



# Fusion 2016

## The Art of Connection

### Deep Listening Circle

Saturday 15 October 10am – 2pm  
Burrinja Cultural Centre  
351 Glenfern Road, Upwey

Photo-story including ...

Story of the Burrinja Pigeon

Creative Resources

*Photo-story*    *Dr Laura Brearley*

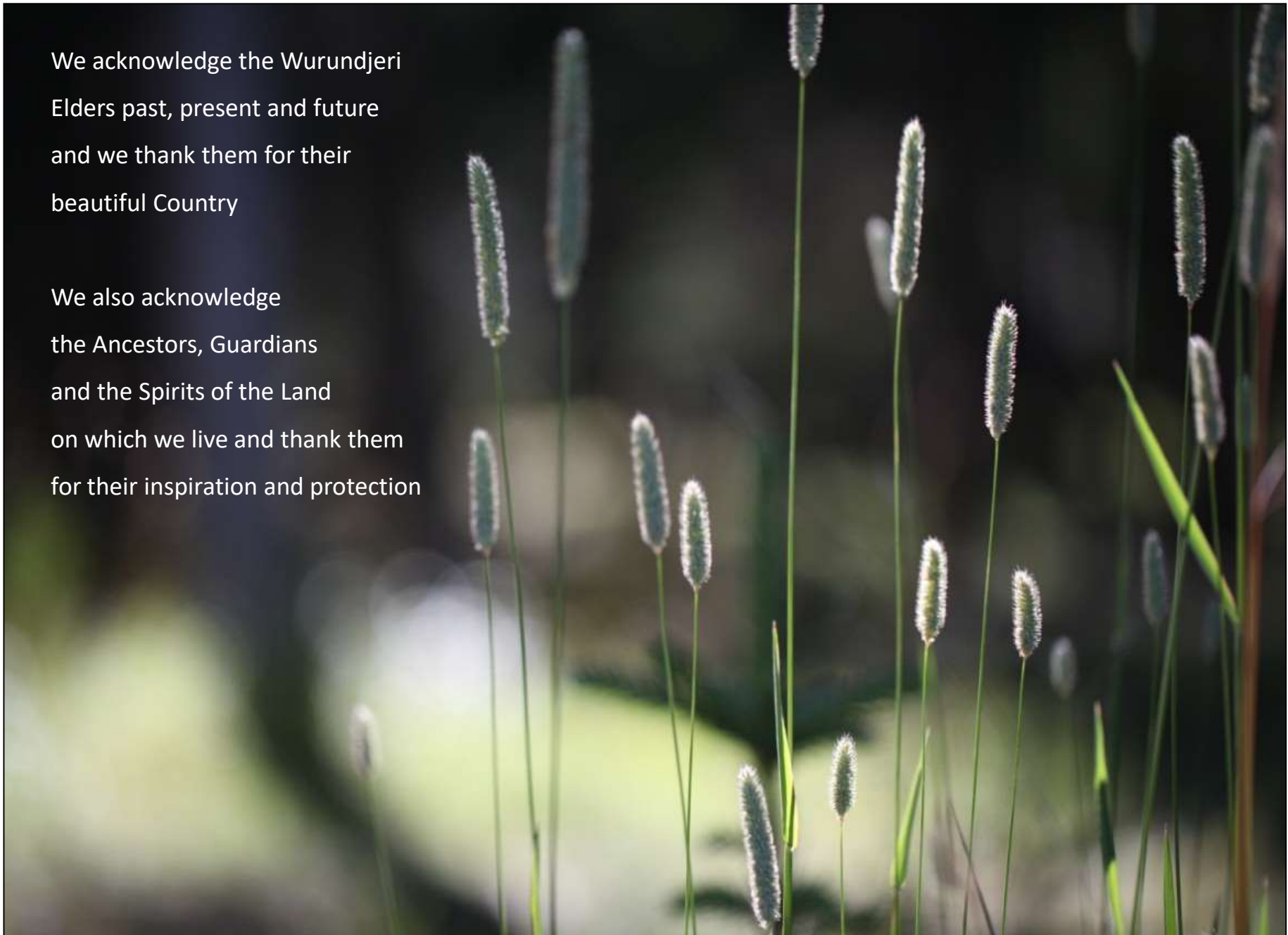
*Images*        *Barbara Oehring*  
                      *Jen Angel*  
                      *Terry Melvin*  
                      *Ronald Edwards*  
                      *Laura Brearley*

Image Terry Melvin



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri  
Elders past, present and future  
and we thank them for their  
beautiful Country

We also acknowledge  
the Ancestors, Guardians  
and the Spirits of the Land  
on which we live and thank them  
for their inspiration and protection





On October 15<sup>th</sup> 2016, thirty people came together to participate in a Deep Listening Circle held at the Burrinja Cultural Centre in Upwey





The event was organised in two days and reflected the generosity of everyone involved







The gathering was designed to generate the spirit of creative collaboration of *Fusion 2016: The Art of Connection*, a gathering of artists facilitated by the Arts and Cultural Officers of six Shire Councils in South East Victoria



*Image Ronald Edwards*





The Deep Listening Circle was facilitated by a group of seven Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists, musicians and educators, all of whom have been involved in previous Deep Listening activities

## Deep Listening Circle Facilitators



**Dr Laura Brearley** coordinates the Creative Cultural Exchange project and is a researcher, event manager and singer/song-writer who works with Aboriginal artists, musicians and linguists in Higher Education and community contexts



**Lisa Kennedy** is a Trawlwoolway woman from North East Tasmania and is a visual artist, story-teller, published author, book illustrator and community development facilitator. She has completed a Master of Visual Arts at Monash University



**Peter Corser** is an artist, sculptor, sailor and educator who has worked for many years with Aboriginal community members in Vocational and Higher Education sectors and within the Corrections System



**Ruth McKittrick Chambers and Peter Chambers** are musicians, composers and educators who facilitate community music-making and have a long on-going association with the Aboriginal community of Gunbalanya in West Arnhem Land



**Mick Harding** is a Taungwurrung Kulin visual artist, woodworker, poet and story-teller who belongs to the Yowung-Illam-Baluk and Yeerun-illam-baluk clans. He has just completed his Master of Visual Arts at Federation University



**Ronald Edwards** is a Gunaikurnai visual artist, cultural educator and performer who is undertaking a Bachelor of Visual Arts at the Gippsland Centre for Art and Design at Federation University.



# Fusion 2016: The Art of Connection

## Deep Listening Circle

### Running Order

Time	Activity	Facilitators
10.00am – 10.45am	Welcome, Acknowledgment and Introductions Welcome to Country Story Book Wurundjeri Acknowledgment Song	All Lisa Kennedy and Aunty Joy Murphy Laura Brearley, Ruth and Peter Chambers
	'Journeys to the Meeting Place' Artwork Introduction to Deep Listening Who is with us in and beyond the Circle?	Ronald Edwards Lisa Kennedy and Mick Harding All
10.45am – 11.30am	Songs and Stories of Gunbalanya The Story of the Morning Star	Ruth and Peter Chambers
11.30am – 11.45am	BREAK	
11.45am – 12.15pm	Within and beyond the prison walls Listening to the Voices of Country Singing for the Country of the Taungwurrung	Peter Corser All Mick Harding
12.15 pm – 1.00pm	LUNCH (Emily Kame Kngwarreye exhibition)	
1.00pm – 1.45pm	Stories of Art and Healing Magic Dilly Bags and The Message Exchange	Lisa Kennedy Lisa Kennedy, Laura Brearley and All
1.45pm – 2.00pm	Deep Listening Circle Closing Ceremony	All

We shared stories and sang  
and danced together

















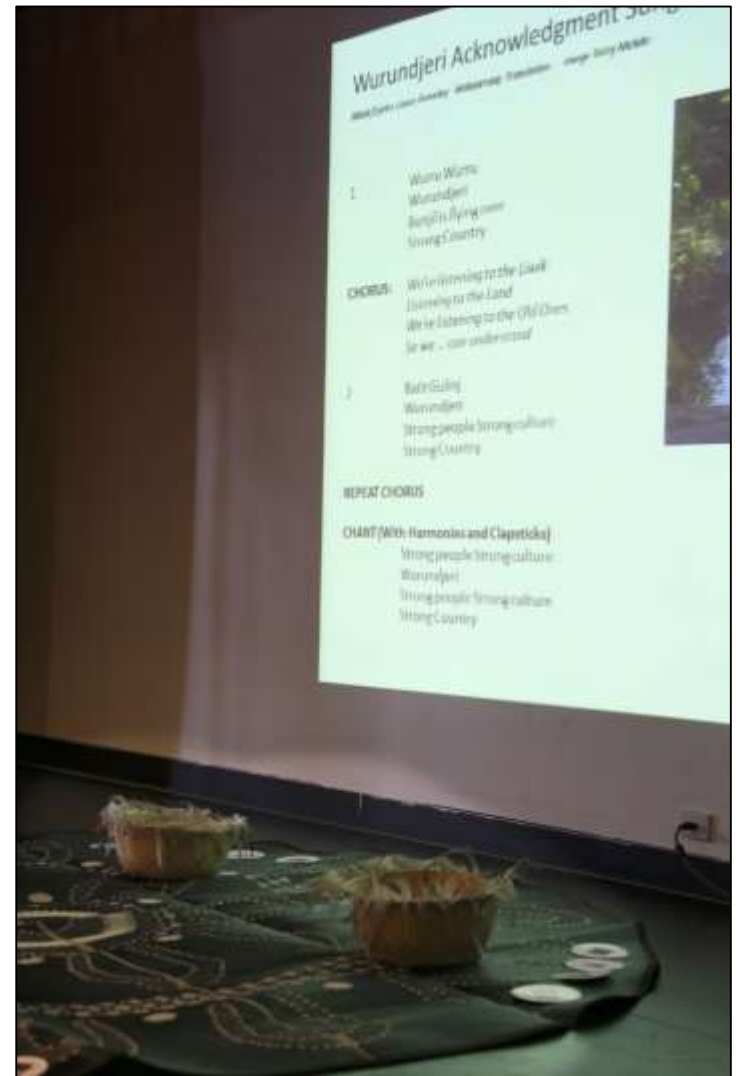


We listened to each other





We learned Aboriginal language and explored our relationship to Country through song, story and dance

















We connected to Wiradjuri Elder  
Aunty Gloria Whalan over the phone

She talked about her connection to  
the birds and animals of her Country

‘I love youse all’ she said





We learned from each other









We laughed together ...



and sometimes there were tears







Peter Chambers told the story of The Morning Star  
from Maningrida, Arnhem Land





Images Jen Angel



Image Barbara Oehring





We shared food and conversation





Image Laura Brearley





# Story of the Burrinja Pigeon



After wild windstorms in the Dandenongs, a homing pigeon found its way to the Burrinja Cultural Centre



The pigeon stayed in the garden for a few days, watched over by staff at the Centre

The following weekend, a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists, musicians and community members came to Burrinja for a Deep Listening Circle to honour and celebrate the spirit of creative collaboration of *Fusion 2016: The Art of Connection*







Tracy Hayllar was on duty that day, looking after the Centre and caring for the pigeon who had become quite weak

The pigeon was snuggled into Tracy's warm jumper

After lunch, Tracy and the pigeon visited the Deep Listening Circle

Lisa Kennedy, Trawlwoolway artist and story-teller, spoke about the significance of birds as messengers

She read out some messages from 'Living Connections', a story she had written about birds and their links to the Ancestors



Artwork Lisa Kennedy (Trawlwoolway)



Image Barbara Oehring

After the Deep Listening Circle was over, the pigeon was taken to the home of Rowena Ward, one of Burrinja's volunteers



For many years, Rowena had worked as a palliative care nurse  
She cared for the pigeon, offering it bird seed and comfort





Later in the afternoon, the pigeon took a deep drink of water and peacefully died



The next day, Rowena undertook some research and spoke to people with expertise in homing pigeons

On the Burrinja Pigeon's leg was a tag that said 'UAE 2013'

Rowena was told that the pigeon had been born in the United Arab Emirates in 2013 and had been purchased for breeding purposes by someone in Australia



It had been sent to the United Kingdom to be quarantined

Rowena also learned that pigeons used for breeding purposes lose their ability to fly and their capacity to return home





Pigeons are messenger birds

The Burrinja Pigeon carried with it a big story of loss, dispossession and constraint



It also generated a story about compassion and the quality of care

On its last day, the Burrinja Pigeon heard the sound of songs, stories, tears and laughter



And it did not die alone

Finally, it was free to return home





As we were cleaning up at the end of the Deep Listening Circle,  
we found some feathers on the carpet



*Image Terry Melvin*



There were emu feathers from the Dilly Bags

*Image Ronald Edwards*

There was a feather from The Morning Star from Maningrida





And there was one was from the Burrinja Pigeon



# Special Thanks to ...

- The Burrinja Cultural Centre for the beautiful environment
- The Fusion 2016 Team for their work leading up to the day and their willingness to work with a Plan B
- Ross Farnell, Megan Meuleman, Karen Rowland and Josie Kent for their work in the lead-up to the event
- Tracy Hayllar, the Burrinja Cultural Centre Duty Manager for her care and competence on the day
- The Facilitation Team for their generosity and creative gifts

Lisa Kennedy

Peter Corser

Laura Brearley

Mick Harding

Ronald Edwards

Ruth McKittrick Chambers

Peter Chambers

- Mandy Nicholson, Wurundjeri artist and linguist for her translation and guidance (VACL)
- Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir, Elder and linguist from Victorian Aboriginal Corporation of Languages (VACL)
- The Gunbalanya Community for their song
- Community Music Victoria and the other creative networks for spreading the word
- The Shire Councils of the Yarra Ranges, Bass Coast, Baw Baw, South Gippsland, Cardinia and Casey
- The Skylark Café Team
- The team of photographers who have helped to tell the story

Barbara Oehring     [www.barbaraoehringphotography.com](http://www.barbaraoehringphotography.com)

Jen Angel

Terry Melvin

Laura Brearley

Ronald Edwards

- The Burrinja Pigeon for the gift of its presence, its story and for keeping us connected

