

SWAN Supporting First Nations Sub-Committee Newsletter, May 2020

Welcome to SWAN's new sub-committee, 'Supporting First Nations' which was endorsed by the committee recently. As a social justice network, we are acutely aware that justice for First Nations people is far from being achieved. We can help by educating ourselves and others on the history, by challenging racism, by working with Indigenous women on issues like family violence and forced removals, by campaigning, and by engaging in events held locally by Indigenous communities, or helping to amplify First Nations' voices when requested.

While we are all 'confined to barracks' we can still move support for First Nations people forward. Here are some possibilities: reading, researching, writing, listening and even walking, as below.

1. **Dark Emu** by Bruce Pascoe puts forward an argument for a reconsideration of the hunter-gatherer tag for precolonial Aboriginal Australians. The evidence insists that Aboriginal people right across the continent were using domesticated plants, sowing, harvesting, irrigating and storing - behaviours inconsistent with the hunter-gatherer tag which Bruce challenges as a convenient lie.

2. **Taboo** by Kim Scott is a masterful novel on the frontier of truth telling. Taboo takes place in the present day, in the rural South-West of Western Australia and tells the story of a group of Noongar people who revisit, for the first time in many decades, a taboo place; the site of a massacre that followed the assassination, by these Noongar's descendants, of a white man who had stolen a black woman. They come at the invitation of Dan Horton, the elderly owner of the farm on which the massacres unfolded. He hopes that by hosting the group he will satisfy his wife's dying wishes and cleanse some moral stain from the ground on which he and his family have lived for generations. But the sins of the past will not be so easily expunged.

3. Read about the history of the stolen generation (whilst being mindful that still today Indigenous women face racism and forced removals of their children): The **Bringing Them Home** Report can be downloaded, pdf version. Go to:

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf. You may also be able to get the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to send you a hard copy. It is a long report – I am reading 10 pages per day.

4. Learn about the historical injustice of colonial invasion right here on the Mornington Peninsula. The fascinating book called **Yalukit Willam, The River People of Port Phillip** is by Meyer Eidelson. You may also be able to get a hard copy from the City of Port Phillip. The book might inspire us to write to Mornington Shire Council to ask why they haven't undertaken an initiative like this to inform our community of the past here or undertake more public education, something our sub-committee is pursuing. Go to:

https://issuu.com/copponline/docs/yalukitwilliam_12_december/68?ff

5. Listen to the personal story podcast of Antoinette Braybrook, her work with the Victorian Family Violence and Prevention legal Service, Djirra (djirra.org.au tel. 1800 105 303) and also her advice on how we as non-Indigenous people can support Indigenous women. There is an opportunity to act, too, by giving a donation, as the conference Antionette chairs on Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention annually has not yet received its government funding. <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/first-nations-women-fight-domestic-violence-and-winning-the-vote/12109950>

6. Consider donating: Willum Warrain, Aboriginal Gathering Place at Hastings, has had to close its doors temporarily, but is still continuing its work with Aboriginal community members and their families who are experiencing stress during the COVID-19 crisis through their tax-deductible charity.

Anyone wanting to donate to this vital programme for Indigenous people in our area can go to their website and look for the drop-down box ABOUT / DONATIONS.

<https://www.willumwarrain.org.au/donations/>

Similarly, if you live in the Frankston area, you might consider contacting Nairm Marr Djambana Aboriginal Gathering Place, email nairmmarrdjambana@bigpond.com

7. If you can go for a walk, keep your eyes peeled for any Peninsula Shire historical signage which refer to the history of First Nations peoples. There are a couple at Mills Beach and Schnapper Point Mornington, but that's all I have been able to find. No leaflets at the Tourist Information Centres either. This could be a good piece of action research- just let me know what you find and equally, don't find. Indigenous people once lived all over the Peninsula yet public historical reference seems almost non-existent.

8. A suggestion from Deb Mellett, Aboriginal Culture and Community Development Warringinee Team Leader, MPSC: The film "*In my Blood it Runs*" can be accessed via internet via Vimeo for \$12.60.



SYNOPSIS: Ten-year-old Dujan is a child-healer, a good hunter and speaks three languages. As he shares his wisdom of history and the complex world around him we see his spark and intelligence. Yet Dujan is 'failing' in school and facing increasing scrutiny from welfare and the police. As he travels perilously close to incarceration, his family fight to give him a strong Arrernte education alongside his western education lest he becomes another statistic. We walk with him as he grapples with these pressures, shares his truths and somewhere in-between finds space to dream, imagine and hope for his future self. Here's a link <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/in-my-blood-it-runs-workplace-remote-screening-q-tickets-103071108460?aff=erelexpmlt>

9. Acknowledge: Reconciliation Week May 27th- June 3rd and National Sorry Day, 26th May.

10. Another good read is *Tell Me Why*, by Archie Roach is available at Mornington Library and in bookstores. There is also a recommended selection online at: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Rec-News-Ten-Important-Books.pdf>

And finally, the SFN sub-committee has been actively responding to a request for support from Mornington Shire's Aboriginal Team Leader, Deb Mellett, as well as advocating for Indigenous organisations' demands for protection of remote communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

SWAN sub-committee Supporting First Nations May 2020

SWAN Supporting First Nations Sub-Committee Newsletter, July 2020

Greetings during what would normally be NAIDOC Week, a week which for this year, has unfortunately had to be deferred to November. Reconciliation Victoria is nonetheless encouraging people to get involved now, as much as restrictions allow. Here are our suggestions.

- Watch the moving documentary, *In My Blood it Runs* on the ABC, Sunday July 5th at 9.30 pm (or see it on ABC iview). We included a synopsis of the movie in the last SWAN newsletter.
- Check out a great series, *First Australians*, a documentary on SBS on demand or on YouTube.
- Listen to Senator Pat Dodson's powerful and inspiring address at the 2020 Swinburne Annual Reconciliation Lecture. Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNyjLTnkA00>
- Get a copy of *Finding the Heart of the Nation* by Thomas Mayor (2019). This book invites us to hear the stories of struggle and hope of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to learn about the journey to the *Uluru Statement* towards Voice, Treaty and Truth.
- Share the beautiful children's version of Thomas Mayor's book, *Finding our Heart*, with the kids in your life.
- Read *Welcome to Country* by Marcia Langton (2018). This travel guide to exploring Indigenous Australia includes a helpful and essential introduction to Indigenous cultures.
- Other book suggestions: Recently announced Miles Franklin Award winner Tony Birch's *The White Girl* and Miles Franklin shortlisted *The Yield* by Tara Jane Winch, both fine Indigenous authors, and Archie Roach's moving bio *Tell Me Why*.
- Copies of these books are available at Farrell's Bookshop in Mornington and elsewhere.
- When you are out walking, look for any council signage which references the Aboriginal history of the Mornington Peninsula. So far, we have found little: Mills Beach and Tanti Creek, Mornington, one marker in the Tyabb area and a display at Forest Drive Reserve Mount Martha. Perhaps we just haven't walked enough but suspect that it just isn't there. Your 'research' would help us put a case to council for creating proper cultural trails to acknowledge Aboriginal history and colonial injustice – as councils in other areas have done.
- As mentioned in the last SWAN newsletter, the ABC podcast series, *Walking Together* is recommended.
- We also recommended supporting Willum Warrain Aboriginal Gathering Place with a donation to support the outreach work they are doing during the COVID crisis. Details on their website. To donate to a specifically women's support service, check out a refuge for Aboriginal women and children run by the Uniting Church: go to the website for Elizabeth Morgan House details.
- Music buffs, check out the magic of Indigenous musicians showcased on radio ABC FM 105.9 played at 12.45 p.m. – 3 p.m. on Tuesday 23 June 2020 - go to ABC FM radio website - Recently Played - for this unique partnership of the Australian String Quartet together with talented Indigenous musicians/composers, in particular Stephen Pigram (guitar & vocals), Kate Moore, Lou Bennett (vocals) culminating with Sculthorpe's "Jabiru Dream" with the wonderful Aboriginal musician William Barton playing didge in several other interesting presentations, including William Barton singing. This concert is also available on screen at ABC's iView – click on iView, take the cursor to ARTS click on that then scroll and click on "Quartet and Country: Australian String Quartet" – 1 hr 36 mins with William Barton's participation at the final 15 mins of the concert.

- Last, but not least, do not miss the opportunity to buy a Reconciliation Pot from SWAN's own mosaic maker, Julie. Proceeds go to Willum Warrain. (Details on SWAN's Facebook page.)

The sub-committee is also excited to have received an invitation to engage with Indigenous community members at the Aboriginal Gathering Place, Nairn Marr Djambana, once restrictions allow.

Our sub-committee is growing! If you would like to join us or if you have something to contribute to the cultural trails project above please contact Val 0404 951 582 Maureen 0423 806 525 .

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