



**Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
Victorian Regional Committee
The Uniting Church in Australia**

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM UAICC VICTORIA

After 30 years, Narana Creations will return to the genesis of its first imagining and be transferred to the Wathaurong Co-Op.

As reported to the Synod of 2023, the UAICC Victoria Oversight Committee has been in conversation with both the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation and the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Operative about the future of Narana Creations.

At the beginning of 2024 the Wathaurong Co-Op indicated its interest in acquiring Narana Creations as an ongoing cultural centre in the Geelong district and beyond. This acquisition is in the final stages of agreement. As part of the transition, Narana will be closed for business as of this week to enable the appropriate preparation for handover.

Narana Creations has held a special place within the Synod of Victoria and the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania since 1996. It has been the location of the State Office for UAICC Victoria for 30 years and became a space in which many of us within the Uniting Church were 'baptised' into a deep listening to the story of the First Nations Peoples. We have been significantly influenced and blessed by Uncle Vince Ross over the Narana years, and for those of us who have been able to visit Narana once or many times, it is a special place.

Prior to his appointment as UAICC Victoria State Director in 1993, Uncle Vince was one of a few visionary Indigenous leaders involved in what was then known as the Geelong and District Aboriginal Co-operative. This Co-op became later known as Wathaurong Co-op, and continues to be a provider of support and health services, employment and justice services to and for the First Nations people of the greater Geelong area.

Vince, along with some other key leaders, had a vision for a cultural education centre and social enterprise for the Geelong area. The Co-operative had some property next to the wildlife sanctuary at the base of the You Yang Ranges. It was their vision to create a centre linked to the sanctuary, but for a variety of reasons the vision never came into fruition.

Vince never lost his passion and vision for a cultural centre, and when he was appointed to the UAICC Victoria in 1993 he worked to establish this new enterprise as the primary activity of the Congress in Victoria. Through the support of the (then) UCA Synod of Victoria, and its commitment to the Covenant, Uncle Vince realised his original vision for a cultural centre.

Since Uncle Vince's retirement, Narana has continued to be an important place. It has become clear, however that the energy, focus and resources needed for its flourishing mean that other expressions of UAICC Victoria Mission and Ministry have been limited.

So after 30 years Narana Creations is returning to the community of its first imagining. This is both sad and wonderful. While the UCA is letting go of a space and place that has been so important to our own identity as Second Peoples in relationship with the First Peoples of this land, it is a sign of the Church's commitment to the covenant and reconciling relationship with First Peoples that this centre and the land be returned to the First Peoples' community of the land on which Narana sits.

A ceremony of thanks and gratitude and celebration of transfer with the Wathaurong community will be held at a date to be decided.

Rev Will Pickett and Rev Greg Crowe

UAICC Victoria