



VTMH FORUM 2023

Women Empowering Communities

Deepening the Dialogue in
Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Mental Health and Wellbeing

Forum Program

Thursday 26th October 2023

Presented by Victorian Transcultural Mental Health (VTMH)

Supported by The Darebin Intercultural Centre



Victorian Transcultural
MENTAL HEALTH



What is the ‘Women Empowering Communities: Deepening the Dialogue in Mental Health and Wellbeing’ Forum?

The ‘Women Empowering Communities: Deepening the Dialogue in Mental Health and Wellbeing’ Forum aims to showcase work undertaken by women to strengthen mental health and wellbeing in their communities. The program features inspirational keynote speakers, innovative community programs, panel discussions, Q&A sessions, a musical performance, and live graphic recording. For more information, see the Program on page 3.

Date & time

Thursday 26th October 2023

Registrations open from 9:00am - 9:30am.

Forum commences 9:30am sharp and concludes at 4:30pm.

Venue

Preston Shire Hall, 286 Gower St, Preston Victoria 3072

Access to the Preston Shire Hall is via the Gower St entrance.

Catering

Morning tea, lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Quiet space

A quiet room is available for attendees to use at any point throughout the Forum. Information about this will be provided on the day.

Program

Whilst every attempt is made to bring you the Program as advertised, amendments to the Program may occur due to unexpected circumstances beyond our control.

Feedback Form

Your feedback is very important to us, and helps us to host events such as this forum. Feedback forms can be found at your table, please place completed forms in the collection boxes.

General enquiries

Enquiries can be directed to VTMH Administration and Project Support, on 03 9231 3245 or vtmh@svha.org.au.



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MENTAL HEALTH

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Program

Doors & registration open 9:00am - 9:30am

Morning Sessions 9:30am - 12:45pm

Welcome & Opening

Tigist Kebede, MC and Shehani De Silva, VTMH

Welcome to Country

Colin Hunter Jnr Jnr

Keynote Presentation: The Importance of Women Empowering Communities and the Limits of Relying on Community Capacity Alone to Bring Change

Nyadol Nyuon, OAM, Lawyer, Award-winning Human Rights Advocate and Writer

Morning tea 11:00am - 11:30am

Presentation

Sheree Lowe, Executive Director, VACCHO, and Elected Member, First People's Assembly of Victoria

Presentation: Bottom-up Empowerment to Speak Out Against Racism

Dr Mario Peucker, Associate Professor, Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities, Victoria University and Executive Member, Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS)

Huwieda Idris, Caseworker, Doorways Salvation Army

Linda Yang, Islamophobia Support Service Community and Case Support Officer Islamic Council of Victoria

Lunch 12:45pm - 1:30pm

Afternoon Sessions 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Keynote Presentation: Struggle, Agency and Achievement

Mary Crooks, Executive Director, Victorian Women's Trust

Stretch Break 2:30pm - 2:35pm

Snapshot Presentations: Empowering Women - Hearing from Grassroots Approaches

Soothing the Savage Beast: Anecdotes from the Community Music-Making World

Nicki Johnson, Artistic Program Manager, Community Music Victoria, and Choir Members

Conversational Journeys with Muslim Women

Fazlinda Faroo, Community Programs Manager, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights

Dance N Roll: A Wheelchair Dancing Project

Rocca Salcedo, Founder, Dance N Roll

Panel Q&A with Snapshot Presenters

Moderated by Tigist Kebede

Summary, Door Prize & Close

Tigist Kebede, MC and Adriana Mendoza, VTMH Manager

Close 4:30pm

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Tigist Kebede, MC

Tigist is a proud Ethiopian Woman who was born in Sudan and came to Australia as a child under the humanitarian program. She has deep ties to her community locally and abroad.

Tigist is passionate about mental health and became a Counsellor wanting to create better wellbeing outcomes for marginalised communities.

She pursued her passion and became the Cofounder of Pola Practice. Pola Practice is a culturally responsive mental health service that envisions a world where marginalized identities have access to world-class mental health and well-being support.

Tigist integrates understandings around colonization, systemic oppression and inequality to provide specialized culturally responsive mental health delivery. She brings this expertise into therapy, program development, training and organizational consulting.

As a young African community leader she utilizes her community networks and fierce advocacy in her role as the Deputy Co-Chair of the Victorian African Communities Committee advising the Victorian government regarding the experiences of African Australians.

Tigist is an empathetic ear and friendly face, you know when she's in the building because of her cheeky one-liners and infectious laugh.



Debbie Wood, Graphic Recorder and Illustrator

Debbie Wood is a Melbourne-based Graphic Recorder & Illustrator.

Since 2017, she has worked with both large and small organisations around Australia and abroad, and all levels of government to visually convey their messages and purpose, live, in real time at workshops and conferences.

Prior to this she spent over 20 years as a Graphic Designer, and has dabbled in other creative pursuits including jewellery making, face painting, and raising boys.

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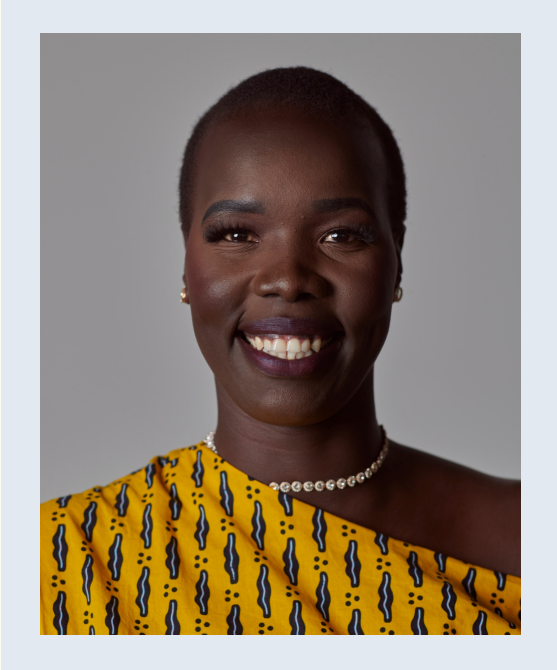
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Keynote speaker

Nyadol Nyuon OAM, Lawyer, Award-winning Human Rights Advocate and Writer



Nyadol Nyuon OAM was born in a refugee camp in Itang, Ethiopia, and raised in Kakuma Refugee camp, Kenya. In 2005, at the age of eighteen, she moved to Australia as a refugee. In 2022 she was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in recognition of her service to human rights and refugee women.

Since then, Nyadol has completed a Bachelor of Arts from Victoria University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Melbourne and worked as a commercial litigator with Arnold Bloch Leibler.

Nyadol is a vocal advocate for human rights, multiculturalism, the settlement of people with refugee experiences and those seeking asylum. She has worked and volunteered extensively in these areas with a range of organisations.

Nyadol is also a regular media commentator in these areas, having appeared on ABC's The Drum, as a panellist on Q&A and contributing to The Age, Sydney Morning Herald and the Saturday Paper, to name just a few.

In both 2011 and 2014, Nyadol was nominated as one of the hundred most influential African Australians. In 2016, she was the recipient of the Future Justice Prize.

In 2018 her efforts to combat racism were widely recognised, with achievements including the Australian Human Rights Commission's Racism. It Stops With Me Award. The prestigious award was in recognition of her advocacy and activism on behalf of the Australian-African and Melbourne's South Sudanese communities. Nyadol also received the Harmony Alliance Award for significant contribution to empowering migrant and refugee women, and was a co-winner of the Tim McCoy Prize for her advocacy on behalf of the South Sudanese Community. She also received the Afro-Australian Student Organisation's Unsung Hero Award.

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Keynote speaker

Mary Crooks, Executive Director of the Victorian Women's Trust



After an extensive public policy career, Mary became the Executive Director of the Victorian Women's Trust at the end of 1996. She has designed and led groundbreaking community engagement initiatives, such as the Purple Sage Project and Our Watermark Australia. These were two early examples of the Trust's Kitchen Table Conversation model which has since become a nationally lauded approach to democratic engagement as exemplified in the successful application of the model in 2012/2013 which saw the election of Independent Cathy McGowan to the seat of Indi.

Mary has led other major Trust initiatives including the exhibition, Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives; the development of Here She Is! as a register of women; the Breakthrough for Gender Equality Conference in Melbourne in November 2016, the largest feminist gathering on record; the research and publication of About Bloody Time: The menstrual revolution we have to have; the creation of the Rosie website for girls; and the development of Club Respect as a harm-prevention initiative for community sports clubs across the country.

In 2012, Mary authored *A Switch in Time – Restoring Respect to Australian Politics* which was distributed widely across Australia. She also authored the Trust's publication of a one-page advertisement in four national newspapers called *Credit Where Credit is Due*, which paid tribute to the leadership and capacity of Julia Gillard as the nation's first female prime minister.

In June 2012, Mary was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia, for her distinguished services to public policy and advocacy for the advancement of women. In 2016, Mary won the Public Policy category as part of the AFR/Westpac's 100 Women of Influence for her years of work in shaping public policy in Australia.

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Presenter

Sheree Lowe

Gunditjmara, Peek Whurrong, Djab Whurrung, Kirrae Whurrung

Executive Director, VACCHO and Elected Member, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria



Sheree Lowe is a Djab Wurrung and Gunditjmara woman with a strong connection to South West Victoria, she has lived most her life on Wadawurrung Country in Ballarat. Sheree has been advocating within the Aboriginal Community in Victoria for over 20 years.

Sheree is the Executive Director of the Social Emotional Wellbeing Centre (SEWB) at VACCHO, where she is leading the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing. Sheree is also a current member of the First People's Assembly of Victoria (the Assembly).

The VACCHO SEWB team is dedicated to fostering a deep understanding of the social and emotional wellbeing needs within Community,

focusing on the mental health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in Victoria. The SEWB team works across various programs, including mental health and wellbeing, alcohol and other drugs (AOD), sector support and networking, and partnering with mainstream organisations. The team also ensures the SEWB workforce across the state is supported and connected, this is integral to our work and informs our collective understanding of SEWB needs and priorities across rural, regional and metropolitan areas.

The First People's Assembly is tasked with delivering Treaty in Victoria. Sheree is passionate and committed to work with integrity and to be accessible to communities to ensure that the negotiated Treaty is empowering and reflects the aspirations of Victoria First Peoples. Sheree believes First Peoples communities are owed a Treaty which represents the core values of First Peoples. A Treaty which is guided by the knowledge, Wisdom and authority of first people's Elders. A Treaty which future generations and young people can inherit. And a Treaty which upholds First Peoples sovereignty, lore, and cultural authority.

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Keynote speaker

Sue-Anne Hunter, Deputy Chair and Commissioner of Australia's first truth telling process – the Yoorrook Justice Commission

Sue-Anne Hunter is a proud Wurundjeri and Ngu rai Iillum Wurrung woman and the Deputy Chair and Commissioner of Australia's first truth telling process – the Yoorrook Justice Commission. She is an Adjunct Professor of Global Engagement at Federation University and a member of the National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth, and Justice Advisory Board.

A child and family services practitioner by trade, Sue-Anne has over twenty years' clinical experience responding to developmental, transgenerational and community trauma.

She is widely recognised for developing rights-based, transformative practice responses that empower Aboriginal people to heal from the continuing effects and processes of colonisation.

Sue-Anne has extensive experience in the governance and the leadership of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and her expertise is regularly sought for government inquiries, parliamentary and ministerial advisory committees, academic research projects and media interviews.



Presenter

Ngarra Murray

Co-Chair, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria



Ngarra Murray is a proud Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta, Dhudhuroa and Dja Dja Wurrung woman who grew up in Shepparton, and is Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (the Assembly).

She has significant cultural and familial connections to many parts of Victoria and NSW. Living and working on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country, Ngarra represents the diverse Aboriginal Communities of the Metropolitan region.

As the elected Co-Chair, Ngarra is a spokesperson for the Assembly. Her role is to elevate the voices and priorities of Community members on the journey to Treaties in Victoria. She is committed to meeting with all Traditional Owner groups and spending time 'talking Treaty' with communities to foster nation-building and consensus-building throughout her term.

Ngarra is passionate about community mobilisation, the inalienable power of sovereignty and lore, and Treaties in our near future. Before commencing her full-time leadership role at the Assembly, Ngarra was the Executive Lead of the First Peoples' Program at Oxfam Australia. Oxfam Australia are a global movement of people fighting inequality to end poverty and injustice. In her role, Ngarra worked across local, national and global alliances and led a team working across multiple national priorities; including building constituency for change, policy and influencing activities and the Oxfam Straight Talk program. Ngarra played a critical role in the success of the Straight Talk program, supporting hundreds of First Nations women to engage with political systems and forge important connections globally. Ngarra has made immense contributions to Oxfam Australia and devoted more than ten years of service to the organisation.

Ngarra has held a range of positions at The University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne, Co-Health and Museum Victoria. Ngarra was previously a Member of the National NAIDOC Committee and Member of Creative Victoria's First Peoples Direction Circle. She is an Alumni of the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership. Outside of her professional commitments, Ngarra is a mother of four children, and is the second oldest of 12 siblings. She prioritises family, Country, Culture, sport and art. She enjoys visiting Murray River country and her traditional lands around Cummeragunja, Shepparton, and Barmah.

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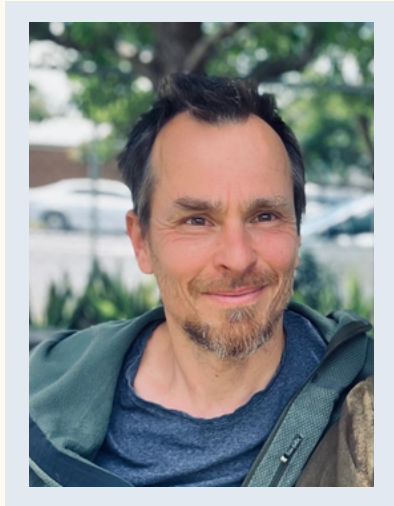


Presenters

Dr Mario Peucker, Associate Professor, Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities, Victoria University and Executive Member, Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS)

Linda Yang, Islamophobia Support Service Community and Case Support Officer Islamic Council of Victoria

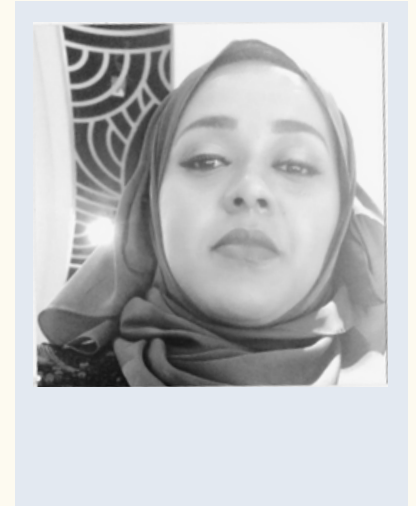
Huwieda Idris, Caseworker, Doorways Salvation Army



Mario Peucker is an associate professor at the Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities at Victoria University and an executive member of the think tank Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS). Mario has undertaken research on community activism, inclusion-exclusion dynamics and radical political movements since 2003, both in Europe and since 2010 in Australia. In the past few years, his work has mainly focussed on facilitating community-led change in supporting those who experience racism.



Linda Yang is the Islamophobia Support Service Community and Case Support Officer at the Islamic Council of Victoria. Linda is passionate about empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds by creating inclusive opportunities. Linda has completed her Bachelor's Degree in Food Technology and Nutrition, Diploma in Counselling and several studies in Family and Domestic Violence. Linda comes from a range of experiences and has worked within the community service sector alongside the Australian Multicultural Foundation, National Zakat Foundation and Uniting VicTas. Linda is also a current member of Darebin Interfaith Advisory Committee and Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network.



Huwieda Idris is a caseworker and community connector. She facilitates and leads projects, advocates and assists community members in navigating services. Huweida is currently working as a case manager at Doorways Salvation Army



Snapshot Presenters

Empowering Women - Hearing from Grassroots Perspectives



Nicki Johnson

Artistic Program Manager, Community Music Victoria

Nicki Johnson is a community music activist with a deep appreciation of the power of participatory music-making to heal, connect and ignite change. Nicki currently leads 4 Melbourne choirs with a focus on inclusion and social justice, and in her role at Community Music Victoria is responsible for the design of programs and events supporting music group leaders and their communities. Nicki also sings with the Songrise quartet, and is one songwriting-ukulele-playing-mouth-trumpeting half of contemporary folk duo All the Way Home.



Fazlinda Faroo

Community Programs Manager, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights

Fazlinda Faroo is a social worker with close to 30 years of experience in working with Muslim families and youths. Her passion lies in family work in particular supporting clients experiencing grief, loss and trauma. She currently works with the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights overseeing a wide spectrum of preventive programs and services for Muslim women in Melbourne.

Snapshot Presenters

Empowering Women - Hearing from Grassroots Perspectives



Rocca Salcedo

Founder, Dance N Roll

Rocca migrated from Colombia to Australia around 20 years ago to pursue studies in International Law at the University of Melbourne. Little did she know that her life would take a new turn in Melbourne after being hit by a car which caused her to become paraplegic owing to a spinal cord injury.

To live the life she is living now, she has faced many challenges but have always overcome them with great determination. She has previously worked as radio host on community radio 3ZZZ and has also worked at various NGOs and is still currently involved in the disability sector working for the Disability Services Commissioner.

On top of these commitments, she still takes some time to play tennis and badminton where her team, Ability Para-Badminton Club, were finalists in the Disability Sports & Recreation awards. Rocca set up a para-dance group called Dance N Roll with the purpose of encouraging people with physical disabilities to dance, enjoy music and be physically active. She has also been learning and playing the violin for the past five years and is a member of the Eltham Orchestra.

She is an ambassador of This Girl Can Vic. The first woman in a wheelchair, promoting physical activity and exercise for women regardless of their ability, age, and ethnicity.

She is a Victorian Disability Award 2021 awardee and was nominated in the Brendan Gabe leadership Award 2021, an award from the Women with Disabilities Victoria.



About Victorian Transcultural Mental Health

We acknowledge that VTMH is located on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. VTMH celebrates the continuing culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We know this land has history, custodians and stories spanning tens of thousands of years. In a spirit of reconciliation, we commit to walking the journey of learning and healing together.

VTMH is funded by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Division of the Victorian Department of Health (DoH), and administered by St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne.

Our mission is *working together to create healthy connected communities, where no one is left behind.*

VTMH works with organisations and agencies to strengthen their capacity to address inequity in mental health service provision, with the overarching goal of improving the mental health, social and emotional wellbeing of culturally diverse individuals, families and communities.

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