

RECONCILIATION IN THE WEST is held in May each year and occurs during **National Reconciliation Week**. This year, because of COVID-10, *Anglicare SA* and its partners *Life Without Barriers*, *Uniting SA* and *Tauondi Aboriginal College* took the event online. Normally attracting a crowd of more than 1,000 South Australians, the event was transformed into a live *Facebook* lunchtime concert featuring local Aboriginal singer-songwriter Nathan May.

I have been involved with a group called "*Anglicans for Makarrata*" (**Makarrata** is an aboriginal word for "*coming together after a struggle*") who have been meeting at *The Church of the Good Shepherd* for several years. Because of my involvement, I was contacted by *Anglicare* and asked to contribute toward a banner on "*Life Without Barriers*". My illustrations are included below.

What does reconciliation mean to me individually?

For, or working towards **Makarrata**

Conciliation: making friendly overtures, overcoming hostility. *Toward whom?*

Compared with

Reconciliation: getting back to where we once were. *When?*

It has to be a full two way effort

As a seventy five year old non-indigenous woman, for me it's all about learning. Since my retirement I've been taught by Elders I don't know, but who generously and untiringly, offer their time to anyone who respectfully seeks understanding.



My three pictures below represent:

- * Being shown both aboriginal culture - and my own biases
- * Learning by working with nature, as the original First Nation people did.
- * Seeing my own artwork differently, after being influenced by the Dark Emu constellation in the sky. (I also found "**Dark Emu: Black Seeds, Agriculture or Accident?**" a fascinating book. (Written in 2014 by Bruce Pascoe

this non-fiction work reexamines colonial accounts of indigenous people in Australia, and cites evidence of pre-colonial agriculture, engineering and building construction by Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people).

THE SKY AS TEACHER by Wendy Loneragan

Can you see the two New Holland Honeyeaters sipping the nectar from Grevillea with their long, fine beaks? I made this picture quite recently down at *The Patch*, but didn't spot the bird shapes until later - then realised I was beginning to see in a different way.

A few years before, I'd been to a talk on '*The night sky*' at Warriparinga and was shown how the *Dark Emu* was seen by looking at the dark spaces, whereas the European way was to see the outline of the stars.

In my picture I'd drawn the flower petal shapes which then inevitably also show the shape of the birds who feed on them. Of course.....bird and flower belong together.

Living here together, as our various peoples listen to the ancient custodians with great and mutual respect, each culture will enhance the others magnificently.

INDIGENOUS TEACHERS by Wendy Loneragan

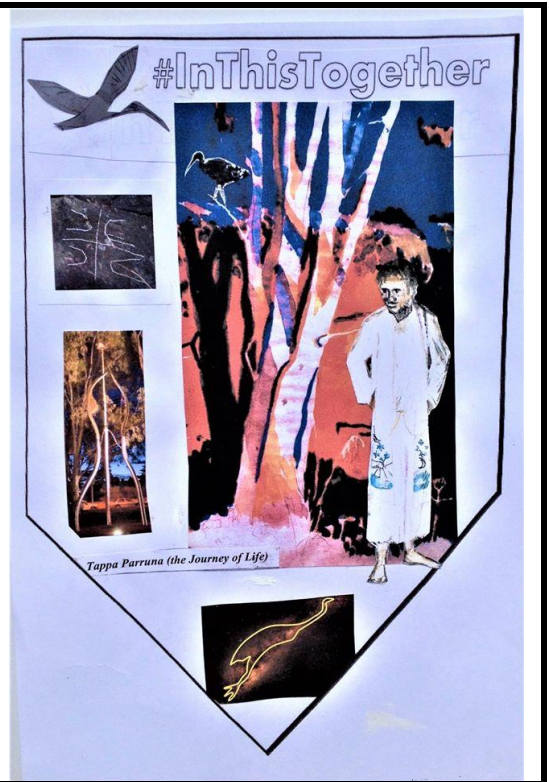
Bedford Park, where I live, has the *Kaurna Cultural Centre* at Warriparinga and six Indigenous Cultural Markers at the hospital and the University. Adelaide too has offered me *Tauondi Aboriginal College* open days and an invaluable 2-day Cultural respect training. '*In this together*' has special meaning for me, as first learning from people who knew. At this stage they give, I aim to listen and receive.

The red bank of '*Sturt*' Creek, the frequent presence of an Ibis, and the wind in the red gums were all part of this painting, which I did before I discovered there was so much to learn (from generous, untiring, indigenous teachers I've never met, but who offer their lessons for anyone to receive).

Originally I gave the European priest Aboriginal features, and he had a sun and moon on his robes. Later, I discovered that Karl Telfer and Gavin Malone's '*The Journey of Life*' had a male (Moon) and female (Sun) dancing round a *Kuri* dance stick '*celebrating the eternal spirit and nurturance*'

(How many of the world's sculptures of man and woman celebrate a third and most special presence?)

Now I've visited '*Dreaming In Light*' at this year's *Fringe* and been immersed in *Tjilbruke's* tears, the Ibis, the wind in the living trees and water and so much else, the learning goes on.



THE LAND ITSELF AS TEACHER by Wendy Loneragan

For 16 years a small group of us at Bedford Park have worked to create bushland on this previously overgrown reserve next to the '*Sturt*' Creek. We called the part we were working with '*The Patch*'.

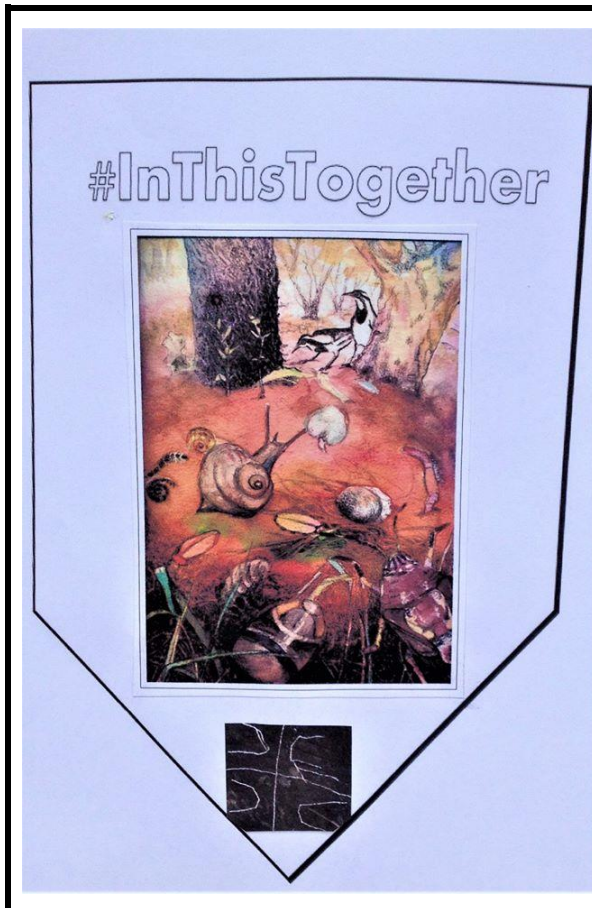
This is an early picture I made while weeding in the old orchard, learning about the many little animals and insects living there.

When we started, the whole area was covered in couch, kikuyu, Scotch thistles, olive trees and rubbish. We've made lots of mistakes based on our European ideas about caring for the land, eg trees too close, so the bigger birds stay away. But we didn't have to water (much), plough, fertilise or use poisons. Later no weeding.

In the area in which we later planted indigenous shrubs and grasses, we saw that someone had made a cubby (or it might even have been a *wurlie*) and they'd left an engraving of the '*sit down together*' symbol on a rock at the entrance.

I've just found out, (during the Covid 19 isolation) that this special place is an old burial ground. and now I'm glad, even though we often stuffed up, that we have always respected the site, and will continue to honour and care for it.

Learning from the earth and plants reveals the total sense of the indigenous teachings ... a great help to being '*in this together*.'



I have huge appreciation for the help provided by indigenous leaders and I want to actively support them, (in my case being part of the group creating and tending '*The Patch*' the small suburban bushcare site near our home).

I want to encourage others to recognise how the original people have understood and looked after this amazing country of ours.

THE SPIRITUAL GARDEN

Whilst working in the garden over recent weeks, it has been encouraging to see that a number of people from the local community are regular visitors to the garden, including quite a few (well supervised) children - and there is no doubt that a real outreach has developed from this space.



Angus, the West Highland terrier, with his mum who tops up the birdbaths when she visits.



When the remaining section of the large banksia tree collapsed a few months ago, we were able to include the fallen trunk into the existing landscape, where it is providing a haven for small lizards, insects and the like, as it becomes part of the *next stage*— a reminder that nature is the ultimate recycler(!)



New bird spotted in the garden(!)

Whilst working in the garden in April, Chris & Harold BB and Susan Smith were delighted to see an Eastern Spinebill feeding on grevillea blossoms.



Grevillea intricata

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GARDEN RE-DEVELOPMENT AT THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH

During the lockdown period, landscaping the area at the front of the church and hall continued to the next stage, as over thirty native Australian plants were put into place, ready to take advantage of the autumn rains. Social distancing was easily managed and being able to work on consecutive days was a real advantage in getting this task completed.



Chris and Harold BB, and Susan Smith spent several full days on the project, and were well looked after by Father Michael, who provided very welcome morning teas and lunches for the workers to keep energy levels and spirits up(!).



The fruit trees destined for the area alongside the church, opposite the cottages, have been selected and planted this month by Fr Michael, and we look forward to seeing this site looking very different in the coming weeks and months.

WATCH THIS SPACE !!!

