



THE INTERFAITH CENTRE  
OF MELBOURNE

## World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023

Love of God and Love of the Neighbour  
Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour



Please join us for this special event

# ***Bringing Our Multifaith Neighbours Together for Reconciliation: The Voice***

**5.30 pm – 7.30 pm, Sunday 26 February, 2023**

**Venue: Melbourne Town Hall**

### **Guest Speakers:**

**Professor Joy Wandin Murphy, AO**  
Senior Wurundjeri Elder of the Kulin Nation

**Fr Frank Brennan, SJ AO**  
Senior Advisory Group Member with Co-Chairs Prof Dr Marcia Langton AO and Prof Tom Calma AO,  
Indigenous Co-Design Process

**Aunty Helen Bnads**  
Birri Gubba/Bindal Group Nth Qld Cherbourg Aboriginal Mission  
Elder/Cultural Lead, Community Care, Community Health, Peninsula Health

**Bishop Philip Huggins**  
Director, Centre for Ecumenical Studies,  
Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

**Dr Diana Cousens**  
Vice-President, Buddhist  
Council of Victoria

**Rabbi Gabi Kaltmann**  
Ark Centre

**Mohamed Mohideen OAM**  
Vice-President, Islamic Council  
of Victoria

Question and Answer time will be scheduled for all those important questions.

**Registration essential! Seats are limited, so please reserve your place now!**

**BOOK NOW: <https://bringingtogether.eventbrite.com.au>**

**Enquiries: [info@interfaithcentre.org.au](mailto:info@interfaithcentre.org.au) M: 0400 228 146**



The Interfaith  
Centre of  
Melbourne





AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR  
**CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE**

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WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

**REFLECTION AS REGARDS THE  
REFERENDUM ON 'VOICE'**

**Sunday 26 February 2023, Melbourne Town Hall  
in World Interfaith Harmony Week**

**BISHOP PHILIP HUGGINS**

**Director of Centre for Ecumenical Studies,  
Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture**



Painting by the Rev'd Canon Glenn Loughey, Wiradjuri man, for "Forgiveness: A Study Guide" by John Hendry, Philip Huggins, Hugh Kempster, and Felicity McCallum.

[https://cdn.csu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/3944378/2-FINAL-Forgiveness-A-Study-Guide-E-book.pdf](https://cdn.csu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/3944378/2-FINAL-Forgiveness-A-Study-Guide-E-book.pdf)

Thank you for this invitation.

May I offer three reflections.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This is the most important moment of my 70 plus years on this continent.

I imagine many of us feel the same..

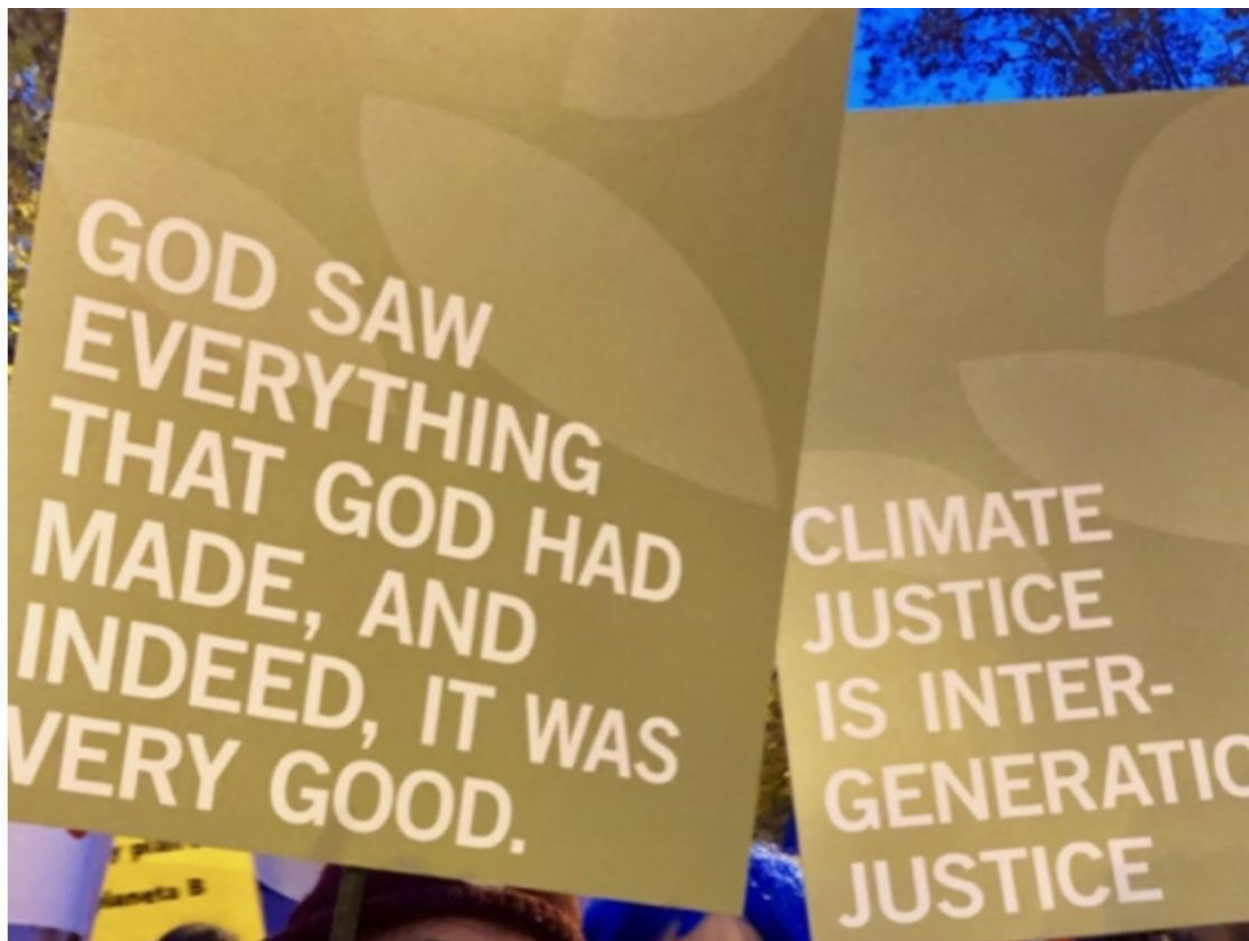
Everything I have learned about healing; about listening well; about building unity through careful, prayerful dialogue; about being really reconciled; about forgiveness; about finding one's own true voice and speaking from it ...

Absolutely all of it comes together in seeing this as a moment in the life of people on this continent which is of unprecedented and profound significance.

Bluntly, what is at stake is whether we are to be a truly civilised nation, or just another mediocre, miserable place of wasted opportunities.

The compassionate depths of our spiritual traditions call us to be united for this high purpose like never before.

In my tradition, we have begun Lent and, with discipline, are practicing, practicing, practicing awareness of the presence of God. Wisdom teaches us that we thus come to see God in all people. In all living beings.



## THE POETRY OF THE ULURU STATEMENT OF THE HEART

Singer/songwriter Paul Kelly, who's voice is compelling, has The Uluru Statement in his anthology of the world's most wonderful poetry. [Paul Kelly: 'Love is Strong as Death', Hamish Hamilton 2019]

It's there with Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas, "To everything there is a season" in the Bible, Elizabeth Barrett Brownings "love me for love's sake.. through love's eternity," and "Lead kindly light' of John Henry Newman, much loved by Mahatma Gandhi.

It is there with all the world's most wonderful 'Poetry of the heart' – all that is unifying and illuminating.

Such is the beauty of this invitation.

An invitation that will be nation building on firmer foundations, should we all say "yes"!

Remembering from another great poet of the heart, Elie Weisel, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace prize laureate, that:

**"Indifference is the epitome of evil. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."**



"Indifference is the epitome of evil." / „We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented"

(Elie Wiesel, Auschwitz survivor, Peace Nobel Prize laureate who passed away on that day in 2016)



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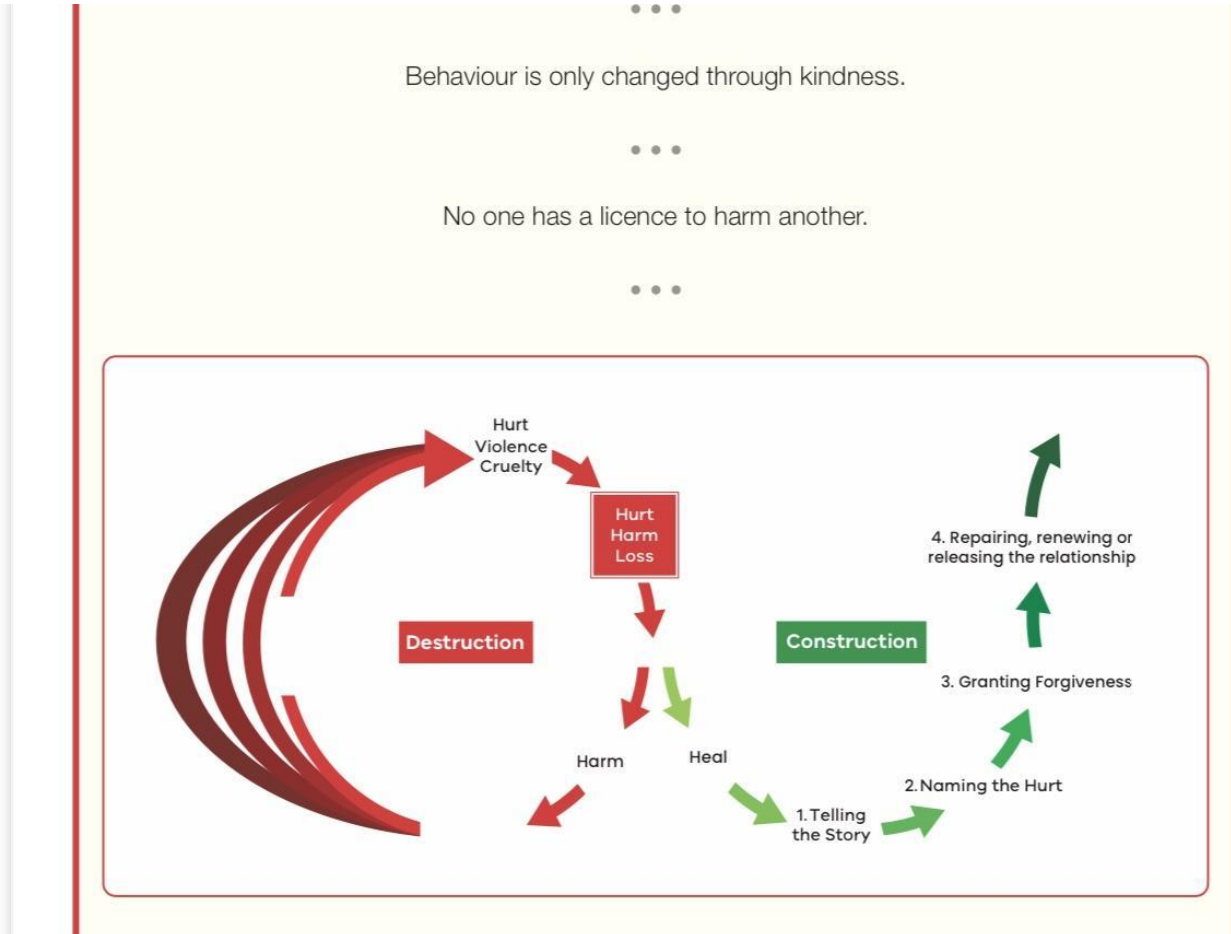
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## HEALING

In healing work, after people have suffered 'Hurt, Harm, Loss,' a first step in the construction of a better future is 'the Telling of the Story, 'the Naming of the Hurt'.



When the one or the one's hurt and harmed feel well listened to, the healing begins.

A future beckons that is more giving and forgiving.

A future in which the choice can be in this healing direction and not into more harm.

Broadly speaking, very few people feel well listened to.

When we have felt well listened to, we know what a gift this is..

Coming to know the healing quality of deep listening, listening that takes as long as is needed.. I have tried to be a better listener.

Yes, so that people can convey the fragmented narratives of their lives – including the traumas, losses, and pains of various episodes – and thus become clearer about what has happened to them, and thus clearer about the way ahead.

‘Lead kindly light’..

Many people on our continent need this careful, patient, loving listening.

We are like a big therapy centre full of people with fragmented narratives from after they have sought refuge and safety from further harm.

..From the holocaust to those more recently here, traumatised after life in Afghanistan and Ukraine. People, mostly women and children, safe from domestic violence in shelters..

That is why this moment is so significant.

The healing of our nation, home now to people from every land, has to start here with listening to our First Nations people.

Get this right and it can also be a model for much else that is needed for our health and wellbeing together..

For now, appreciating the significance, we can but pause and feel blessed that we have this moment entrusted to us!

That our First Nations people have been kind enough to even ask us to say “yes.”

Think of all those places on the planet where this healing moment is impossible to imagine because reciprocal harm is so endemic.

## CONCLUSION

So, in our unity, complex as it is,

yet full of gratitude, heartfelt gratitude,

and with soaring spirits

so aware of this deeply civilising Referendum as a moment of grace,

We will

We must

say YES,

YES, YES!

AMEN, AMEN, AMEN.

MAY IT BE SO. AMEN!

