

# IN PARTNERSHIP

JULY 2018



Every year in July, NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This year's NAIDOC theme is Because of her, we can! This theme shines a light on the significant contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made, and continue to make, within our society. There are numerous incredible Indigenous women within the Churches of Christ history of ministry among their peoples – leaders, activists, pastoral workers, social change advocates, community workers—and there are many more continuing to minister and lead within their communities, and speak into the wider church and nation.

One of these inspirational leaders was Lady Gladys Nicholls, wife of Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls. Lady Gladys was a leading Aboriginal activist whose dedicated community service and commitment to advancing Aboriginal rights was an inspiration to many, particularly young women. Lady Gladys taught Sunday School alongside Sir Doug at the Gore Street Church of Christ, Fitzroy. Lady Gladys also campaigned with her husband in the lead up to the 1967 referendum. This referendum delivered constitutional amendments that saw Indigenous Australians counted in the national

census for the first time, and the Commonwealth Parliament freed to legislate on Indigenous issues.

The Victorian Government's Aboriginal Honour Roll states that Lady Gladys is remembered for her intelligence and her firm but gentle demeanor. She worked hard to ensure that those around her were given every opportunity to reach their full potential. Lady Gladys established a hostel for young Indigenous women in 1956 in Melbourne and co-founded the Aboriginal Advancement League Women's Auxiliary. Lady Gladys also ran numerous op shops and other fundraising projects. Ongoing advocacy for Indigenous rights included roles with the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) and the National Aboriginal and Islander Women's Council, of which she was Secretary and Victorian State President.

To her family and the wider community Lady Gladys was, above all, a source of great strength whenever it was needed most. And like Lady Gladys, numerous Indigenous women have found their vocational calling and faith embodied in the work of biblical reconciliation in our land, our communities and our churches. This has empowered past

generations and paved the way for generations to come. Because of her, we can!

Colin Battersby and Nick Wight, IMA



Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls and Lady Gladys

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## News & Events

### NAIDOC WEEK

#### Because of Her, We Can!

GMP's Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) supports Indigenous Christian ministry across the country and seeks to build strong relationships and partnerships between churches and Indigenous communities.

This month we celebrate NAIDOC week with stories from our IMA friends! Below are opportunities to learn more:

#### Australians Together

'Sharing our Story' is a fantastic resource for church and community groups. We'd highly recommend the study series. [www.australianstogether.org.au/churches/resources](http://www.australianstogether.org.au/churches/resources)

#### Decolonizing Solidarity

Decolonizing Solidarity is a website that offers thoughts and suggestions on growing awareness of Indigenous issues, and partnering well with communities. <http://decolonizingsolidarity.org>

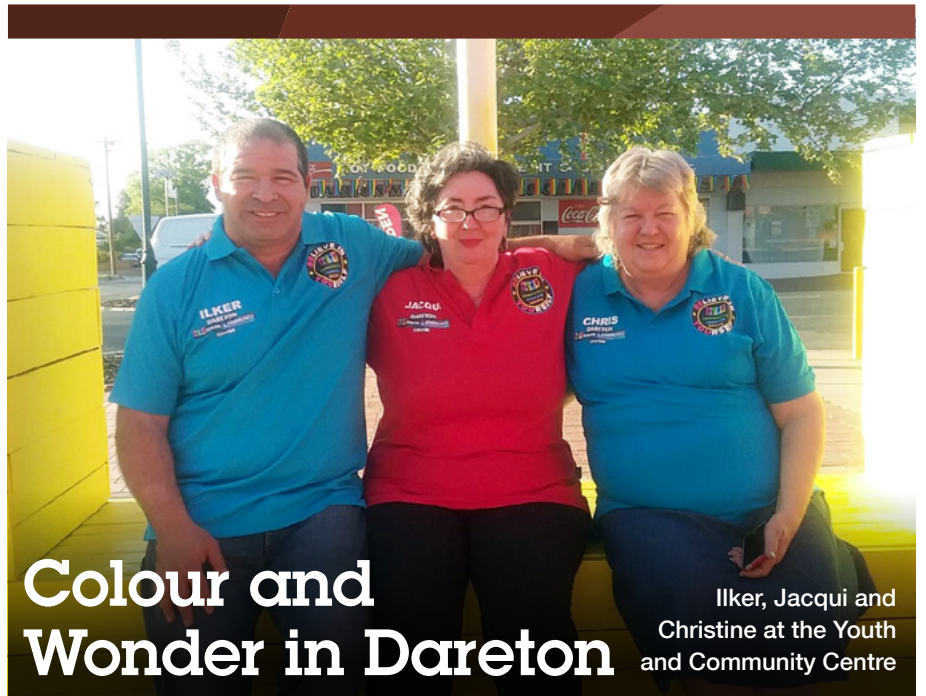
#### IMA-WA Facebook Group

The IMA-WA Facebook group is for friends and supporters of Indigenous ministries in Western Australia to catch up on program news, stories and upcoming events. Search "Friends of IMA-WA" to join the group.

#### Safe Water September

Safe Water September is live for 2018! Safe Water September is a challenge to drink nothing but water for the entire month of September, to raise funds for safe water projects in rural Zimbabwe. For every \$20 you raise, one person gains access to life-changing safe water.

Get your church or community involved and sign up to take the challenge at [SafeWaterSeptember.org.au](http://SafeWaterSeptember.org.au)



## Colour and Wonder in Dareton

Ilker, Jacqui and Christine at the Youth and Community Centre

Our youth sewing group at Dareton Youth and Community Centre started with two Indigenous sisters. It now includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous kids from Mildura and Dareton who are growing up with challenges in their lives, and who just wander into the centre. Quite often a kid takes a slow walk past the sewing group, with a BIG look over the shoulder to see what is being done. A friendly "Would you like to have a go? I'll show you how", and the enthusiastic confirmation from the kids already doing something, gets the new kids involved. This 'watching', allows them time to make up their mind, if they will have a go...or not. Many kids in the group didn't think they could sew, until they tried! One of the first girls learning to sew in the group has now started on her own quilt for her bed! The other sister is making a baby quilt for a new arrival.



Young kids, along with their older creators, need the encouragement of a comment. It is probably their first attempt at sewing something. While looking interesting, it was scary to give it a go. I post photos of our achievements on the Dareton Youth and Community Centre Facebook page. We request comments to read to the creators, rather than just pushing the 'like' button. The expression on their faces while the comments are read to them is wonderful!

We also invite adults to the centre to learn sewing. The women who come on a Monday have developed the habit of saying "clip clop". We have a sign on the wall that says, "If you can't see the mistakes while galloping past on a horse, then don't worry about it." When the women say "clip clop", then we know they have made a mistake. We help each other to remedy it and laugh with each other. Our conversations while sewing are rocked by explosions of laughter and wit.

I thank God for my creativity and skill with fabric that was passed on to me watching my mum sew when I was a kid. I now enjoy seeing the looks of wonder on youth and adult faces when they see what they have created. Our underlying attitude in the sewing groups is to show God's love. His creations are alive with colour and wonder, and so are our sewing groups.

Christine Plumridge,  
NSW



Mary and Joel with their four kids

SPOTLIGHT

## Interview with Juraki's Mary Slabb

*In celebration of NAIDOC week, IMA Coordinator East, Nick Wight, interviewed Mary Slabb, co-founder of Juraki Surf Culture in NSW:*

**Tell us a bit about yourself. Who's your mob, and where is home for you?**

I was born in Brewarrina (Bre), western NSW. My mother's family are Barkindji/Ngemba, and my father's family are Wiradjuri. I now live in Fingal Head, Bundjalung country, with my husband, Joel, and our four children – Budjerah, Jalaan, Namaala and Ngandu. I've lived in Fingal now for 18 years, so Fingal is home to me, but I always love going back to Bre to visit my family.

**Tell us a bit about Juraki...**

My husband and I started Juraki Surf Culture in 2016. Juraki is an Indigenous not-for-profit community entity committed to creating, supporting and partnering in community activities, programs and sporting events that give Indigenous yet culturally sensitive opportunities to mainstream people. It's about 'closing the gap from the Indigenous perspective'. Our projects are aimed at equipping, empowering and encouraging Indigenous people

to achieve their dreams and goals, working with Indigenous Christian community leaders to support the community in areas of leadership, healing, culture and overall health and wellness.

**What are some of your other roles in the community?**

Juraki and family take up the majority of my time. But for the past four years I have been privileged enough to take a weekly Scripture in Schools class at the local primary school. I also love baking, so that's something I do to help our local community in any way that I can.

**This year's NAIDOC theme is 'Because of Her We Can'. Who are some of the key women who have influenced your leadership?**

I have come from a long line of strong, beautiful, Aboriginal Christian women. My two grandmothers, Edith Gordon and Shirley Gibson, and my mum, Elizabeth, have been faithful women of God and have shown me strong family and community values that I see as a great blessing. Since moving to Fingal I have been honoured to have met some amazing Indigenous women, Aunty Kath Lena and Aunty

Dale Williams, who have been a huge encouragement to me and are definitely women I go to for advice and to just sit and learn from. I really feel that the key to us growing is sitting under great leadership. It really is because of her that we can.

**How do you see the 'big picture' of your leadership and faith in your community and your influence on the next generation of women including your daughters?**

Because of the amazing women who have gone before us, a good foundation has been laid, so for me, it's something that I will strive to carry on. Leaning in and listening to their wisdom and knowledge and learning from past mistakes will help me and many others grow and continue on our journey. Hopefully we will be that strength for the next generation, just as the elders have been for us. I have two daughters and if I could teach them anything, it would be to take time to sit with our old women and hear their stories, and honour them for paving the way for generations to come.

## Local Reconciliation Tastes Great!

Active reconciliation came to Footscray in June and it tasted fantastic! The Footscray Church of Christ community, facilitated by Dave Cook and Virginia Moebus-Nelson, brought their whole congregation to the Melbourne Indigenous Church Fellowship during a Reconciliation Week gathering that featured a beautiful roast dinner and self-saucing pudding dessert that the local church provided.

The night also featured some communal singing (including the Yorta Yorta hit, 'Bura Fera') as well as a panel sharing on what reconciliation means to them, with Uncle Ossie Cruse (Wurundjeri elder), Uncle Norman Terrick, and local members from the Melbourne Indigenous and Footscray Church



of Christ. The panel was packed with experts with passionate and informed perspectives from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous folk.

Sometimes acts of reconciliation can look as simple as servanthood – in this case, the cooking and serving of a delicious meal by a whole congregation spoke volumes of

wanting to serve and connect over a meal in conversations flavoured with respect. The Indigenous church community of Melbourne's west certainly experienced an act of local reconciliation that fed not only the body, but also the soul!

*Nick Wight,*  
IMA East

## Marshmallows and Campfires

It is that time of the year! Marshmallows and campfires. My favourite time of the year. One thing that we certainly enjoy doing here at Dareton Youth and Community Centre is making and eating food. We even made Turkish gozleme! The night patrol ladies enjoyed making them with kids and for themselves. Another day, all the kids had a great time decorating biscuits and eating them. Olivia cooked us all pancakes, and we also made milk shakes. Gregy was teaching the little ones how to shoot hoops. He is a very talented sports person! There is a weekly soccer practice. Some of the girls had an amazing time making new bling jewellery.



Making pizzas at the youth centre

The competition is always fierce at our weekly Wednesday pool competition, and we also help kids use the computers. We have a lot to celebrate here at the centre!

*Ilker Deli,*  
NSW



Gregy teaching the little ones how to shoot hoops

## Meet Charmaine Councillor

Charmaine Councillor, a friend of IMA, is a Noongar woman from Bunbury, who has connections to Wardandi, Wadjak, Balardong and Kaniyang Clans of the Noongar Nation and a connection to Yamtjii people from the Midwest. Be inspired this NAIDOC week by watching Charmaine's TEDx talk 'How Language can empower a Nation again'. Here is the link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFrSMCs6siM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFrSMCs6siM)



Charmaine Councillor