



Initiatives of Change
Australia

newsbriefs

Building trust across the world's divides

OCTOBER 2021 NO. 313

Dear IofCA Community,

Time is flying as we approach the end of the year and celebration time! Right now, many of us are celebrating some easing in lockdown restrictions, getting to see family and friends whom we have only been able to connect with via zoom for so long. It feels almost surreal to be seeing people face to face again!

As you read through this Newsbrief, you will recall so many positive steps, yarning with First Peoples elders and leaders; exhilarating collaborations with other organisations; and getting creative with Creative You!

We said a sad farewell to Delia Paul, our Communications Manager. We will miss her professional input in the Coordinating team. Thank you Delia, from all of us. We have also begun a series of important conversations on Financial Sustainability and our IofCA Constitution. Please make sure you register for the upcoming sessions as part of the Bi-Annual National Gathering, to add your voice on these matters that impact our future journey together.

Finally, we are entering an unusual stage - with COVID restrictions easing, comes the NSW and Victorian government mandates for vaccination to enter events and certain venues. Difficult conversations are emerging as we navigate this new space. Please ensure you read our note below, outlining COVID safe protocols for Armagh and other venues used for IofCA events.

A huge thank you to you all for your ongoing support of fellowship, spirit, programs and events for IofCA.

Cheery blessings,

Marg

Executive Officer, IofC Australia

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Turruk Launched

Turruk - Trustbuilding through truth telling and truth hearing, an IofCA workshop series under the Trustbuilding project was launched on Friday 8 October with a virtual smoking ceremony led by Uncle Shane



Charles, a proud Yorta Yorta, Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung man, and Cultural Integrity Lead at IofCA. [The series](#) consists of eight immersive workshop modules, co-designed with First Nations community elders and knowledge holders. The workshop modules have, so far, brought together between 50 and 70 participants connecting online across the country, and will continue until 19 November.

Sending a big shout out to **Uncle Shane Charles** for the courage in his truth telling, with such heartfelt wisdom. The sessions on 8 October were complemented by the extraordinary inspiring stories of **Ron Lawler** and of Aunty Marge Tucker, led by **Marg Hepworth**, who walk the talk as First Nation allies.

On 22 October Meriam woman **Alana Marsh** led us on an embodied *Wayapa Wuurrk* practice. This primed us for the deep dive into the difficult dialogues around power and privilege structures led by Wiradjuri community elder **Uncle Glenn**, who introduced us to the concept of *decoloniality*. With much anticipation, **Margaret Hepworth** pioneered her Collaborative Debating methodology online, on the topic of 'changing the date of Australia day.' This was followed by discovering the wonders of each other through challenging conversations, with some tools of everyday neuroscience with **Shoshana Faire**.

See events section below for details of upcoming modules.

Trustbuilding National Education forums

Film Discussion

On 27 August a wonderful and vibrant discussion was led by Uncle Shane Charles and Leela Gray, a university student and youth activist, around the themes of the movie 'In my Blood it Runs'.

'Thanks to Uncle Shane and Leela for their deep insights into the messages that this remarkable film gives. It's a powerful reveal into stolen identity experienced by the First Peoples of the land.' - *Tanya Fox*



Forum with Thomas Mayor

More than 100 people gathered on Zoom on 7 September to hear Thomas Mayor, signatory and advocate for the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, speak. Thomas outlined where we are now with the Uluru Statement of the Heart campaign for a constitutionally-enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament.

Making such a change to the Constitution will require a referendum. Thomas emphasised that the key step is to continue to campaign with our individual Federal MPs. You can find examples of draft letters on the following web pages: www.ulurustatement.org and www.fromtheheart.com.au

If you missed the session you can listen to a recording of his talk [here](#).

Women's yarning circle led by Tracey Evans, First Peoples Assembly

An online women's yarning circle was held on 14 September with a group of diverse, intercultural, intergenerational, multi-sector collection of women.

The circle started with a Welcome to Country by N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs. The Circle was also an opportunity to honour Aboriginal elder and early activist Aunty Marge Tucker's legacy and the 25 year anniversary of her passing. Participants were encouraged to light a candle in her honour.



Tracey Evans led the circle with a personal recount of her journey to be a member of the First Peoples Assembly and guided our understanding of the Yoo-rook Commission, truth telling and treaty process in Victoria.

Forum with Yingiya Mark Guyula MLA

Over 90 people joined on Zoom on 28 September to hear Yingiya Mark Guyula talk on treaty, self-determination and Yolŋu Rom Durrŋu. Yingiya is the only First Nations Independent member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.



'What he (Yingiya) gave us was a glimpse of how we could live with respect and justice.'
- Mike Brown

'So grateful to have participated in the session with Yingiya last night. The truth of his fight for the soul of his people being also a fight for our national soul, resonates deeply.'
- Participant

Creators of Peace

On 23 September our wonderful Creators of Peace facilitators presented, "The Power of a Creators of Peace Circle" at the Sydney Raising Peace Festival, an event organised by more than 30 other organisations devoted to the pursuit of peace.

Listen to the presentation [here](#)

Creative You!

The IofCA 'Creative You!' workshop series provides an opportunity to set creative spirits free; through storytelling, art, acting, dance, music, film and creative writing! The program inspires leadership, confidence and creativity and provides the opportunity to tell your story in so many ways, with a new-found freedom and self-expression! If you are interested in joining a future workshop please register your details [here](#).

You now have the opportunity to support this program series by making a tax deductible donation through the Australia Cultural Fund webpage.

[Make a donation](#).

The current Creative You! workshop group will present their creative items at the Gala Creative Entertainment Night on 27 November at Armagh - **See more details in the events section below.**

Farewells

We bid fond farewells to **Delia Paul** and **Daya Bhagwandas** as they resign from their roles of Communications Manager and lofCA Board member respectively. We wish them all the best for the future.

Delia Paul leaves her mark as Communications Manager

On 30 September, Delia Paul resigned after six years as Communications Manager of lofC Australia, to devote herself to finishing her PhD at Monash University.

Delia brought to the role years of journalistic experience with a Malaysian newspaper and with the Mekong River Commission in Cambodia. Moving to Melbourne with her family, she started as a consultant to lofC Australia while continuing her contract of reporting on major UN conferences in various parts of the world, covering agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change.

She brought that perspective to lofC Australia, seeking to reposition lofC as a community-based peace building network – building up live, active reporting on the website and a wealth of stories of individual trustbuilding initiatives, retooling interpretation of lofC for contemporary audiences engaged in personal and social transformation.

In 2015, lofC Australia was undergoing its Cultural & Structural Change process – and Delia instituted the monthly Members Memo for internal communications and managed the rebuilding of its database for a growing network. In 2017 she transformed *Newsbriefs* to a digital publication and trained a number of volunteer writers, while launching a research project to document 60 years of lofC/MRA history in Australia. Delia then instituted the weekly What's On, with Parveen Muhammed, which keeps us all updated with how we can best participate in lofCA.

Those who worked with her knew her professional integrity, care and respect for those she worked with, and vision for the maturity and outreach of lofC Australia in its mission of trustbuilding and transformation. She leaves a legacy we can build on, yet have to work to maintain.

A new Communications Manager has been appointed and we will welcome her to the position soon.

Daya Bhagwandas retires as a director of the lofCA board

As Daya Bhagwandas wrote in her resignation letter in August, for over six years she has had the 'privilege of serving the Board of lofC Australia at a time of significant change and transformation.' That she has done, with great dedication, passion and application. We thank her.

She joined, in 2015, when lofC Australia was in the thick of its Cultural and Structural Change process – expanding its membership, clarifying its goals, formalising transparent and accountable decision-making and management, transitioning its governance from a Council of Management to a Board of Directors. Daya was a proactive contributor in this process: setting up the first steps in strategic planning, driving a reform agenda through the Nominations and Performance Committee of the Board, and planning with great energy a 'Pathways' process for the development and integration of new lofC volunteers.

Daya did not always agree with her fellow directors, and was frank in sharing her insights. Yet no-one was left in any doubt about her commitment and integrity as she passionately put forward her analysis and convictions. Her spiritual depth was, and remains, a powerful witness.

Since first meeting lofC at Caux, Switzerland in 1985, Daya has contributed consistently in international forums and conferences of lofC, including serving on the coordinating team for the annual lofC Hub forums during the last two years.

With her international awareness and care for people and spiritual depth, we trust Daya's participation will enrich and sustain the combined efforts of the lofC movement in many situations.

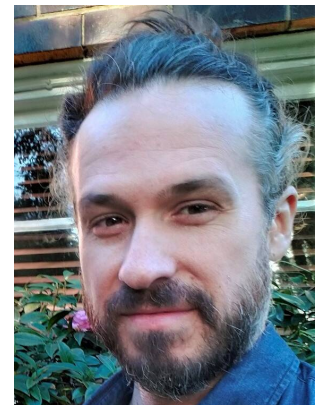
- Mike Brown, lofCA Board member



Introductions

Uncle Shane Charles, a proud a Yorta Yorta, Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung man and Co-Chair of Reconciliation Victoria, joins lofCA as the Cultural Integrity Lead and is the first incumbent of a Cultural Residency at Armagh. A very warm welcome to you Uncle Shane! **Read more about Uncle Shane in the web-story below.**

Fox Gillen joins us as Lead Facilitator and Trainer for the Ethical Leadership and Trustbuilding program area. Fox has spent almost 20 years facilitating and teaching in the not-for-profit sector as well as in universities and community groups, and the performing arts field. He comes to us from Lifeline Melbourne, where he has led training programs in compassionate, non-judgemental communication for interventions in suicide, mental health, family violence, and child protection. Welcome to the team Fox!



Rosie O'Halloran joins us as Lead Facilitator and Trainer for the Community Peacebuilding program area. Originally from Sydney, Rosie has spent over 10 years designing and delivering personal development programs across Australia and internationally. Now based in Melbourne, she runs a part-time corporate training business focusing on workplace wellbeing. Prior to her facilitation work, Rosie founded a Children's charity in Uganda and has spent 15 years working with young people.

Special Wishes - Honouring and Celebrating a Centenary Birthday!

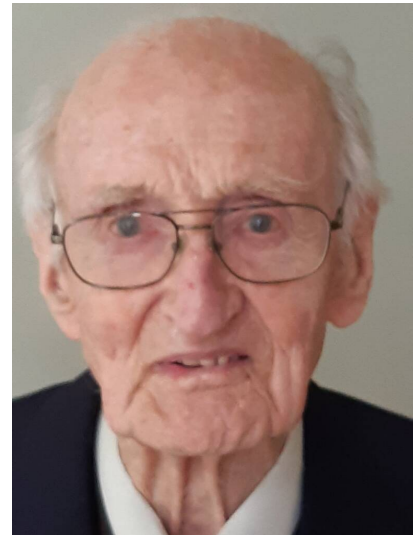
It is not very often that we get the chance to wish someone a happy 100th birthday! We are thrilled to send our very warm birthday wishes to **Ted Holmes** who turns a century on 9 November.

Ted is currently a regular member of the lofCA Thursday group in Melbourne, and maintains rigour with technology, writing and internet skills, and attends and participates at Zoom meetings. Ted is a committed follower of the lofC

vision and penned these words for us;

'On 9 November 2021 I begin Day 1 of my second century! Like every other day as one seeks to live in the present moment, it requires a new start.

In December 1936 my elder brother Bruce, having met the Oxford Group's challenge of absolute honesty, apologised to me for "pinching" sweets from my drawer in a shared chest of drawers. I loved his beautiful Spirit; his sharing triggered the beginning of a lifetime of interest and preoccupation with MRA (as Initiatives of Change was known as previously). I continued to be a keen reader of MRA literature, especially the speeches of Frank Buchman which were published under the title of *Remaking the World*. My commitment in MRA to remake the world progressively led to a transformation in all aspects of my life, including my professional work in the University and State sectors. I have had the honour of lecturing at the Institutes of Finance and Economics of the Education Department in the People's Republic of China in Wuhan and Laoning, and visiting the Institute of Economic Strategies in Moscow Russia.



When a daughter died in childbirth in April 1997 and my wife 12 weeks later, I turned to poetry for solace. In six years I published and sold copies of four books of selected poems. In February 2015 I was one of 20 poets invited by the Director of the National War Memorial to read poems on the occasion of its War and Words program. Mine was titled *Anzac Cove*.

Since 2014 my life has been in a state of transition as faculties, skill, capacities and energy decline and memories fade, while deeper insights and understanding of reality emerge. As I age, I find life simpler especially when one lives in the light of God's vision for creation - that everything be united in Christ's love - and lived in accordance with Christ's two great commandments - love and service of God and love of neighbour "as I have loved you"; both are valuable as litmus tests for the rectitude of human conduct.'

Warmest wishes for your centenary birthday from all of us!

LATEST ON au.iofc.org

Cultural Residency at Armagh: Shane Charles

When Uncle Shane Charles walked into Armagh for the first time, he felt like he'd been there before. He was connected by family and history. Taking up a Cultural Residency at Armagh Uncle Shane, together with the lofCA team are developing a series of learning experiences that people can sign up for, not only to learn about First Peoples, but also about themselves—all drawing on traditional ways handed down by elders.

[Read more](#)





Art Therapy with Creators of Peace

Food and fun feature high on the agenda at a reunion of a Peace Circle. Pandemic moved the Peace Circle online but that didn't mean the fun diminished in anyway!

Art supply kits were dispatched and meals or meal vouchers delivered in time for a Zoom meeting. A guided art session and conversation over dinner gave women a safe space to speak about their current concerns.

[Read more](#)

Finding my peace: Sahba Clara

'The Creators of Peace Circle during the COVID-19 lockdown was a transformative experience for me...the biggest realisation was that I needed to work on, and prioritize, my inner peace.'

Sahba Clara took part in a CoP Circle online in 2020. The story sharing experience in the circle and the positive reception to it, motivated her to turn her painful experiences into a new story of empowerment and resilience. The group of strangers that met online have become some of her dearest friends, supporters and sources of inspiration.

[Read more](#)



Ron Lawler on being a 'Mirror Man'

'Koori communities call public servants visiting their communities in western NSW the "Mirror Men" because when we are keen to get away from a difficult meeting we say we are going to, "look into it".' Ron was committed to to change this common behaviour.

Ron Lawler has a long history of working with First Nations communities in NSW. His personal journey is one with a deep commitment to truth telling for national healing.

[Read more](#)

See all news

GET INVOLVED

COVID Protocols for Events

As per the directions from the Department of Health and Human Services, the following protocols are in place for all in person events at Armagh and other venues used for IofCA events in Victoria and NSW.

Any person entering Armagh is **required to show one of the following**:

- Proof of double vaccinations by checking in through the Services Victoria App and presenting to an appointed Covid Marshal **OR**
- A valid medical exemption.

The following **density requirements** will apply from **29 October to 24 November**.

- One person per four square metres.

Restrictions are expected to ease on 24 November, with no density limits in place. As restrictions change, we aim to keep you regularly updated.

We look forward to many wonderful IofCA events at Armagh.

TURRUK - Trustbuilding through truth telling and truth hearing

Friday 5 November we explore:

Module 5: Healing Historical Wounds -National Forum 9 am - 12 noon (AEDT)

Module 6: Design your own Healing Walk - Masterclass 1 pm - 4 pm (AEDT)

Friday 19 November we explore:

Module 7: Diverse Relationships - National Forum 9 am - 12 noon (AEDT)

Module 8: Creative Trustbuilders - Masterclass 1 pm - 4 pm (AEDT)

[Book via Eventbrite](#)

[Find out more about the modules](#)



Creating Space November 2021 Gathering

Monday 1 November 7 - 8.30 PM AEDT

A monthly online community gathering to deepen our own spiritual practice and renew our sense of purpose in the world. At tonight's gathering, Ron Lawler will reflect on **Healing and Calling - is there a connection?**

[Register here](#)

Creators of Peace Monthly Online Speaker Series

Saturday 6 November 2 - 4 PM AEDT.

An Afternoon in Conversation with **Patricia Garcia AO** on the topic 'Let's imagine a Peaceful and Equal Future together'

Patricia is a highly respected humanitarian and human rights advocate with experience in project design and delivery. She has worked for many years as a humanitarian worker in conflict affected countries, primarily assisting refugee women and children. Her wish is to leave a legacy of educating and empowering girls and establishing women led communities.

[Register here](#) for Zoom link



Didgeridoo Healing with Uncle Shane Charles

Two session to choose from;

Wednesday 17 November 7 - 8 PM AEDT

Saturday 11 December 7 - 8 PM AEDT

Join a unique and spirit reviving experience of Didgeridoo (Yidaki) Healing with Uncle Shane Charles.

The didgeridoo is one of the oldest musical instruments on the Planet founded by the First Peoples of Australia. Through playing and hearing, it is a powerful tool that lifts an individual's vibration back to a less chaotic and natural rhythm.

The sessions will be both **in person at Armagh** and **live online via Zoom**

Buy tickets via Eventbrite.

[Tickets for 17 Nov](#)

[Tickets for 11 Dec](#)

Bi-Annual National Gathering - *The Spring of Transformation*

Session 1: Sunday 7 November 7 - 9 pm

We invite you to join us to celebrate how far we have come this year as a community and engage in series of meaningful conversations around financial sustainability and our constitution

[Register here](#)

Session 2: Monday 8 November 7 - 9 pm

The Constitution - Part One (MEMBERS ONLY)

This session will allow us to re-examine our current Charity sub-type, giving considered discussion on the possibility of adding other charity sub-types

[Register here](#)

Session 3: Wednesday 10 November 7 - 9 pm

The Constitution - Part Two The Principle Purpose and proposed objects (aims) (MEMBERS ONLY)

This session will move to focus on the Principle Purpose of our Constitution. Should we change the Principle Purpose?

[Register here](#)

Session 4: Monday 15 November 7 - 9 pm

Financial Sustainability (further to National Monthly Meeting held on 18 October)

In this session we will respond to the ideas, concerns and questions from the National Monthly Meeting and work through their implications.

[Register here](#)

Creative You! - Gala Creative Entertainment Night

Saturday 27 November 7.30 - 10 PM

A night of drama, film, art, stories, poems and music! Come Celebrate!
Exploring themes of opportunity, change and deep listening, Creative You! tells the story of the gift of Armagh, and some of those who have been part of the Armagh community and its outreach.

All proceeds from the night go to Initiatives of Change Australia – towards the maintenance of Armagh and our Ethical Leadership Programs.

Limited tickets are available and must be purchased Via Eventbrite. \$25 General, \$15 Concession.



[Purchase Tickets](#)

Online option

If you are unable to attend in person, you can join us online on Zoom or FB live. Register your details [here](#) to receive the link to join closer to the event date.

See all events



Newsbriefs is published by Initiatives of Change Australia (ABN 22 004 350 789)

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Contributions, news and comments are welcome, and can be sent to communications.au@iofc.org