



Initiatives of Change
Australia

newsbriefs

Building trust across the world's divides

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This year has seen new buds emerge at Initiatives of Change Australia (IofCA) alongside the fruit of some lifelong commitments.

Rob and Cheryl Wood, full-time volunteers for many years with IofCA, launched an album of Rob's original music and lyrics in early December. Supported by volunteer performers and production crew, the 'Signposts Along the Journey of Life' album reflects the IofC ethos – the value of quiet reflection, the importance of personal integrity, and the possibility of personal action to bring about a world of peace and justice.

We continue to foster bottom-up community initiatives, many of which are led entirely by volunteers who feel a call to contribute their time and abilities. Two examples, in this issue of Newsbriefs, are the work of public servant James McIvor with 'Life Matters', and the formation of a friendship network in Melbourne that is bringing together Australians of German background with those of Jewish heritage.

Based on our three-year strategic direction ('empowering leadership for trust building, peace building and transformation in communities') we are starting some new partnerships in 2019. The PeopleCraft internship program will be giving young leaders a taste of our community work in Australia, creating a space for strengthening collegial collaboration and friendship within IofC's international network. IofCA is also partnering with the CERES Community Environment Park in Melbourne to offer a Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program encouraging young people to draw on their own faith or spiritual practice (of any kind!) to engage with real-world challenges.

Read on for details - and may the new year bring new growth and peace to you.

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



Album Launch: Signposts Along the Journey of Life

Rob Wood's lifelong passion project comes to fruition with the launch of his original music album 'Signposts Along the Journey of Life.' The 17 songs and one instrumental solo involved 14 singers and musicians from many countries.

[Read more.](#)

Life Matters Follow-up: Helping Others Achieve Their Dreams

James McIvor, a senior manager with the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation, talks about why he began offering leadership seminars for Life Matters alumni. [Read more.](#)



German-Jewish Group Builds Bridges of Friendship

A newly formed German-Jewish group meets regularly to share stories past and present and reconcile differences.

[Read more.](#)



EVENTS

Breaking Barriers and Building Trust

Saturday January 26 to Wednesday January 30 2019: Join an international dialogue for a humane world at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, India. You are invited to take part in the conversation, share your own experiences and explore together ways to build a humane society of peace and trust. More information and registration details can be accessed [here](#). USD 40/day per person will help cover costs, and any additional contributions will be gratefully accepted. Some limited support is available from IofC Australia for volunteers and students.

Spiritual Ecology Retreat and Leadership Program

Thursday 14 February to Sunday 17 February 2019: Participate in a four-day Spiritual Ecology retreat in the Otways National Park as a part of the Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program offered by CERES Community Environment Park in partnership with lofC. Spiritual Ecology is a response to the urgent need to build peace with Earth, our common home. It explores the integration of spiritual values with practical action to sow the seeds for a more positive future. This event is the start of the Spiritual Leadership Ecology Program, which offers a workshop series from March to July. The program is aimed at young people between the ages of 18-35 with a faith or spiritual practice who are passionate about ecology and environment. More information about the program is available [here](#).

Peace Focus Gathering in Gladesville

Saturday 30 March 2019: Peace Focus Gatherings are a community of like-minded women who hold the vision for peace in themselves, in their families, in the community and in the world. Elizabeth Devine, a Creators of Peace Facilitator, will be leading the next gathering, which will be an exploration into the 'Narrative of Women' - how the capacity for deep compassion, resilience, strength and courage shows up in life stories of efforts to bring about a more peaceful world. 3.15pm for 3.30pm - 5.30pm in Gladesville, NSW. Bring your open heart, curious mind and big smile - and also a plate of food to share! RSVP appreciated but not necessary. Contact [Maria Moy](#) or call 0413 585364 to get address details.

PeopleCraft

Monday 22 April to Friday 21 June 2019: PeopleCraft is lofCA'S program for building teams across national and other kinds of borders, as we create stronger networks and promote collaboration amongst lofC's younger generation. The program is seeking people between the ages of 25 – 40 who are a part of the lofC international network. The nine-week program will take place at 'Armagh' in Melbourne, Victoria. The program offers the opportunity to work on lofCA initiatives and includes two weeks of interstate travel, outreach and homestays with people in the lofCA network. More details about the program are available [here](#).

Australians Telling a New Story - Blacktown Forum

Friday 3 May to Sunday 5 May 2019: Join a weekend of story sharing and trust building in Blacktown, NSW. The Blacktown Forum will acknowledge our colonial past and embrace our 'three-story' identity (in the words of Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson) of 60,000 years of Aboriginal culture, inherited British systems and today's rich multicultural reality. The forum is the first in a series of lofCA events encouraging people to engage with others from different backgrounds - breaking down stereotypes and uncovering the structures and systems that drive inequality in Australian society today. This public event is being organised in partnership with SydWest Multicultural Services. For more information, contact [Jean Brown](#).

[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.

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