

OCTOBER 2017 NO. 289

As the warmer weather sets in, we're delighted that so many initiatives are taking off through our network around Australia. While our work is wide-ranging and diverse, a key focus is empowering leadership for peace and trust building in both local and overseas communities. Read on to see how you can be a part of it!

Newsbriefs is the bi-monthly newsletter of Initiatives of Change (IofC) 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



Gold Coast City Signs Charter for Compassion

A more compassionate city, a more compassionate country, a more compassionate world: this was religious historian Karen Armstrong's vision when she launched the 'Charter for Compassion'. **Parveen Muhammed** speaks with Terry Ayling and Lesley Bryant, who are working to make that vision a reality on Queensland's Gold Coast. [Read more.](#)



'Track 3 Diplomacy' Connects Australia with Asia

Since the 1950s, Initiatives of Change (IofC) has promoted connections between Australia and countries in the region, to develop people-to-people solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. This year's **Asia-Pacific Regional Gathering** of IofC people pondered on emerging challenges. [Read more.](#)



Life Matters: Linking Personal Growth to Action

A chance encounter brought university student leader Marlous Teh to her first Life Matters workshop. She had attended personal development courses before, but this one was different - inter-generational, quieter, and more reflective. **Delia Paul** speaks with Marlous about her experience. [Read more.](#)



Compassionate Conversations: The Continuing Story of BHALT

The stage performance of The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe featured four women telling the true stories of their experiences of sexual violence. Then it became a film. **Creators of Peace**, an IoFC programme, took out a licence for five community screenings around Australia in 2017. [Read more.](#)

EVENTS



Asia-Pacific Youth Conference

27 December 2017 to 3 January 2018: Applications are open now for the 23rd APYC on the theme 'The Future We Want'. Held in Panchgani, India at our Indian Centre for Initiatives of Change 'Asia Plateau'.

The conference will see more than 140 young leaders come together for 8 days for a series of workshops, panel discussions, guest speakers, leadership activities, cultural exchange, and leadership and peace-building development. The conference is designed to empower young leaders to address issues of concern in our region and countries, to form networks and teams across countries and to plan action at local and/or regional levels.

This conference also offers reflective spaces and activities for self-inquiry, so that we may better understand ourselves and what is blocking us from having a more positive impact on the world around us. Included in the conference will be cultural outings and the chance to explore surrounding villages and the organic farm and livelihood training centre 'Grampari'.

Some limited funding is available. More information is here: <http://www.iofc.org/2017-2018-asia-pacific-youth-conference-india>

More questions? Write to [kirsty.argento@iofc.org]Kirsty Argento, the Australian country co-ordinator for APYC.

Creators of Peace

Saturday 4 November: Auburn Creators of Peace monthly meeting from 1.30 for 2-4 pm at the Youth Room, Auburn Centre for

Community, 44A Macquarie Rd, Auburn, NSW. For more information, email creatorsofpeace.nsw@gmail.com.

Sunday 19 November: Hills Creators of Peace meeting, 1.30 for 2-4 pm at The Small Meeting Room, Rowland Village, 301 Galston Road, Galston, NSW. Topic: Looking after myself – selfish or essential? For more information, email creatorsofpeace.nsw@gmail.com

Tuesday 21 November: Peace Focus Gathering from 6.30-8.30 pm at Princess Gardens Village, 7-11 Princess St, Rose Bay, NSW. RSVP [threepillars@ozemail.com.au]Tanya Fox.

Saturday 25 November: Peace Focus Gathering, 3.15 for 3.20-5.30 pm at 53 Blackbutts Rd, Frenchs Forest, NSW. The topic is 'Speaking Peace', based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg on non-violent communication. Bring your open heart and big smile! Also please bring a plate to share for dinner following the meeting, if you'd like to stay and continue the peace conversation.

Life Still Matters

Friday 3 November – Monday 6 November: 'Life Still Matters' workshop for the over-35s, at Armagh, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak, VIC. The program is about learning to make a positive difference in the world around us, whatever our age and stage of life.

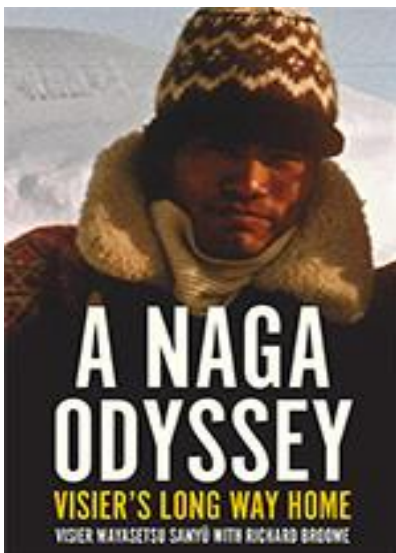
The workshop begins at 8 pm on the Friday and finishes at 4.30 pm on the Monday. A contribution of \$250 will cover accommodation, meals, and the program. Registration for this event is closed, but if you're interested in similar events, contact [rob.wood@iofc.org]Rob Wood for more details.

Christmas Afternoon Tea

Sunday 10 December. 2-4 pm: This is get-together for all lofC friends, volunteers and supporters in Melbourne, at Armagh, 226 Kooyong Road, Toorak, VIC 3142. Wear something festive! For more information, contact events.au@iofc.org

See all events

REVIEWS



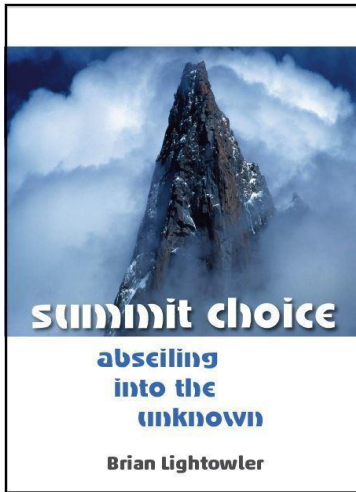
Visier Sanyü: A Naga Odyssey

Visier Meyasetsu Sanyü was born in 1950 into a world that came apart in 1956, when the Indian army invaded Nagaland. His village was burned down and his family, like the other villagers, lived in the jungle for three years, hunting and gathering plants.

Against all odds, he finished school, received his Ph.D. and became the inaugural Head of the Department of History at the University of Nagaland. Together with his wife and three children, he came to Australia in 1996 as a research fellow at La Trobe University. He is a current President of the Overseas Naga Association, and an International Elder of Initiatives of Change.

In this book, written with Richard Broome, an Emeritus Professor of History at La Trobe University, Visier tells his extraordinary story. [Read more.](#)

Brian Lightowler: Abseiling into the Unknown



Brian Lightowler has had more than half a century of daily practice in the principles and application of Initiatives of Change, or 'Moral Re-Armament' as it was called when he first encountered it. In the book, which presents his life story, Brian wrestles with understanding the motivation of a militant Communist, an 'extremist' who had killed men in his doctrinaire passion for class war. In America, he finds himself enmeshed in the raw forces of racism and joins actions in Kentucky and Georgia trying to overcome them. With a group of friends in Queensland, he takes a pledge to counter the police/political corruption being exposed and it grows to a series of 'Clean Election Campaigns' in half a dozen countries.

Reading the book, **Mike Brown** finds that the issues today are similar, as are the gut feelings behind the issues—the same basic raw drives in human nature. At this level, the message and approach of Initiatives of Change remains fundamentally the same: that only

through deep transformation in people's thinking, behaviour and relationships does anything begin to change in the world around us. [Read more.](#)

GET INVOLVED

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. See more about our mentoring approach here: <http://au.iofc.org/mentoring>.



There are many areas you can volunteer in, depending on your skills sets and where we have a need. These include roles in administration, finance, hospitality, event management and communications. If you are interested, please contact Volunteer Co-ordinator kirsty.argento@iofc.org with an introduction about yourself, your motivation, and your area of interest.

Your donation allows Initiatives of Change Australia to sustain its trust and peace building work. An investment today will deliver benefits for many years to come. Every donation, large or small, has a direct impact on the individuals and communities with whom we work.



Donate Now

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