

THE BULDAU YIOOHGEN PROGRAM PRESENTS

BIG DREAMS

EMBRACING CULTURE AT ANGLICARE VICTORIA

BULDAU YIOOHGEN NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023

WELCOME

Wominjeka Cabbe Melemungil Narrin ik Kellie

Welcome to the Buldau Yioohgen newsletter

It's been another very busy time for Buldau Yioohgen. Our cultural centre Darrango yhan-dan had another facelift, building on previous efforts to make it a culturally safe space for our young people, families and staff.

Tennis Australia, one of our amazing partners, worked with BY to invite over 100 young people and their families to the second First Nations Day at the Australian Open. Uncle Les and I interviewed 15 young people to join the BY Leadership Academy for 2023, and after a lot of discussion we chose 10 very lucky young people to join us for the year. With great excitement we set off to our On Country camps at Maria Island and Lake Mungo, with Narrm and Darwin around the corner.

Once again Uncle Ron Murray joined us to share his cultural knowledge with our young people. It is always a pleasure and privilege having such a strong and passionate Elder join us.

We had our inaugural First Nations Staff Network meeting, with our CEO Paul McDonald yarning around the firepit with us. Anglicare Victoria also launched its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) at Darrango yhan-dan with a Smoking Ceremony and Uncle Ron playing the yidaki (didgeridoo). And Tennis Victoria nominated BY's "Culture on Court" program for a Victorian Sports Award.

Expressions of Interest for our 2024 BY Leadership Academy will be sent out in July so watch this space!

The Buldau Yioohgen crew are here to support every Aboriginal young person that is part of Anglicare Victoria. Come be part of the BY mob in creating a community that is supportive, culturally safe and can immerse you in a beautiful, strong and proud culture.

We would like to say "thank you" to our friends and family of Buldau Yioohgen for your support and belief in what we are doing for our Mob. See you all in NAIDOC Week, if not before.

Ngoon Godgin

Kellie Hunter
Senior Cultural Operations Lead





DREAMING BIG AMONGST THE ANCIENT LANDSCAPE

Mungo National Park is a deeply spiritual place for Barkandji/Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngiyampaa peoples. The ancient landscape, filled with striking formations and rolling sand dunes, once contained freshwater lakes and was inhabited by the communities of the oldest continuous Culture in the world. The annual Lake Mungo Cultural Camp is an on-Country experience giving young people in the Buldau Yioohgen program the opportunity to connect with their identity and Culture in this sacred place.

Aunty Kellie Hunter and Uncle Les Corlett ran activities for the young Mob in Moulamein along the Edwards river with the help of Wamba Wamba Elder Uncle Ron Murray, before heading to Mungo National Park. The week-long camp included a variety of immersive experiences such as fishing, astronomy and camping by the fire.

The program is designed to build resilience, camaraderie and leadership skills in a culturally safe environment. Since Buldau Yioohgen's last visit a year ago, the reburials of Mungo Man and Mungo Lady have taken place, bringing a deeper sense of connection to the land they walked upon. During a sunset tour of the landscape, the group performed Ceremony on-Country together with their feet in the sand.

Two volunteers from Anglicare Victoria (AV), Mel and Josh, supported the Buldau Yioohgen team. **"We learned about the unique ways Aboriginal people utilised the land and why it holds such a profound connection to them,"** said Josh, reflecting on his time with the young people.

"It was evident that preserving Aboriginal history is crucial to young Aboriginal people and their sense of identity."

"Preserving Aboriginal history is crucial to young Aboriginal people and their sense of identity"

– Josh, AV volunteer



Mel shared similar thoughts about her time in Mungo National Park. "It was so inspiring to see them connect with and embrace their culture over our time away, and the way they expressed such respect to Aunty Kellie, Uncle Les, Elders, staff and the volunteers," she said.

"Mungo National Park proves beyond any doubt that Aboriginal people are the oldest living groups of peoples in the world. The young people sense they are walking in the blood of their ancestors of over 50,000 years," said David Law, our Buldau Yioohgen Program Manager.

CELEBRATING CULTURE ON COURT WITH TENNIS VICTORIA

Everyone had a ball when 150 participants from the Buldau Yioohgen Culture on Court program descended on Melbourne Park this April. The attendees had the opportunity to connect with community through the joy of tennis and share in several amazing cultural experiences led by Aunty Kellie and Uncle Les.

We enjoyed some Deadly performances from Indigenous Hip Hop Projects and Culture Evolves, and Fire Services Victoria came along with one of their fire trucks for us to explore. Last year we held similar events in Bendigo and Castlemaine, and we're looking forward to planning the next one soon. These events are made possible thanks to our partnership with Tennis Victoria.

We are also very grateful for the support of Tennis Australia, who facilitated our participation in First Nations Day at the Australian Open in January and helped us get 12 Aboriginal young people from Victoria off to the National Indigenous Tennis Carnival in Darwin last year. Not only did they have a once-in-a-lifetime tennis experience, but they were also lucky enough to head out on our Northern Experience on Country for a unique camp they'll never forget.





INTRODUCING KAHLEA SPIBY: WURUNDJERI WOMAN, ARTIST AND BULDAU YIOOHGEN ALUMNI

Kahlea Spiby is a proud Wurundjeri woman from Echuca who participated in the Buldau Yioohgen program in 2022. She's also an accomplished artist who has been commissioned by organisations including Anglicare Victoria and Tennis Australia to create unique works of art.

Kahlea has loved drawing and art since she was little, but it wasn't until her teenage years that she discovered she had an incredible talent. After selling her first painting to the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation in 2020 Kahlea realised her art could become more than just a hobby. She started taking her art more seriously and was inundated with requests for her work. In fact, she became so busy that she had to stop taking commissions!

"I kept painting and experimented with different materials and eventually found my style and developed it over time. Practice makes progress."

Kahlea travelled to Darwin with Buldau Yioohgen in 2022 to represent Victoria in the National Indigenous Tennis Carnival. During the carnival she had the opportunity to design and paint a tennis racquet, and her talent was immediately recognised by Tennis Australia. She was asked to design tennis racquets for the Australian Open, which were presented to the women's singles finalists Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina at the grand slam tournament.



It took Kahlea almost eight hours to carefully hand-paint her intricate design onto each racquet.

Kahlea's amazing art is a unique combination of traditional Aboriginal designs with some of her own style thrown in, and she says a lot of her pieces are open to interpretation. Her artworks are inspired by land and nature, with symbolism often featured. One of her recent commissions is a vibrant work called Bunjil (pictured), which she created for Anglicare Victoria.

"Art tells a story, and it's so much more than just a painting," Kahlea said. **"I've loved art my whole life. It has led me to so many places and to meet so many amazing people."**

Kahlea hopes her art will be a vehicle for change, helping to educate people on the issues facing First Nations peoples today. **"I want my art to be able to help people, to tell a story, and raise awareness. People need to be aware of the issues still taking place,"** she said.

If you are interested in hearing more about anything you've read in this season's newsletter, please contact the BY program via email: by@anglicarevic.org.au