Wehi.

Magdy Tadros, Finance Manager. Magdy moves to a new full time position. We wish him well; he will be sadly missed. Magdy also wishes to remain connected to lofCA.

We thank both Magdy and Saheem for bringing sunny dispositions into the Armagh offices.

New Staff

Mia Nour Gadelrab joins us as our new **Marketing and Communications Manager**. Mia comes to us with strong professional experience in Marketing/ Branding, both in multinational and not-for-profit domains. Mia also has a passion for world events and social justice.

Ildi Klein is stepping in to fill the **Finance Manager** role. Ildi has 9 years experience in accounting in a private practice. Ildi has a passion to be of service in community. She believes she can help refugee and other communities through teaching Financial Literacy.

Mike Lowe joins us as **Lead Facilitator Ethical Leadership**. Mike has over 25 years of international experience with lofC leading transformational workshops in the areas of trustbuilding and reconciliation. His particular gift is in creating safe spaces in which transformation can occur. Please see events section for the new events he will be facilitating at Amagh.

Amy Churchouse joins us as the **National Coordinator for Creators of Peace**. Amy is the founder of the Good Karma Network, a community-building Not For Profit.

Kathryn Farrell joins us **Event Coordinator**. Kat has wide experience in event organisation both in Australia and overseas. Kat has a passion for helping others and is working closely with Uncle Shane in the First Peoples Pathway developments.

We warmly welcome all our new staff. They have hit the ground running with events including Thomas Mayor's visit, the Art Auction and more. Ildi has helped with developing the lofCA budget for the new financial year. I am personally looking forward to a time of vitality and growth with our newly forming team.

LATEST ON au.iofc.org



Special Visitors to Armagh

What do you say to a Federal Minister who is interested in the work you do? This question loomed large as the lofCA staff prepared to welcome the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, Hon Ken Wyatt, and the local Federal MP, Dr Katie Allen to Armagh, the Australia-Pacific Centre for lofC. A didgeridoo healing welcome by Uncle Shane Charles set the tone for a deep discussion.

Read Mike Lowe's account of the visit to learn how it all went.

A Yarning Circle to Remember

Under the tress on the grounds of Armagh, community thought-leaders and action-makers from local councils and Indigenous and multicultural organizations joined a deep listening circle organised by lofCA with signatory and advocate for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Thomas Mayor. Tracing the timeline of the statement, Thomas spoke of the key steps so far and the crucial next steps needed for Voice to be enshrined in the constitution.

Read more



SEE ALL NEWS

SAVE THE DATE

Discover the Other Workshop



Tuesday 12 April, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm

A full day workshop led by lofCA Lead Facilitator **Mike Lowe**, exploring how to relate to those who are different, in ways that deepen all of us and build trust. You will learn to engage confidently and easefully with people who are different, deal with inner and outer complexity, transform anger from a toxic energy to a constructive power for positive change, and constructively handle conflict.

The first workshop will be a half-price special offer of \$97 per person including lunch

[Buy Ticket](#)

Soul Care

Weekly on Thursdays starting 14 April 7 - 8.30 pm at Armagh, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak

A weekly time of coming together in community to deepen, learn, connect, be spiritually nourished and grow as people and as community. Each weekly session led by lofCA's Mike Lowe will include elements of community and trustbuilding, of spiritual depth and exploration, and of personal development.

[Register here.](#)

Cost: Free during April. \$20 per week after that.

Free first session for all newcomers. No obligation to be there every week.

Come when you can.



Didgeridoo Healing with Uncle Shane Charles

Friday 22 April 7 - 9 PM in person at Armagh



A special didgeridoo healing session with Uncle Shane Charles on World Earth Day.

The didgeridoo is a powerful tool that lifts an individual's vibration back to a less chaotic and natural rhythm. The broad range of harmonic sounds produced by the didgeridoo vibrate in an ancient and universal tone, and is used as a sound therapy or sound healing tool that affects a person on all levels.

[Get your ticket](#)

TURRUK - Trustbuilding through truth telling and deep listening

Thursday 28 April to Thursday 2 June, once a week 10 am - 1 pm, in person at Armagh.

Limited tickets available - [Book now!](#)

A compelling series of yarning circles and intimate masterclass workshops hosted by Uncle Shane Charles and First Nations Leaders

The first half of the session will be led by First Nation leaders. In the second half a masterclass tool will be explored in smaller groups, with lofCA facilitators including Uncle Shane Charles, to unpack the content of the yarn.

Schedule of sessions:

- 28 April - **Belonging** with N'arweet Carolyn Briggs + Uncle Shane Charles
- 5 May - **Authentic Leadership** with Alana Marsh + Uncle Andrew Gardiner
- 12 May - **Inclusive Dialogues** with Uncle Glen Loughrey + Dr Maya Ward
- 19 May - **Healing Historical Wounds** with Dean Stewart + Uncle Shane Charles
- 26 May - **Diverse Relationships** with Jai Allen Wright + Sarah Naarden
- 2 June - **Trustbuilding Futures** with N'arweet Carolyn Briggs + Uncle Shane Charles

Come to one, a few or all.

[Buy your ticket via Eventbrite](#)

Tickets priced at \$30 (Students/concession), \$45 (General) and \$ 60 (Organisations) per session.

Members Meeting

Monday 9 May 7 PM on Zoom

Join us for a Members gathering to hear 'What's happening'. This will include news from Members, and lofCA activities. There will also be an update, with questions/feedback, on progress on the Constitution and Financial Sustainability.

A time for both questions and sharing.

Registration details to follow.



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



You can continue to donate to our projects with First Nations communities — Trustbuilding Project and First Peoples Pathways.

Please donate **here** or contact the **Treasurer** to send a cheque or make a bank transfer. Check out the options on our website—you can specify where you want your contribution to go.

Every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference.

DONATE NOW



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