



# Initiatives of Change Australia

# newsbriefs

Building trust across the world's divides

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JUNE 2019 NO. 299

## Hello again.

It's been great to see faces both old and new, as many of you joined us in Melbourne on the weekend of 21-23 June for our National Meeting and AGM. Amid the business part of the weekend, we reflected on progress we've made over the past year on our mission of 'empowering leadership for trust building, peacebuilding and transformation in communities.'

We've seen that a common thread across all our work is the importance of telling real stories about our authentic selves, and this issue of *Newsbriefs* reports back from Blacktown, NSW, on 'Australians Sharing a New Story', our newest initiative that launched in May. In Melbourne this month, we have storytelling on the big screen as we reopen our regular winter season of Australian documentaries. We're also now deep into the implementation phase of our partnership with the Southern Migrant Resource Centre in Dandenong, Victoria, to bring Creators of Peace to new communities in Melbourne's southeastern suburbs. Read on to see how you can be a part of our work!

*Newsbriefs* is the bi-monthly newsletter of Initiatives of Change in Australia – part of a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who share a vision for a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

## NEWS



### Australians Sharing a New Story

IofC Australia ventured into Blacktown, one of the most multicultural areas of Sydney, to help the community to hear each other, challenge old narratives, and find a new story to share. Starting with a Smoking Ceremony to welcome participants to the land, the weekend was about being united in our experience as human beings.  
[Read more.](#)

## PeopleCraft Partners at Armagh

IofC Australia had three partners join us from India, Zimbabwe and Indonesia for the nine-week PeopleCraft program from April to June. By hosting IofC workers from other countries, the program is strengthening the global IofC network and building capacity for future collaboration. Partners brought fresh insights to IofCA and are taking back new ideas to inform their work.

[Read more.](#)



## Taking the Practice of Peace into Schools

The Creators of Peace program of IofC has taken a new direction this year in partnership with the Southern Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) in Dandenong, Victoria. This joint project is supporting the organization of Peace Circles in Melbourne's southeastern suburbs, with women and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, new migrants and refugees.

[Read more.](#)

## COMMENTARY



## Peace Building in Sri Lanka

Ethnic tensions have flared up in Sri Lanka after the devastating bombings of Easter Sunday this year. Jeremy Liyanage, founder of *Bridging Lanka*, shares his thoughts about bridging the widening divides between the communities there.

[Read more.](#)

## FRIDAY FILM SERIES

### Australian documentary films

As winter closes in, IofC Australia is screening documentaries once a month at Armagh in Melbourne. On Friday 21 June, around 35 people came to share pizza and watch *Hope Road*, film maker Tom Zubrycki's documentary about the efforts of a small group of people to build a school that will bring education to girls in South Sudan. Read more about the film below.

Don't miss our next film in this series, *Border Politics*, when lawyer Julian Burnside takes us on a trip around the world to examine differences in refugee policy - and Australia's response in comparison. The film, says reviewer Mark Russell, 'is intended as a wake-up call and delivers as such.' Check out his review below - and mark the date in your diary!



## Hope Road

Zacharia dreams of building a school in the South Sudan village he left as a refugee long ago. His English language teacher in Australia thinks it's a great idea, and so do some of her friends, who rally round to raise funds. He flies back to South Sudan and is reunited with relatives, friends and neighbours, all of whom are keen for the project to happen. What could possibly go wrong?

Read the full review [here](#).

## Border Politics

Human rights advocate Julian Burnside traverses the globe to see how other countries treat refugees. 'The human dimension of the problem is kept well hidden,' he reports. 'The tragedy is that those who suffer it are politically irrelevant, and those who have the power to change it either do not know or do not care.' Read the film review [here](#).

## EVENTS

### Creators of Peace Circle

**Saturday 13 July and Sunday 14 July 2019:** Creators of Peace Circle South East Melbourne

Venue: Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre, 39 Clow St, Dandenong VIC 3175. Please see [here](#) for more details.

Come join a group of fellow women and become a creator of peace in your home and community and explore tools for inner peace. Don't miss this opportunity!

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### Creative Tools for Transformative Healing

**Thursday 18 July and Friday 19 July 2019:** This workshop, facilitated by Judy Emma Greenberg and Anne Holland, is for health practitioners or community workers working with clients who have faced abuse and

trauma. A 'by donation' offer is available to IofC friends. Please see [here](#) for more details.

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## Friday Film Series - Border Politics

**Friday 26 July 2019:** Human rights advocate and longstanding critic of Australia's immigration detention policies, Julian Burnside, takes us on a trip around the world to examine how other countries treat refugees, observing how Jordan, Greece and Mexico struggle under the weight of human movement in the 21st century. Time: 7 pm Venue: Armagh, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak. Pizza will be available from 6.30 pm. A contribution of \$15 is invited to cover expenses. Bring a friend! For more information, please see [here](#).

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## An Evening of Spiritual Ecology

**Saturday 27 July 2019:** Learn what Spiritual Ecology is, hear from this year's participants in the Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program, and view their projects, which were developed over the course of the program. Venue: CERES Environmental Park, Brunswick, VIC. Time: 7pm. A flyer is available [here](#).

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## Friday Film Series - Angels Gather Here

**Friday 30 August 2019:** This film provides a unique insight into the lives of one Aboriginal family over five generations and shows how past government policies continue to impact on Aboriginal people today. Time: 7 pm Venue: Armagh, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak. Pizza will be available from 6.30 pm. A contribution of \$15 is invited to cover expenses. Bring a friend! For more information, please see [here](#).

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## Initiating Change - From Within to Beyond

A seven-week training program offered by IofC India will be held at Asia Plateau, Panchagani, India, from 2 September to 8 October 2019. The program is aimed at energetic, self-starting young adults who are ready to engage deeply with the core ideas of IofC - to change oneself, live with integrity and bring positive change to society. Applications have now closed for this intake, but you can find out more [here](#) if you are interested in applying for the next cycle.

[See all events](#)

## GET INVOLVED

### Volunteer with us

Initiatives of Change prides itself on being a big family, nationally and internationally, and there are many ways to be involved. As a volunteer, you are welcome to join our bi-monthly social catch-ups and workshops. These are a great way to meet new people and also to get to know more about IofC. Volunteers also have access to the IofCA mentoring program, with experienced people who have worked for many years in peace and trust-building initiatives all around the world.

There are many areas you can volunteer in, depending on your skills sets and where we have a need. If you are interested, please contact our [Volunteer Coordinator](#) with an introduction about yourself, your motivation, and your area of interest. We'd love to hear from you!

## DONATE



As we develop our community engagement work, we're excited to see your donations coming in. We value so much your support. Please know that your contribution allows Initiatives of Change Australia to sustain its trust-building and peace-building work.

**Every donation**, large or small, has a **direct impact** on the individuals and communities with whom we work. You can donate through our page [here](#) or contact the [Treasurer](#) to send a cheque or make a bank transfer.

[Donate Now](#)

You can now follow us on social media.



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