

IN PARTNERSHIP

July 2023



Les Schultz sits on Whadjuk Noongar country

Listening to Aboriginal Christian Leaders



GMP partner Les Schultz belongs to the WA Indigenous Ministries Australia Council (IMA). He's a Ngadju Elder and Christian leader. Recently Les attended the United Nations. He was a delegate at the 22nd Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, USA. This was in connection with his role with the Ngadju Conservation Aboriginal Corporation.

Today though, Les sits under the shade of a gumtree. Seated in a red camping chair on Whadjuk Noongar country, Western Australia. He introduces himself as "a Ngadju bloke from the Western Nullarbor". Also, from the "Great Western Woodlands".

As the breeze sways in the leaves, Les shares a message close to his heart.

"We're counting on Australians in general to support the Voice to Parliament," Les shares.

"For Indigenous [people] to be enshrined within the constitution. I mean, we've been here 40,000 years and yet we're still not in there."

Les is one of many IMA partners who advocate for the Voice to Parliament. As Australians consider the upcoming referendum, Les asks us to "come across and listen to the Indigenous Voice".

"It's time for us to grow as a nation," Les reflects. "The Voice to Parliament

is essential, especially for all of us Indigenous [people] right across [Australia]. Where community is empowered, we begin to save costs on community and begin to see happier communities, less crime and less health issues."

Les believes we have a lot to learn from one another about our shared histories and cultures. He desires a better relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. "The best way we can do that is by communicating. Talking to each other and walking alongside each other and working out the way forward." He shares that within the Indigenous language, "there's a gold vein that explains this country like the back of your hand". Les explains that until we, as a nation, come together, we won't be able to "extract a lot of that gold".

Les also believes Australian churches can play a significant role in this decision. "We need to share our thoughts and values with the rest of our networks. Not just through our households." Les describes it as light. "Put it out there so that the light can be seen from the top of the beacon."

This journey won't be easy, but Les is full of hope. "We're gonna hurt as we deal with the truth of the issue around Australia's history. But it's only gonna be for the good, because it's going to heal us."

GMP stands alongside our Indigenous partners in Australia. We seek to listen and learn from them in partnership. We seek to share our partners' voices. To encourage listening and learning within the GMP community. First Nations voices like Les.

"Let's support [the Indigenous Australian] in his hour of need," Les shares. "The hour of need is the Voice to Parliament."

"Open the door for Indigenous people to have a Voice to Parliament." He says, "It's a simple thing".

GMP recognises and respects the diverse journeys of Australians and Australian churches. We seek to share our partners' voices to encourage listening and learning. Together we can partner in our nation's future, as one diverse body. It is an opportunity to respond to the generous invitation made by First Nations Australians in their Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017). You can read GMP's statement about the Indigenous Voice to Parliament on the GMP website www.gmp.org.au/thevoice

If you would like to speak to someone about this further, please email GMP Director of Community Education Colin Battersby colinb@gmp.org.au

Watch
the video



[youtu.be/
ZOACNcu4hBs](https://youtu.be/ZOACNcu4hBs)

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News & Events



COCOA Mid Year Appeal Update

Thank you to everyone who has given children like Kirsty a second chance for a better future.

There is still an urgent funding gap for our international Relief and Development partners.

It is not too late to give.

Free Call 1800 467 222

or give online

www.gmp.org.au/secondchance

Ten Years of Safe Water September (SWS)

Take part in the 2023 challenge and celebrate ten years of SWS!

Drink nothing but water all September and raise funds for safe water projects in Zimbabwe, Vanuatu and Bangladesh. Last year you helped to raise \$183,976. That means as many as 7,359 lives can be changed with your support! Visit the SWS website to get involved www.safewaterseptember.org.au

Expression of Interest Invited – GMP Board Treasurer

An important element of the work of the Board is the financial governance of GMP. There is now opportunity to join GMP as the Board Treasurer. The suitable person will have experience in a governance financial role. This is an honorary position. Expressions of interest can be sent to Barrie Yesberg, GMP Board Chair, yesberggmp@gmail.com

For more news and updates, follow us on Facebook or Instagram @gmpaustralia

Praying for Change



Dear Friends,

How long would you pray for change?

In June I travelled across the river border from Mildura to Dareton, NSW. The township of 500 people includes many Indigenous Australians. I was there to visit the Dareton Youth and Community Centre. A project supported by Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA). But I wouldn't be visiting if it wasn't for the prayers of one faithful intercessor.

Back in 1944, Violet Waters, better known as Vi, started to work with and pray for the local Indigenous people. She prayed that God would provide the resources to care for the young people. That establishment of an Aboriginal ministry would happen in the Dareton town centre.

Vi was also affectionately known as 'Aunty Vi' by her Indigenous friends. She prayed faithfully for years. But no permanent Indigenous ministry occurred. As she grew older, she began to worry that this would be one of those unanswered prayers.

Then, in 2007, over 50 years later her prayer was answered. The vision for the Dareton Youth and Community Centre was launched.

The local Church of Christ merged with the Uniting Church to consolidate their mission activities. Together, with the leadership of John and Ruth Saulo, they started the youth centre to serve the local Indigenous young people. When Vi was 99 years old, and shortly before she passed, she was able to meet John and Ruth Saulo.

When I visited in June, it was a hive of activity. Young people flowing in and out, doing craft, playing table tennis and PlayStation. Sitting around the outdoor fire pit chatting and eating the food provided.

The young people were happy and relaxed, welcoming me and inviting me to play games with them (which I lost - all of them!)

There were 25 young people there when I dropped in, but I'm told it can swell to 70 on peak days.

Ilker Deli, the Centre Manager, serves them faithfully and provides generous hospitality. He has a warm heart and big smile. He greets each young person by name. Ilker tells me they didn't talk to him for six months when he first started. But now they give him the greatest compliment - teasing him in the friendliest way.

The youth centre, located in an old mechanic's garage, is one of the most noticeable landmarks in the rural town. Inside, Ilker has placed Christian posters on the walls. This is to reinforce why the youth centre exists, serving as a visible witness in that space.

This environment was the answer to Aunty Vi's prayers over all those years.

Now, there are hopes of recruiting a second youth worker to share the load. Expectation is for an Indigenous female to complement Ilker's efforts. There are also plans to provide accessible toilet amenities.

Without those prayers, Vi's vision may never have happened. But it did, and the vision for Dareton's Indigenous youth is still unfolding.

How long might we also pray for change? The Apostle Paul puts it like this:

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

In faith,
John Lamerton



SPOTLIGHT

Ilker Deli, Centre Manager, Dareton Youth & Community Centre, and Dareton Young People

Investing in the Future

Ilker Deli knows the Dareton Youth and Community Centre will be the reason disadvantaged local youth discover their worth, talents, and purpose. That's because a youth centre near his family home in Hanover, Germany, once changed the course of his own life.

"I got a lot of guidance from the youth centre that I attended as a young person," Ilker said. "The leadership directed me in the right way. I didn't have much guidance growing up; I will forever be grateful for the people who showed me the right way. I'm trying to pass that on to the kids here."

God has used Ilker's journey as a teenager to prepare him to lead this ministry in Dareton and provide a safe and nurturing place for young people in the area – many of whom are in desperate need of this kind of support.

"My greatest desire is to show these young people that there are people out there who care, and that they (the young people) matter."

The youth centre is an afternoon drop-in centre for youth to hang out, play games, engage in activities, and help prepare a nutritious meal to eat before they return home. With the help of a few volunteers, Ilker runs this almost every afternoon.

Recently, Ilker secured a grant from the government to provide a program for "Youth Week" over the April school holidays. They took a group of young people out to the cinema, provided a BBQ at the park, and hosted cooking, gardening, and art programs. During this time 17 young people joined in, 10 of whom were new to the centre.

"We wanted to spoil the youth a little bit for the week," Ilker said. "We're trying to get a bit more interaction and engagement with them and encourage them in exploring their talents."

Currently, the governance of this ministry is shifting from being directly funded by GMP to becoming its own entity, governed by five to seven people from the

local church and community. This move is strategic and will enable the centre to apply for larger government grants as they develop into the future.

"I just want to lay the foundation and make sure this place stays open for as long as possible," Ilker said, as he shared his dreams of developing their centre with a large outdoor covered area for a workshop. "My biggest goal, though, is to have a male and female who attend here to take over from me one day."

Ilker welcomes you to pray for the centre during this transition of governance, so this ministry can make a lasting impact on the lives of the youth of Dareton.

You can also support the youth centre and make a tax-deductible donation via GMP Extend www.extend.org.au

Article written by Josh Gibbon, Churches of Christ NSW & ACT



FOR OUR ELDER'S
2-9 JULY 2023

NAIDOC WEEK 'For Our Elders' July 2-9

NAIDOC Week celebrates and recognises the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories. The 2023 National NAIDOC Week theme is 'For Our Elders'. You can find out more about NAIDOC Week online at their website www.naidoc.org.au.



Mentor Uncle Don Hayward from Berean Church, Adelaide, with Lonny at his recent graduation

Lonny is Equipped for Indigenous Ministry

Following Jesus has taken Lonny far from his home in Ceduna, South Australia. He left family and church to embark on a significant faith journey. With a strong sense of calling, he enrolled to study at Ridley College in Melbourne. Lonny wants to share the Gospel within Indigenous communities.

This is a big encouragement for the Melbourne Indigenous Church Fellowship and Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA).

“Only a small handful of Indigenous people have studied or graduated from the mainline denominational seminaries and Bible colleges at any time,” said Nick Wight, IMA Coordinator East.

The IMA Pathways Program aims to help both emerging and established Indigenous Christian leaders grow. The program offers culturally relevant support to help make ministry training more accessible and sustainable.

Through the Pathways Program, young leaders like Lonny can connect, support each other, and gain guidance from Christian Elders. Lonny graduated in April with a Diploma of Ministry! He is also currently the Associate Pastor at the Melbourne Indigenous Church in Victoria.

Senior Indigenous Christian leader Uncle Don Hayward attended Lonny’s graduation at Ridley College’s Parkville campus. He has been a long-time mentor for Lonny, as well as the Pastor at Lonny’s home church, Berean Aboriginal Church in Adelaide, South Australia. The Pathways Program made his attendance at the graduation possible. Nick Wight also attended the graduation. “This is a deeply significant time,” he reflected.

For Lonny, the journey following Jesus is far from over. He is continuing his studies in 2023 to complete a Bachelor of Ministry, again at Ridley College. “His heart is to share his faith and the Gospel in a culturally relevant context,” reflected Nick.

You can partner with IMA supporting emerging leaders like Lonny through the Pathways Program. Find out more at www.gmp.org.au/what-we-do/projects/australia/pathways-program

Experience an Indigenous Retreat ‘On Country’

Dhiyaan means ‘family’ in the Goomeroi language. It is also an Aboriginal owned and run property and faith community in rural Queensland. If you want to learn more about Indigenous culture, spirituality and worldview, then you are welcome to visit!

The 40-acre farm is two and a half hours west of Brisbane in the Western Downs, on the edge of the township of Dalby. The Indigenous community provides retreats for church groups, leadership teams, or student groups.

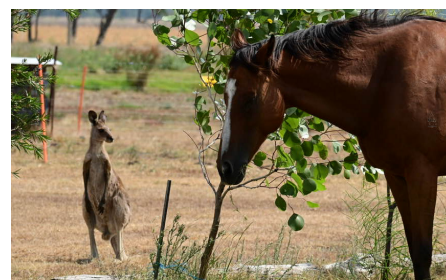
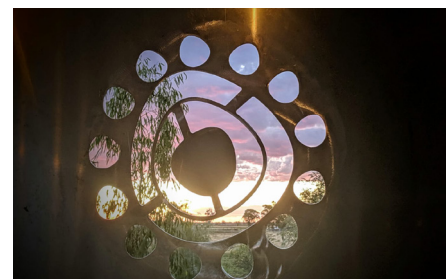
During this unique retreat, you can enjoy the camp facilities and

accommodation. Experience ceremonies and cultural awareness sessions. Immerse yourself in caring for the land and animals. And partake in deep listening around the campfire.

Dhiyaan also runs several community development programs, the main one being ‘True Fella’, a program designed for at-risk Indigenous youth.

You can learn more about ‘True Fella’ during your retreat.

For more information on how to book this unique GMP Discovery Visit please visit the ‘Discovery Visits’ page on the GMP website: www.gmp.org.au/get-involved/discovery-visits/dhiyaan-on-country-experience



Dhiyaan: It’s a special place