



Initiatives of Change
Australia

A photograph of a diverse group of people, including men and women of various ethnicities, smiling and looking towards the right. A woman in the center is holding a microphone. The image is partially overlaid by a large green circular graphic in the bottom left corner.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Building trust across
the world's divides

CONTENTS

Initiatives of Change (lofC) is a world-wide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who are committed to the transformation of society through changes in human motives and behaviour, starting with our own, as a basis for working for a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

lofC (pronounced 'eye of sea') is active in some 60 countries under the umbrella of lofC International, which is incorporated in Switzerland and has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

Initiatives of Change Australia (lofCA) is a public company endorsed as a charity by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. Our mission is to empower leadership for peace and trust building in communities in Australia, and overseas where invited.

lofCA acknowledges the traditional owners of country across this ancient continent, and pays respects to elders past, present and emerging. Consistent with their wisdom and traditions, along with those of others making up our multicultural and multi-faith nation, we seek to contribute to healing and transformation in our society through awakening the spiritual and moral impulse within, between and among people.

Recognising that it will take more than human reason and ability to solve the problems of the world, lofC places the search for inner wisdom at the heart of its approach. When people listen to what is deepest in their hearts, insights often come which lead in unexpected directions. Many understand this experience as guidance from God, others as the leading of the Divine, of conscience, or of the inner voice. The regular practice of silence can give access to a source of truth, renewal, inspiration and empowerment.

This annual report covers activities and financial statements of lofCA from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Read more about lofCA on our website:

www.au.iofc.org

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR	1
MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE OFFICER	1
WHO WE ARE	2
OUR COMMUNITY	4
OUR PLACE	8
OUR PROGRAMS	10
PEOPLE AND FINANCES	14

Cover image: Singers at the launch of Rob Wood's album, *Signposts Along the Journey of Life*.
Credit: Mike Worsman

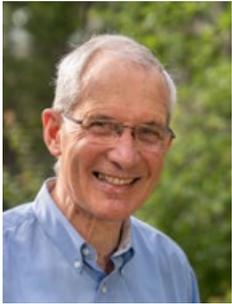
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FROM THE CHAIR



Speaking to the thousands who had gathered for the memorial service following the mosque attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern stated that, 'Our challenge now is to make the very best of us a daily reality, because we are not immune to the viruses of hate, of fear, of

other. We never have been. But we can be the nation that discovers the cure.'

She might have been speaking to Australia. For many years IofC's purpose has been expressed as working for the creation of 'a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world, peopled by free men and women.' That each of us learns how to do that, supported by the energising spark of a superior wisdom, remains fundamental to the building of a humane society.

The past year has been one of consolidation. New ways of working are evolving as we develop our programs and formalise our structures. We have accepted grant funding for programs through partnerships at the local level, and we have begun to work with the structures of local government and community services.

This has meant that the Board increasingly assumes clearly-defined governance responsibilities, while continuing to draw on the principles, values and ways of working honed over our 60-year history in Australia.

At a time when our national conversation struggles to bring to birth the next 'big ideas' that shape our sense of who we are as a nation, IofCA is proud to contribute to this conversation through the work we do and the community action we support.

We invite you to meet us, our work and our 'big ideas' in these pages.



Andrew Lancaster
Chair of Board

FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The poet Maya Angelou wrote, 'Seek patience and passion in equal amounts. Patience alone will not build the temple. Passion alone will destroy its walls.' Finding our path between patience and passion continues to be integral to our work and what we support in others.

In IofC Australia's 60-year history, we have benefited from deep and longstanding relationships with volunteers and supporters, people who are helping to 'build the temple', bringing their energies to healing some of the most profound hurts in our society.

Our core programs – Creators of Peace, Life Matters, and Sprout! Community (formerly known as Sustainable Impact Mentoring) – continue to draw participants, often by word of mouth. We also developed and launched two new programs this year: PeopleCraft and the Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program.

In the last 12 months, we cooperated closely with the South Sudanese community on a wonderful women's conference, a faith leaders' weekend of trust building and reconciliation, and an emerging leaders' workshop. We have also worked with some of Australia's First Peoples to plan together how we may continue to build bridges between all Australians and overcome inequalities and injustice.

We will keep seeking to fill the gaps that exist in between the many community programs and services already in place in our society – 'destroying the walls', if necessary, of ideas that are no longer helpful, replacing them with a human appreciation of need and with new networks of care and friendship within and among Australia's diverse communities.

Let us find our path between patience and passion together.



Athalia Zwartz
Executive Officer

WHO WE ARE

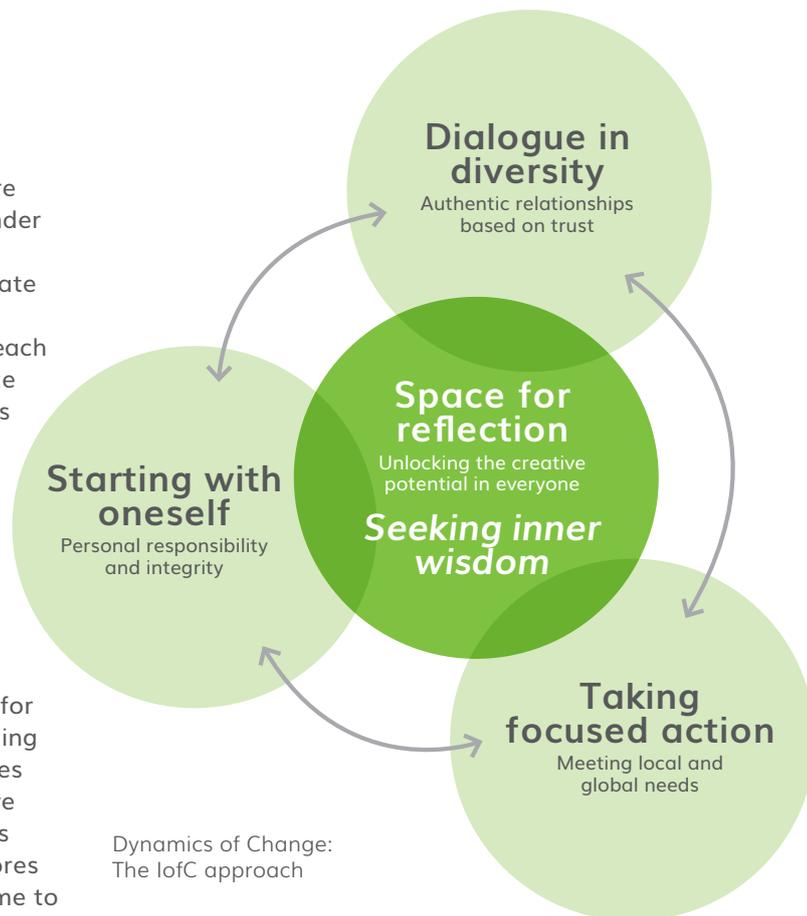
lofC began as a spiritual and social movement more than 80 years ago, drawing on the ideas of its founder Frank Buchman, a Lutheran minister. Buchman worked with university students at Pennsylvania State University in the US, and at Oxford in the UK. He believed that by being open to the divine spark in each individual and applying moral standards of absolute honesty, unselfishness, purity and love as yardsticks for living, anyone could play a part in bringing change in the world for the benefit of all.

These ideas gained traction in Europe in the period between the two world wars. Followers took up the cause of 'moral re-armament' in the face of increased militarisation, and the movement was known for many years by this name. In the immediate post-war period, Moral Re-Armament (MRA) began creating opportunities for former enemies to begin cooperating in the rebuilding of Europe. One hundred Swiss pooled their resources to buy a derelict hotel in Caux, a small village above Montreux with commanding views of the French Als and Lake Geneva, as a venue for these efforts. Scores of people from all over Europe volunteered their time to refurbish it. The centre continues to be used for annual lofC conferences.

lofC's history in Australia began with the visits of people associated with the expanding global movement from the 1930s through to the post-war years, including that of Ivan Menzies, lead comic baritone in the British D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, who used opera tours to several Australian cities to share the personal transformation he himself had experienced. A good many Australians served in the movement overseas, and in 1956 Frank Buchman visited Australia with a diverse group of workers.



Caux Conference Centre, Switzerland. Credit: Delia Paul



The group was formally incorporated in Australia later that year.

The network in Australia played a role in industry-based peacebuilding in the mines, wharves and other workplaces from the 1940s to the 1980s. From the 1980s onward, efforts to build bridges with migrant and refugee communities featured strongly, along with ongoing work to support Indigenous leaders seeking reconciliation and justice, notably during the National Sorry Day campaign.

In 2001, MRA changed its name to Initiatives of Change (lofC) to better reflect its way of working. The community-owned, volunteer-led nature of our work enables us to maintain a high degree of independence and flexibility to respond to emerging needs in the community.

From 2012-2016, lofCA undertook a cultural and structural change process that led to greater systemisation in the way we work, and appointment of our first full-time, paid staff member. This in turn has paved the way for recruitment of other paid staff to support our longer-term mission of 'empowering leadership for trust building, peacebuilding and transformation in communities.'

In recent years, lofCA's Council of Management has transitioned to become a Board that concentrates on governance rather than managing day-to-day activities, while operations are managed by a crew of paid staff and volunteers who support the activities of the wider network.

LEARNING FROM LIFE

Liz Weeks and her late husband Alan worked full-time for Initiatives of Change.



'I started out as part of the cast of MRA musical revues in India and Europe during the mid- 1960s to the early 1970s. We raised our own funds and travelled on invitation, with all our stage equipment and costumes, and with the message that,

"Change starts with me."

'In the lead-up to Papua New Guinea's independence from Australia in 1975, Alan and I were involved in translating an IofC film, *Freedom*, into Tok Pisin. Originally written and acted by Africans, the film was then screened around PNG. It was very relevant, as it drew from experiences of colonial history as well as recounting individuals' own experiences of personal change and related community experiences.

'It was during this time that Alan got to know many Members of Parliament, laying the foundation for his ongoing commitment to PNG, which included an AusAID-supported trust-building project and his own 'Track 3' diplomacy during the civil war between PNG and Bougainville, from 1988 to 1998. I did a lot of solo parenting of our two young children to free him to make about 30 trips from Melbourne. He was the doer in PNG, but we constantly talked ideas through, always searching for inspiration together in our shared quiet time.

'Alan's passing has been the deepest sadness and challenge for me. He was the love of my life, my soul mate...I've had to learn to be content in my own skin. A daily quiet time has been the place to find peace of heart and search for how I am meant to use my life.

'In an unexpected way, my work with Creators of Peace has grown in recent years as I have travelled to facilitate peace circles with women in the Solomon Islands and, lately, women and men in Bougainville. There's a continuum there as I find myself on routes that would have been familiar to Alan.

'In my role now with IofCA, I support the smooth running of Armagh as a venue, residential IofC centre, and home. I also continue to volunteer in the Caux kitchen during the conference season.

'Caring for people and cooking good meals enables good conversation, often life-changing. I feel my role has been to create that atmosphere to have the conversations that are needed.'

Below left: Liz Weeks (centre) with Creators of Peace colleagues in Bougainville.

Right: Liz Weeks with the cast of *Anything to Declare*. Credit: Dennis Mayor.



OUR COMMUNITY

lofCA is first and foremost a community of people who come together to seek inspiration and support each other to be the change we want to see in the world.

We respond as individuals and small groups to meet emerging needs, often working through long-term friendships with people in diverse communities. Such responses may be as simple as having a meal together, or as complex as supporting a peacebuilding conference with 150 participants. The aim in every case is to allow for honest conversations to take place in a supportive environment, and to find ways to work across traditional divides.

People come into the lofC community by taking part in our regular programs, or through friendships with those involved. They continue in community by developing their own 'initiative of change' or taking part in ones they feel led to support. lofC grew out of Christian tradition and ethics, but preaches no religious creed: our community is made up of people from all faiths or none. We encourage all to live out their values fully and authentically in life. What we have in common is our practice of individual and communal 'quiet time', our belief in the possibility for positive change through active listening and discernment, and our aspiration to create a better world by seeking to transform ourselves and our relationships.

lofC has worked with First Nations people of Australia by accompanying them in their struggles for recognition, justice, social transformation and healing. An NITV documentary aired this year featured the

Aboriginal tenor Harold Blair, who was known nationally for his artistry in the 1950s. At a moment of deep despair and embitterment about the plight of his people, he spent several months with his wife in Caux, the lofC centre in Switzerland. The documentary quoted letters to his friends saying: 'I have learned to

forgive. Hatred doesn't get things done.'

lofC volunteers continue to accompany a range of First Nations people on the issues that concern them. Through such relationships, many non-Indigenous Australians also gain a different perspective and a deeper understanding of the challenges to all Australians seeking national reconciliation.

Over the past year, the focus has been on building support and conceiving ways to take forward the proposals of the Uluru Statement from the Heart – the first Indigenous-led, nationally-negotiated agenda capturing the aspirations of Australia's First Nations.

'Hatred doesn't get things done'

Images:



In Adelaide, Allen Edwards, a Kokotha-Kaurna man, took part in Life Still Matters, an lofCA workshop for seeking direction and developing life skills. 'It put my life into perspective,' said Edwards, who has volunteered to be on the organising team for the program in 2019.

Left: Allen Edwards and Raymond Finn. Credit: Mike Brown



Many Australians, including IofC network supporters, attend the annual commemoration of the 1838 massacre of Aboriginal people at Myall Creek, NSW. Credit: Graeme Cordiner

Drawing on relationships built over many years of supporting Aboriginal artists in the Central Desert, author Margo Stanislawski-Birnberg sounded a call to the IofC community to support the Uluru Statement's call for *Makarrata* – a truth-telling and reconciliation process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In October 2018, Aboriginal activist Brian Butler and former National Sorry Day Secretary John Bond facilitated a meeting of Indigenous community leaders and supporters at Armagh in Melbourne, which reviewed developments since the Uluru Statement was issued, and discussed ways forward.

Members of the IofCA network continue to support the annual commemoration of the 1838 massacre of Aboriginal people at Myall Creek in New South Wales, the first such event for which white perpetrators faced justice. The community that has formed around the annual commemoration is looking at ways to memorialise similar events around Australia.

A friendship group has brought together people of Jewish background with those of German or other heritage in an effort to explore and heal generational trauma from the Holocaust. The group has met several times over dinner and has visited the Holocaust Museum together.

Right: German-Jewish dinner at Armagh. Credit: Nikolaus Rittinghausen



OUR COMMUNITY ABROAD

lofCA grew out of cross-cultural and international collaborations, and the community in Australia continues to have an international character. Visits and exchanges take place through the year among lofC entities in the network. lofC international centres at Caux in Switzerland and Asia Plateau at Panchgani, India, host regular conferences to bring people together to share experiences and break bread (or eat rice!) together.

At Caux, events take place over the Northern Hemisphere summer, and attract participants from all over the world. The Caux Conferences address various themes, among them inclusive peace, just governance, land restoration and ethical issues in business and industry.

At Asia Plateau, January is a busy time when international conferences and consultations of the global network take place. Through the year, the centre in the hills of Maharashtra state hosts 'effective leadership' programs for industry managers, government officers, and educators, while also supporting its own rural development program, Grampari, in the local villages.

lofCA works with other lofC national entities in the Asia-Pacific region – this year, especially with partners in Indonesia, India, the Republic of Korea, and Papua New Guinea.

Out of the deep relationships formed at these meetings and conferences, many have experienced radical transformations in their personal lives and seeds are sown for new collaborations.

Credit: Mick Vertigan

Reconnecting in PNG



Mick Vertigan toured the Asia-Pacific region with Moral Re-Armament's *Song of Asia* musical in the 1970s. In September 2018, he reconnected with Papua New Guinean friend Gele Bonarua while on a trip to bring a film about Frank Buchman,

The Man Who Built Peace, to Milne Bay province.

'On arrival, I was thrust into a program of meeting people, starting with the pastor of the church group and many of his co-leaders. Many of these individuals had been to Armagh in Melbourne for leadership training, so we shared our stories of deep change. For me, it was to retell the story of a split between the PNG cohort of the *Song of Asia* cast and the Australians.

'In '73, PNG was still under colonial rule by Australia and I reacted badly to being criticised by one of their delegation. In a time of quiet, I felt clearly my reaction was based on race and I needed to apologise. On the apology, my colleague from PNG shook my hand and said, "Now we are brothers." It was an act of grace that I still feel deeply.

'To meet up with Gele, I travelled an hour and a half across open ocean in a small dinghy to Samaria island. On return, a half-hour with Charles Abel, Deputy Prime Minister of PNG, was arranged. Our conversation ranged widely, and Abel invited any lofC visitors to PNG in the future to come and meet with him.

I am left with the conviction that those of us with an experience of personal change, and willing to share it, would be most welcome to visit this former colony. There is an expectation of change and a willingness to sacrifice personal advancement for the greater good. We should stand with them in any way we can.'

Finding Forgiveness

The IofC network in the Asia-Pacific region organises annual conferences for youth, which provide space for building relationships and developing life skills through personal encounters, workshops and seminars. A young Australian woman of refugee background told this story of life change after attending the Asia-Pacific Youth Conference (APYC) in Malaysia in December 2018.

'My mother married into an extended family that was abusive. My father died when I was only one... The abuse continued until I was four years old and my mother left. I resented her for leaving me.

'I bottled up my anger toward my mother. Although I didn't get to form a strong mother-daughter bond with her, she still meant the most to me. I was so overwhelmed with pain and resentment that I forgot to think of her as a decent human being who had to do what she thought was right at that time. When we were reunited in Australia, my communication

'I'm more aware now of how I speak'

with her was unhealthy – lashing out, bringing up hurtful things, and being inconsiderate of her feelings.

'During my experience at APYC I took part in a session on non-violent communication, which allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of how words can influence others. I have realised I'm more aware and selective of my words now.... Words play an important role in bringing change to oneself and also to the world. I'm more aware now of how I speak.



Credit: Mike Brown

'I have adopted personal quiet time into my daily routine. One of the decisions I have considered during quiet time is whether to go back to university and complete my Masters, or just continue with work. Personal change and development start with a clear mind and inner peace.

'I'm currently working on building a healthy relationship with my mother. We are now communicating better.

'Another relationship that has improved since APYC is my relationship with my sister. We had stopped talking for nearly a year. However, during APYC I wrote a letter to her, apologising to her for being hard-headed and for not being there for her during her lowest moments. Since then our relationship has never been better, and I am planning to visit her during the Easter holiday.

'I have also met some of most amazing young people who are making changes to the world and this has been inspiring to me.'



Breaking Barriers, Building Trust

Australian Indigenous broadcaster and political candidate Susan Moylan-Coombs visited Asia Plateau, India, in January 2019 to take part in the 'Breaking Barriers, Building Trust' dialogue. In her keynote address, she shared a traditional blessing ceremony with all participants, and called for a process of restorative justice for Aboriginal people in Australia.

Susan Moylan-Coombs (left) at Asia Plateau with new friends from Ukraine, Tibet, and India. Credit: John Bond

OUR PLACE



IofCA works in several cities and regions of Australia, and many activities take place on the premises of local government, local communities, educational institutions and individual homes. IofCA's national

Armagh. Credit: Jo Lancaster

centre is situated in Melbourne at Armagh, a Toorak home that was gifted to the movement in 1956 by the industrialist Cecil MacKay, whose family company developed and sold the Sunshine Harvester.

The building serves as a community residence, and as a centre for training programs, seminars, conferences and meetings. Events here take place in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity where, depending on the time of year and the weather, guests may soak up the sun in the garden, or warm themselves by an open fireplace!

Armagh was the venue for many community events this year, including documentary film screenings, a Sustainability Fair, and several meetings and conferences bringing together South Sudanese migrants and refugees in Australia for community strengthening and peacebuilding activities.



Sustainability Fair

More than 200 people filled the grounds at Armagh's first Sustainability Fair on Saturday, 8 September 2018. It was also the first planting day for the Armagh organic community garden – a joyful occasion for everyone wanting to get their hands into the rich brown dirt! Live music, fresh organic food, and fun activities were all part of a day that involved learning about electric vehicles, browsing ecologically sound, fair trade products, and going on a Yarra River bike ride. The event featured a public showcase of outcomes from IofCA's 2018 Sprout! Community – a seven-month program in which individuals, working in small teams, develop unique projects to meet the needs of local communities and the environment.

Top: Children planting vegetables at Armagh.
Credit: Delia Paul

South Sudanese church leaders' meeting, June 2018. Credit: Mike Brown

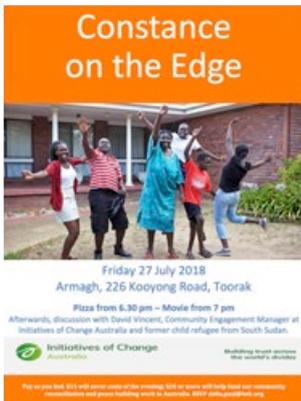
Working for peace in South Sudan and Australia



In August 2018, IofCA supported the hosting of a conference for the empowerment of South Sudanese women at Armagh. More than 50 women attended the event, which focused on cultivating mental health, personal empowerment, and inner peace.

Participants discussed letting go of the past and building a desired future in community, improving communication between mothers and daughters, and developing the personal qualities needed to create change. In small groups, women considered ways to

Winter Film Series



Pizza, speakers and small group discussions – all this, and a film too? Volunteers organised a three-film season of Australian documentary films at Armagh during the winter season, with the aim of giving space to hear and tell stories of the diverse life experiences of Australians. The season kicked off with

Constance on the Edge, a true story of 10 years in one African woman's life after settling in Australia. It continued with *Another Country*, a visit to Ramingining in the Northern Territory, narrated by acclaimed Australian Indigenous actor David Gulpilil, who hails from this community. The season concluded with *The Hungry Tide*, which follows the struggles of a Sydney-based woman from Kiribati as her family is affected by climate-induced sea-level rise.



Credit: Mike Worsman

Signposts Along the Journey of Life

Long-term IofC volunteer Rob Wood launched an album of original songs and music at Armagh in December 2018. Rob and his wife Cheryl hosted a residential community at Armagh for 28 years, which sought to model how a diverse group of people can knit together and support each other in the challenge of building bridges across the world's divides. The album, Rob's passion project, draws on experiences from those years. The album, *Signposts Along the Journey of Life*, highlights 'the signpost within' of the inner wisdom to be found in quietness and reflection.

Songs such as 'Everyone Has a Story', 'Promises' and 'Song of a Refugee' encourage listeners to take action on issues they themselves are concerned about.

offer support to those who struggle, and when and how to seek professional help. 'It helps break barriers, and it brings to light issues we don't discuss,' said one participant after the event.

Other special occasions at Armagh were a June meeting of 70 Sudanese and South Sudanese church leaders of all denominations on the same day that a 'permanent ceasefire' was proclaimed by warring parties in the five-year civil war in South Sudan. The event was the culmination of several meetings of church leaders who used Armagh as a neutral meeting ground for private discussions and shared devotional times. In November 2018, the Australian ambassador to several East African countries took part in a community meal at Armagh to meet with the South Sudanese community gathered there.

In January 2019, Armagh once again was the venue for part of a four-day workshop organised in cooperation with the University of Melbourne to support emerging leaders in the diaspora community. The workshop emphasised the need for personal action and personal change as the basis for working with integrity in healing long-standing divisions. Outcomes included the creation of a WhatsApp group to encourage regular communication among participants after they returned to their homes around Australia, and a proposal for a 'dialogue conference' that will bring together representatives of the various tribal groups.

Some of this work springs out of a long-standing relationship between IofCA and the South Sudan Australia Peace Initiative, a network of South Sudanese Australians and others who are committed to building peace.

OUR PROGRAMS

lofC believes in inspiring, equipping and connecting people to create change. We do this through developing ethical leadership, creating opportunities for people to learn and practise community development skills, and encouraging individuals and groups to engage in reflective practices.

Programs grew substantially this year, with more than 500 people taking part in organised programs around Australia and many more attending public events such as film screenings and introductory 'tasters' of program activities.

Creators of Peace

Creators of Peace remains lofCA's largest program to date. Members facilitate peace circles with groups of eight to 15 women at a time, in which participants work through a series of 10 'gathering points' designed to elicit story sharing and promote active listening at a deep personal level.

Over the past year, 14 Creators of Peace circles took place in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and Queensland, with around 90 participants in total. Participants said taking part in a Creators of Peace circle has helped them to make the connections between inner peace and external conditions, develop skills in active listening, and acquire a greater awareness of the various dimensions of peace.

To organise the circles, lofCA has partnered with universities and community service organisations, including the University of Sydney's Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, the University of the Third Age in New South Wales, and the Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre (SMRC) in Dandenong, Victoria. The Victorian Multicultural Commission is supporting lofCA's partnership with SMRC with a grant of \$120,000 to deliver 11 peace circles in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne over two years.



Nine new Creators of Peace facilitators trained at an October 2018 weekend workshop in Melbourne, laying the foundation for reinvigorating the network around Australia. Credit: Kirsty Argento



Life Matters

Life Matters aims to support young people aged between 18 and 35 years in discerning their own life direction and acquiring skills for negotiating an ethical path through life. Residential workshops are organised over the space of a three-day long weekend, offering a mix of panel discussion, personal reflection, encounter workshops, music, sport, and getting to know people from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Workshop participants are followed up for a three to six-month period, and some have engaged in more long-term exchanges with mentors from the lofC network.

In the past year, lofCA organised two Life Matters workshops and two rounds of Life Still Matters, a spin-off version for participants over 35 years of age. Workshops took place in South Australia, Victoria and NSW, with a total of 60 people taking part, supported by 25 volunteers and alumni.

Bek Brown, a participant in Life Matters in Victoria, wrote of her experience afterwards: 'I have gained a joyous appreciation of the fact that there are people like me in the world, people who want and value the things that I do. Not in all my life have I felt such commonality with my fellow human beings, and with this faith now properly instilled, I feel I can move mountains to begin my work to make the world a better, more inclusive place.'

'Your values shape everything'

Jimmy Nguyen fled Vietnam as a refugee in 1987, arriving in Australia with the clothes on his back and a pair of thongs. His Life Matters experience in 2003 laid the foundation for his ethical business in fashion. 'The workshop was about how your values shape everything – your talk, your walk in life...What I learned in Life Matters gave me the comfort to do things in business: to feel the force behind my actions. With my practice of Buddhist meditation and the values I learned from lofC, I'm able to run my business with integrity,' he said.



Top: Life Still Matters in South Australia. Credit: Mike Brown
 Right: Jimmy Nguyen. Credit: John Ng/Humans of Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville



Bringing nature to people: The Brain Forest
Credit: The Brain Forest Project

Sprout! Community

Sprout! Community equips participants to develop their own community-based projects to benefit local communities and the environment, utilising the Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach, professional mentoring, and reflective practice for leadership development. HCD is a project development approach that aims to bridge the gap between intended solutions and what really works for people in communities, through an immersive and collaborative process. In keeping with lofC's approach, the program focuses on personal attitude, deep listening, empathic engagement, and building authentic relationships.

Working in small groups amidst a collaborative network of supporters, participants design and test their own projects over a seven-month period of monthly workshops and small group work, with support from mentors who have a professional background in sustainability or community development. The completed project designs and any results from pilots are presented at a public showcase event.

The first cycle of Sprout! Community (referred to in its earlier phase as Sustainable Impact Mentoring) resulted in three projects, including the Brain Forest project, which has been delivered to staff at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). Other completed projects were an information-sharing platform on recycling facilities, 'What Waste!', and guided bike tours of the Yarra River and Merri Creek, designed to provide mental health benefits by connecting people to place and to nature.

With a carload of donated plants and some budding partnerships with nurseries, Sprout! Community participants Alice, Jacinta and Julianne found a way to bring nature to corporate employees trapped indoors for most of the day. The Brain Forest is now marketing its services to organisations that could benefit from its presence in their workplaces.

Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program

Spiritual Ecology is a growing field of study and action that seeks to reawaken our 'sense of spirit' within and around us, in order to rediscover reverence and our sacred connection to land. Rebuilding this lost understanding is essential in responding to the current environmental crisis today, so lofCA, in partnership with the CERES Community Environment Park in Melbourne, is offering leadership training to millennials and youth, who will need to undertake much of the work needed to support ecological and spiritual renewal. The aim of the program is to support and inspire young people who recognise the need to create a future that is not driven by materialism and greed, but rooted in the spiritual values of reverence for nature, interconnectedness, stewardship, compassion and service.

The program commenced with a retreat in the Otway Ranges, in which participants were guided through practices such as grief rituals to acknowledge the loss of the natural environment, and 'barefoot exploration' to reconnect with the Earth. Participants are continuing their work through a workshop series that will introduce the fundamentals of Human-Centred Design and support them to develop their own contributions toward renewing relationships between people and nature.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission supports this project with funding of \$30,000 to be shared by CERES and lofCA for partnership activities.



IN DEVELOPMENT

A big part of our work this year has been in developing programs and activities for the year ahead. Here is a preview.

Australians Sharing a New Story

This public forum of films, talks, and story-sharing in small groups took place in Blacktown, NSW, from 3-5 May 2019. The event brought together more than 200 people to share stories reflecting Australia's identity as a 'three-story' nation with an ancient, Indigenous living heritage, British-style institutions and democratic traditions, and a rich cultural mix of people from all over the world. The forum aimed to jointly craft a new narrative for Australian society that reflects who we truly are.

PeopleCraft

IofCA is strengthening the global IofC network through its new PeopleCraft program, which provides support for hosting IofC workers from other countries. In 2019, PeopleCraft is hosting IofC workers from India, Indonesia, and Zimbabwe.



Top: PeopleCraft participants from India, Zimbabwe and Indonesia at Armagh in Melbourne. Credit: Simone Richardson

Dharug First Nations people led a smoking ceremony on 26 April, ahead of Australians Sharing a New Story in May. At the event, Blacktown mayor Stephen Bali said, 'We can't change what happened, but we can change the way we walk into the future.' Credit: Mike Brown

PEOPLE AND FINANCES

lofCA remains a mainly volunteer-driven organisation, drawing on long-standing ties of fellowship among our network. We are truly community-based. An estimated 120 volunteers worked with us this year, greatly increasing the capacity of our 12-member, mostly part-time staff. Volunteers contributed almost 10,000 hours of time this year to supporting programs and events at lofCA, with some individuals shouldering core responsibilities for planning, design and delivery of activities.

With the expansion of our program activities this year, we have begun once more to receive funding from public sources, after a hiatus that was devoted to planning and visioning for the years to come. While lofCA activities are still largely funded by investments, we have begun to seek out further public and private funding sources to ensure the financial sustainability of our programs and expand the possibilities for action on trust building and community strengthening in Australia.

Learning to practise deeply

Kate Allison, a BA student of International Studies at RMIT, undertook a one-year part-time internship with lofCA, which ended in 2018. The partnership aimed to introduce and foster the application of lofC's theory of change in emerging peacebuilders and community development workers so as to increase the future impact of their work.

'Doing this internship has honestly changed who I am as a person – how I see the world, my relationships, and myself. I will be forever grateful to all of the wonderful staff at lofC for opening my eyes and always pushing me to be the best version of myself in such a warm and kind way.

'Before my internship, I was struggling with how I would ever be able to have an impact in the world...I had a very narrow idea of how change gets made.

'Many of the most significant learnings for me have come from dealing first-hand with conflict, challenges and joy, and from taking time to assess and reflect on my role in creating these... connecting with people of all ages, ethnicities, and genders, and realising how similar we all are. I now have tangible experience of working within communities that differ significantly to mine and many of the misconceptions I had have been dispelled. I am more self-assured than I have ever been, and have learned to deeply practice trust, forgiveness and acceptance.'

Kate's internship provided increased staff capacity of 320 hours in much-needed support for Creators of Peace and other programs, valued at \$8,000. She has since transitioned into paid positions as national administrator for Creators of Peace and project coordinator for a government-funded Creators of Peace partnership in the southeast of Melbourne.



Credit: Delia Paul

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year ended 31 March 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Income		
Gifts, bequests and grants	87,461	104,494
Investment income	354,252	276,432
Proceeds from sale of books and videos	557	655
Program income	30,038	23,920
Property Income	104,024	80,423
Profit/(loss) on sale of investments	(18,923)	(2,800)
	557,409	483,124
Expenditure		
Administration expenses	82,387	89,187
Consultancy expenses	27,879	34,893
Depreciation expense	29,416	30,042
Grants and donations	29,491	23,483
Property expenses	143,431	135,933
Employee expenses	366,474	239,796
Other operating expenses	134,584	121,289
	813,662	674,623
Surplus / (Deficit) from Operating Activities	(256,253)	(191,499)
Increase/(decrease) in Market Value of Investments	(22,573)	(223,398)
Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss)	(278,826)	(414,897)

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2019

Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,185,905	879,344
Financial assets & receivables	4,644,096	4,780,788
Property plant and equipment	1,453,030	1,474,249
Total Assets	7,283,031	7,134,381
Liabilities		
Trade payables and other provisions	103,207	80,683
Financial liabilities (non-current)	2,527,215	2,122,263
Total Liabilities	2,630,422	2,202,946
NET ASSETS	4,652,609	4,931,435
Equity & Reserves		
Retained earnings	4,626,730	4,882,983
Reserves	25,879	48,452
TOTAL EQUITY & RESERVES	4,652,609	4,931,435

These statements have been produced and extracted from the 2019 audited financial report with permission from the Company's external auditors John L Bush & Campbell.

JOIN US

Participate

lofC Australia's core programs run through the year. Our alumni form a growing network around Australia and the region, as we aim to generate a critical mass of people steeped in the principles and values that will promote our transformation to a just and humane society.

Besides our regular activities, we are open to working with individuals and community groups on new projects. lofC Australia may just be that safe space that enables your initiative to take root and grow.

Talk with us if you have an idea.

Partner

lofC Australia works closely with many other not-for-profit groups. We offer training support, event management, and a warm and welcoming venue for a host of community events. We sometimes act as an auspicing body for community initiatives that are in an emergent stage. If you think our values align with yours and we can do meaningful work together, get in touch. We're stronger together.

Give

Our achievements would not have been possible without the generosity of many individuals who have supported lofC through financial donations and gifts in kind.

We welcome regular and one-off donations, as well as offers of goods and services. If you're unsure about whether something you have to give will be useful – try us!



lofC friends gather for an Iftar meal marking the end of the day's fast during Ramadan at Armagh.



Registered address

Initiatives of Change Australia
226 Kooyong Road, Toorak, VIC 3142

ABN 22 004 350 789

Board (as at 31 March 2019)

Andrew Lancaster (Chair), Mike Brown (Deputy Chair),
Paul Wilkins (Treasurer), Jonathan Lancaster, Daya
Bhagwandas, Quynh-Tram Trinh, Francis Halim, Ron
Lawler and Paul Ntoumos.

Company Secretary: Elizabeth Lee.

Auditors

John L. Bush & Campbell
30 Blake St (PO Box 98)
Wagga Wagga, NSW 2650

Bankers

National Australia Bank Limited
445 Toorak Road, Toorak, VIC 3142

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Forest Project



www.au.iofc.org

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