

# Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

September 2023

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## Welcome to our September edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

In this issue, Keith Giles reflects on how the Kingdom is within us.

You can read an obituary for Mac MacCormack and admire and read about more brilliant flower arrangements from the Mother's Day service.

This month's "forgotten woman" is aviator Maude Bonney, who secretly took up flying while hubby was golfing. Also lots photos of milestone celebrations.

The cut-off date for the October edition of Vision will be **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September**.

Either drop a copy in to Nicole at the Office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or [snout-n-about@bigpond.com](mailto:snout-n-about@bigpond.com)

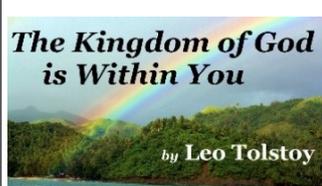
Go well.

## The Kingdom is Within You

Adapted from a post by Keith Giles

"The most difficult subjects can be explained to the most slow-witted man if he has not formed any idea of them already; but the simplest thing cannot be made clear to the most intelligent man if he is firmly persuaded that he knows already, without a shadow of doubt, what is laid before him."  
- Leo M. Tolstoy (The Kingdom of God is Within You)

The first time I read through Tolstoy's manifesto, it really scared me because Tolstoy's vision of following Christ was more radical, more unflinching, more ego-destroying, than anything I had ever encountered. Other than the red letters of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount, that is. Those words burned holes in my soul and ignited a flame in my heart that has never been extinguished.



His book made me believe that following the Way of Jesus was not only possible, it was essential to my survival and to the future of humanity on this earth. He boldly confronted the demonic influence of Empire, the insanity of war, the necessity of love, and the inevitability of God's Kingdom reign on this planet we inhabit.

Even though his words had been penned so long ago, they felt as real and as vibrant and vital as any writings by more modern authors. His words vibrated with the frequency of liberation, of love, and of a radical inner transformation of the human soul from mere selfish animal to a divine, self-giving Christ-likeness.

His book made me wonder, "Is it possible?" and it made me ask, "Could we really change the world?" By the end of the book I was more than certain that it was indeed possible and that our world was already in the process of being changed by the wisdom and life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Later, I learned that people like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were influenced by this book.

I hope you might decide to read Tolstoy's magnum opus and allow yourself to be transported into a brand-new way of seeing the world through the lens of Christ.

It just might change your life.

*Keith Giles is the best-selling author of the Jesus Un Series. His latest book is, "Sola Mysterium: Celebrating the Beautiful Uncertainty of Everything."*

### Note from the author

Today, I celebrate a new release of Tolstoy's this life-changing book – Magnum Opus. It is one of several titles being launched in a new series by Quoir Classics. Others include Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass by Lewis Carroll, and A Spring Harvest by Geoffrey Bache Smith. Future titles in this new Quoir Classics series will include The Brothers Karamazov by Dostoyevsky, The Call of the Wild by Jack London, and The Prophet by Khalil Gibran.

Why are we doing this? Because we hope to encourage readers to seek out great works by exceptional authors who challenge our status quo and inspire us to think differently. Quoir Classics is all about the rejuvenation of great works from exceptional authors of literature, poetry, philosophy and mysticism that still resonate with modern readers today.

## Imagining a Safer World

The World Council of Churches has released the video of a presentation by Peter Prove at an event in Adelaide on August 14<sup>th</sup> at Prospect UC by CTSA and WCC.

You can view it at <https://churchestogethersa.org.au/safer-world/>

It was an excellent presentation with significant information and theological reflection on our role as Christian people and

Churches together as peace makers locally, nationally and globally.

This presentation, along with Allan Behm's video presentation at the same event, can be found on the Churches Together SA website, and Churches Together SA YouTube as PDFs.

**Churches Together SA**  
South Australian Council of Churches  
Listening, Learning and Living in the Way of Christ



## Adelaide Male Voice Choir @ Morialta UC

From Community Building & Fundraising Team

Adelaide Male Voice Choir will be presenting a “Springtime Concert” at Morialta Uniting Church at 2.00pm on **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October**. The concert will have a Music for Spring theme with guest pianist Jacob Fabich, so pencil the date into your diary.

Proceeds will be shared with AMVC and if we all bring one friend – it will be a great success!



## Fellowship News

From Arlene Lomman

Eighteen members had lunch at The Clay Cup this month. This cafe is an outreach of the Rostrevor Baptist Church so we wanted to support them. The menu was varied, we all had plenty to eat and there was much chatter.

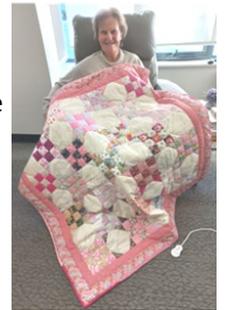
For various reasons the format of the September meeting has had to change. Please watch the church newsletter for the new details.



## Milestones

Marie Elson recently celebrated her 90th birthday with a cake in the hall after worship, and lunch with the ladies in red!

Beverly Hopkins was delighted to receive one of Judith Purling’s magnificent quilts.



## MUC Art and Craft Circle

Contributed by Anne ind

The Art and Craft circle on Friday mornings at Morialta has grown. Participants bring anything that they would like to work on. As well as completing the diverse types of projects, there is plenty of animated conversation to go with it!



A mini-exhibition of some of their work was recently held in the foyer.



## Japanese Playgroup news

The Japanese playgroup meets at Morialta on Monday mornings and recently enjoyed a lunch and social gathering with members of Morialta.



## Spring thoughts...

David Purling was able to go for a walk in the garden after COVID closed his residence. He found this stone plaque which reads – “Quiet Hearts can hear the Song of a Garden.”



## Ervine (Mac) McCormack 1936 - 2023



Mac was born in 1936 in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland to Matilda and William McCormack and grew up on a farm near Donegal with his 4 brothers. As his family were often the targets of the IRA, they moved to Australia in 1948, when Mac was 12. He lived with his younger brothers in Magill Boys' Home for 6-12 months before moving to Felixstow then Windsor gardens with the rest of his family.

Mac played football and being quite talented he was asked to play for Norwood at age 15. Although he only played for a short time, Norwood was a lifelong love, as was football and the Crows. He continued his football career at Payneham, where he won many awards.

Mac met Barbara at school and after a Sunday School romance, they married in 1959. Son Ricky was born in 1960 and daughter Joanna in 1963. They were happily married and had a great partnership for 28 years, until Barbara died in 1987.

After leaving school Mac was apprenticed as a fitter and turner for various companies then worked as an engineer for the Advertiser. In the 1960s he had a family earthmoving company which built the Gorge Road and until the day he died, he still told you what was wrong with every other road he drove on.

Later he moved to White Cliffs, Andamooka and then Coober Pedy with his 4 brothers. But it was his with engineering work for other miners and their tractors that kept him busy. He stayed in Coober Pedy and was offered work at the school and then TAFE, teaching the mechanical trades. He later became a senior lecturer in the school of Aboriginal Education where he designed and taught programs. His innovation and passion for his work benefitted both Aboriginal students and Aboriginal communities across the state. In his own words, his success in changing so many lives, through the many different programmes he had successfully run over his working career, was that 'you need to love them like how you would love your own children.' When youth were in trouble with the law, rather than seeing them go to jail, he would negotiate with the magistrate to have them put into his care and custody, guaranteeing to keep them out of jail and teach them new skills. He took great pride in seeing so many of his students go on to do great things with their lives and hearing the stories of their success in their professional careers.

His passion and dedication were rewarded when he received a Public Service medal for his work in Ab Ed. His students had a special place in his heart (and he in theirs) and he often invited them to his home. On one occasion he arrived home with 'some' students for dinner and, when Barbara asked how many, he replied 22!

In 1991 Mac met Betty (Hosking) who had also been widowed, and after a 'very frosty' start they later married, creating new chapters in both their lives as husband and wife.

He continued his engineering skills into retirement, building a tunnelling machine, fixing Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends, and many other toys and broken things. He was also one of the volunteer 'washer uppers' at Lunch on Chapel and many of us got to know him and enjoy his company while doing dishes.

Although Mac was passionate about his faith, his football, his travels and his work, his greatest passion was family, particularly his grandchildren. He would often go to watch them play sport, and regarded them as too good for their team mates and the umpires and he had to be reminded that they were only 6- to 8-year-olds! Even so, he prided himself in also being there as a trusted counsellor and advisor when they needed it, and was a truly amazing role model to all his children and grandchildren.

Mac had a strong faith which got him through many illnesses, including rheumatic fever twice, being crushed between a boat and a jetty and by a bus. He also survived a number of surgical operations.

David McGowan (president of Public Service Medal Association) summarises the attributes of a Public Service Medallist as: "Unquestionable integrity; innovative and a grasp of reality, having the purpose and confidence for making citizens lives better, persistence, having the courage to resist the calls of the nay-sayers and bring the innovative ideas to reality, communication, possessing an ease in talking to people wherever and whoever they might be, communicating without prejudice, accepting all just as they are."

As David says: "One Ervine (Mac) McCormack had them in spades."



## Poetry Church at Clayton Wesley

The psalmist wrote, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' (Psalm 46:10). Clayton Wesley Uniting Church is launching a new weekly Sunday evening service of lectio divina and contemplation. Making space for peace. Restoring our soul. Deepening our faith.

Poetry Church services begin on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> September, weekly at 6.00 pm. All welcome. More information is available on the Clayton Wesley website or contact Rev Olly Ponsonby on 0420 961 081.

## More Mother's Day Flowers 2023

On May 14<sup>th</sup> flower roster members presented a beautiful floral display focusing on the Women of the Bible. Here are the last 3 displays from Mother's Day.



Rhonda Amber remembers Deborah, the only female judge mentioned in the Bible. Deborah is known for being a compassionate leader. She worked to purge the nation of those who kept Israel spiritually complacent and under slavery to the Canaanites, returning to worship of the one true God.

Ruth Pitt's focus on Ruth offers us the beautiful words that are used at weddings, 'Where you go, I will go, where you stay, I will stay, your home will be my home, your God my God'. She commits to staying with Naomi, to protect her, and to shield her from the harsh reality of life. Ruth eventually marries Boaz and cares for her mother-in-law in a way only a woman can do.



Sharon's arrangement focusing on Elizabeth, includes chrysanthemums, one of the most popular flowers. They are lovingly referred to as the queen of the autumn flowers, and the "mum" symbolizes patience, joy, life, friendship, and birth. Considered too old to conceive a child with patience and love she went on to give birth to John the Baptist, who told the world of its coming saviour, Jesus Christ.

## Fast Thinking!

Source anonymous – Contributed by Wayne Curtis

An elderly man owned a large farm with a large pond in the back. It was properly shaped for swimming, so he fixed it up with picnic tables, horseshoe courts, and some apple and peach trees.

One evening the old farmer decided to go down to the pond and look it over. He grabbed a 20 litre bucket to bring back some fruit. As he neared the pond, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. As he came closer, he saw it was a bunch of young women skinny-dipping in his pond.

He made the women aware of his presence and they all went to the deep end. One of the women shouted to him, 'We're not coming out until you leave!'

The old man frowned, 'I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim naked, or make you get out of the pond naked.' Holding the bucket up he said, 'I'm here to feed the crocodile...'

Some old men can still think fast!

## Asleep on the sofa ... but wide awake in bed?

*Adapted from an article in the Conversation by Madeline Sprajcer and Sally Ferguson CQ University Australia*

Many of us doze while watching TV, then when we go to bed, we find that we are wide awake. Why does sleep come so easily on the sofa but not always in bed?

Our body clock tells us to be awake during the day and to sleep at night, and the longer we have been awake the greater the sleep pressure. This creates the strength of the biological drive for sleep. Perhaps we have just eaten, we are comfortable, the room is warm, lighting dim, and TV is murmuring in the background. This is the perfect environment for falling asleep.

However, if we nap on the sofa before heading to bed, our sleep pressure will be much lower after the nap. Instead of having more than 16 hours of wakefulness behind us, we have just woken up with reduced sleep pressure. This can make it much harder to fall asleep in bed.



After a 5-minute nap, we may have little trouble getting to sleep in bed because our sleep pressure will not be affected. But if we sleep for an hour, it might be a different story.

Our sleep cycles may also have an effect. Most sleep cycles are about 90 minutes long. They start with light sleep, progress to deep sleep, and then end with light sleep. If we wake up during deep sleep, we may find it easy to get back to sleep if we go straight to bed. But if we wake up during light sleep or do activities – doing exercises or brushing our teeth – we become more alert and find it harder to sleep in bed.

There are other reasons why falling asleep is not easy. We may experience anxiety about falling asleep. We may worry about getting enough sleep or falling asleep fast enough. Hence we may find it easier to fall asleep on the couch, where there is less stress involved.

Healthy sleep habits include having a regular routine before bed, a dark, quiet room to sleep in and a regular bedtime. Make sure your room is dark, quiet, and comfortable. Put a heater on for 20 minutes before going to bed in winter, or use a fan or air conditioning in summer to make the room more comfortable. Forget your phone as scrolling on your phone before bed can make it harder to sleep due to exposure to blue light and the potentially stressful effect of the content. You can try playing 'white noise' in your bedroom as you fall asleep, especially if this masks other disruptive noises.

But the best way to make it easier to fall asleep in your bed is to avoid falling asleep on the sofa in the first place!

## Forgotten women of history – Maude Bonney, female aviator



Born Maude Rose Rubens in 1897 in Pretoria, South Africa, she later adopted the name Dolores, shortened to “Lores”. Her family moved first to England in 1901, then to Australia in 1903. After attending the Star of the Sea Ladies’ College (Brighton, Vic) and the Cromarty Girls’ School (Elsternwick, Vic), she travelled to Germany to advance her music studies at Victoria-Pensionat in Bad Homburg. She became an accomplished pianist but suffered from stage fright.

In 1917, age 19, she met and married Harry Bonney, a leather goods manufacturer, whilst she was a member of the Red Cross working on the war effort. The couple moved to Brisbane, and settled in Bowen Hills.

In 1928 she met her husband’s cousin who had set a solo England–Australia record in his Avro Avian biplane. His exploits fired her imagination and her first flight confirmed her determination to fly. She took her first lessons (secretly whilst her husband played golf) and gained her private pilot’s licence within the year. When she told her husband, he bought her a de Havilland DH.60 Gypsy Moth (photo) which she named My Little Ship.



Bonney’s first record breaking long-distance flight was in December 1931. Spending Christmas Day with her husband in Brisbane, she departed

Brisbane at 4.30am Boxing Day, arriving at Wangaratta at 7.20pm in time for dinner with her father.

She was the first woman to circumnavigate Australia (1932); the first woman to fly from Australia to England (1933); and the first woman to fly from Australia to South Africa (1937).

The outbreak of the Second World War ended her flying career just as she was planning an around the world flight, via Japan, Alaska and the United States. One of her planes was destroyed in a hangar fire in 1939 and the other was requisitioned for the war effort and deployed in a flying training unit.

After serving on the executive of the Queensland branch of the Women’s Voluntary National Register, she returned to flying but retired in 1949 due to failing eyesight. During the 1950s she was president of the Queensland branch of the Australian Women Pilots’ Association.

Bonney was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1934 and later was made a member of the order of Australia in 1991. The Bonney Trophy is still awarded annually to an outstanding female British pilot and the Australian Women Pilots Association has also established a trophy in her honour. Her name and her wings were placed on the wall of the Flyer’s Chapel at California’s St. Francis Atrio Mission, alongside the names of Charles Lindbergh, Charles Kingsford Smith and Amelia Earhart. She was awarded a doctorate of education from Griffith University and in 2012, she was inducted into the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame.

Bonney died at her home in Miami on Queensland’s Gold Coast in 1994, aged 96.

## Impact of Australian charities

*From the Australian Charities Not-for-Profits Commission – contributed by Carole Lyons*



The ACNC Report by the Commissioner highlighted the following data. “What struck me (*the Commissioner*) most from the report was not just the dedication and resilience of Australian charities in pursuit of their missions; it was the sheer scale of their impact.

In Australia, the charity sector employs 10.5% of Australia’s workforce, that’s more than 1 in 10 people in paid employment. Perhaps many will also be surprised to learn that charities generate more than \$190 billion in annual revenue.

But there is also a concerning trend – the continuing decline in volunteer numbers – down almost 600,000 from 2018. With half of all charities having no paid staff and relying on volunteers to run their operations, this is a sobering statistic”.

The Commissioner understands the crucial role charities play beyond the numbers contained in her report. “During the reporting period, charities gave help in natural disasters, such as bushfires and floods, rescuing and treating wildlife, raising money for people impacted and helping communities clean-up and rebuild. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, charities provided food relief to those who were unemployed, face masks and tests to those who needed them, social support to those who were isolated and housing to those who were homeless – all while contending with their own challenges. Charities are quick to mobilise in times of crisis and their close relationship with the community means they often know how best to help. We should never take that for granted”.



## Fusing traditional culture and the violin

Adapted from an article by Laura Case, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, published in the Conversation

To only report the brutality and destruction of the colonists in Australia is to miss seeing how Indigenous people engaged, influenced, rejected, and survived the forces of colonisation.

An example is Indigenous violin playing where Aboriginal people adapted the European violin to fit within ongoing cultural practices. Other western instruments have been adapted to become an expression of culture and Indigenous identity.

As colonial governments made more concerted efforts to “civilise” Aboriginal people in 20th century Australia, many were segregated from society on missions or reserves. Missionaries taught European activities and regularly forbade Aboriginal people from practising traditional customs. Western music was often taught to Aboriginal people as preparation for assimilation into white Australian society.



One of the first missions to explicitly use the violin in attempts to “civilise” Aboriginal people was on the New Norcia Mission, north of Perth, which operated from 1848 until 1974.

Aboriginal people continued to play the violin even when not

prescribed. They used music in the creation and preservation of individual, cultural, and collective identities. The violin was used on their own terms.

Peter Jetta, a Nyungar man on the New Norcia Mission, used the violin as a hybrid expression of his own traditional culture. He played the violin for local dances, weddings, and Nyungar-only campfire gatherings in the bush. With this fusion of music, he used the violin to enhance and maintain a sense of community.

In 1933, the Singleton Argus published a story on the wedding of Robert Silva and Mildred Bartholomew. Music was provided by an Aboriginal jazz band playing locally made

violins, banjos, steel guitars and gum leaves. As the couple walked down the aisle the musicians played the Wedding March – a rich evocation of the way western instruments were incorporated into Aboriginal events on their own terms.

A Minstrel.



An article from the Northern Champion in 1934 recounts a concert and corroboree that occurred in Purfleet, New South Wales, for the local “townspeople”. We can assume many in the audience were white. The first part of the program was devoted to songs and native dances, followed by a corroboree which illustrated elements of native lore. Each instrument was homemade and included single-string fiddles, violins and ukuleles made from tea chests.

These musicians combined their familiar traditions and cultures with European instruments. They were not only keeping cultural practices alive and carrying traditional knowledge forward, but also educating the broader population.

While some performances were organised to protest the repressive policies of 20th century Australia, other performances were organised as a willingness to share cultural diversity to both educate and engage non-Indigenous audiences.

These historical violinists are the predecessors of creative and innovative Indigenous string players who enrich our contemporary cultural life today. Noongar violinist, composer and conductor Aaron Wyatt made history in 2022 as the first Indigenous conductor of a state orchestra. Wyatt’s compositions draw on western string instruments and didgeridoo to reflect the beauty of Australian landscapes and convey an Indigenous connection to Country.

Violinist Eric Avery creates starkly original pieces for voice and violin that evoke a powerful connection to his ancestors, culture, and identity. Both Wyatt and Avery exceed and surpass the archetype of classical string playing to create immensely original and modern compositions.

## The wonders of [evolutionary] creation

From Science Vol 379 2023.

Many mammalian species have adapted their coat colour to seasonal change – shifting from brownish summer coats to whitish winter coats to match their environment. However, in many locations, climate change has already begun to affect the extent and timing of snow cover, leaving many individuals and populations mismatched to their backgrounds for part of the year.

Ferreira et al. looked at the genetics underlying these coat colour changes and their variation across populations in white-tailed jack rabbits. What they found was that white-tailed jackrabbits already have the genetic coding to adapt to reduce snow cover and can adapt rapidly. This provides a trait-based genetic framework to facilitate evolutionary rescue.

So, did evolution prepare the jack-rabbits for shorter snow cover just in case, or did the jack-rabbits twig to climate change before humans?

The mystery of ‘Evolutionary Creation’!



## Australian ant honey – a new antimicrobial?

*Adapted from an article published in the Conversation by Dee Carter, Professor of Microbiology, University of Sydney, and colleagues.*

The medicinal value and potent antimicrobial activity of honey has been a topic of considerable interest in recent years, particularly considering the rise in antibiotic resistance.

While most honey comes from honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), other insects such as stingless bees, wasps and even ants can produce honey-like products from plant nectar.

The honeypot ant *Camponotus inflatus*, found throughout the central desert region of Australia, is an example. Their honey has powerful anti-microbial effects, particularly against certain heat-tolerant yeasts and moulds which resist most current antifungal drugs.

Honeypot ants develop large nests in the soil and certain worker ants, known as “repletes”, serve as living food stores. They are fed by other members of the colony, who forage for nectar and honeydew, and the repletes accumulate a golden honey-like substance in their flexible abdomens. They become almost immobile and hang together from the ceiling of the nest, storing honey for the nest.

The honey ant also holds cultural and nutritional significance. As Danny Ulrich of the Tjupan language group says: *For our people, honey ants are more than just a food source. Digging for them is a very enjoyable way of life. It’s a way of bringing the family together, to connect with each other and nature.*

Local Indigenous people have traditionally used ant honey to treat colds and sore throats, and possibly as a topical ointment to help keep infections at bay – suggesting potential antimicrobial properties.

To study the efficacy of ant honey as an antimicrobial, honey from ants was pooled and its ability to inhibit various pathogenic bacteria, yeasts and moulds tested. Comparisons with anti-microbial activity of bee honey from manuka honey from New Zealand, and jarrah honey from Western Australia were also made.



While the bee honeys showed broad activity and were able to inhibit every pathogen tested at similar levels, the honeypot ant honey showed remarkable potency against certain microbes, but little against others.

Intriguingly, honeypot ant honey was particularly effective against some pathogens that are well adapted to living in soils and dry conditions, but can also cause very serious infections in people, especially those with severely weakened immune systems.

In particular, the ant honey was able to inhibit heat-tolerant yeasts and moulds that are likely to be present in the honey ant nest and surrounding environment. These organisms can be very difficult to kill with most antifungal medicines. It appears that the evolutionary pressure imposed by these soil microorganisms on the ants has enabled them to evolve selective antimicrobial activity in their honey.

While it is not feasible to domesticate honeypot ants for honey production, their honey may provide valuable insights for the development of useful new antimicrobial peptides, expanding our arsenal of effective antibacterial and antifungal treatments.

Yet another wonder of the creation!

## Is it will power or gut microbes that get you off the couch?

*Adapted from an article by Christoph A. Thaiss (and others) published in Nature 2022.*

Willpower might be key to getting off the couch to exercise, but bacteria may lend a helping hand. Studies in mice suggest microbes in the gut may be behind differences in the desire to work out. Specific microbial molecules appear to stimulate a rodent’s desire to run – and keep running. By revealing exactly how these molecules talk to the brain, this group has set the stage for finding out whether similar signals help keep humans active.

The work establishes just how critical the microbiome is for exercise and provides a possible new gut-brain connection. Other scientists speculate that exercise-inducing commands from the microbes might one day be packaged into pills people could take. (*Could this eradicate sloth?! Ed*)

Thaiss and his team studied mice bred to have large genetic and behavioural variation and found more than a fivefold difference in how far the mice ran on wheels in their cages. Some covered more than 30 km in 48 hours, whereas others rarely moved in their wheels.

While the active and lazy mice didn’t show any significant genetic or biochemical differences in their genetics or biochemistry, when treated with antibiotics, mice that were normally highly energetic tended to exercise less. Follow-up studies showed the antibiotic treatment affected the brains of the formerly active mice. They also found that “germ-free” mice, which lack gut bacteria, become more active when given some of the gut microbes from vigorous mice.

So, will the finding hold in people? Researchers are guarded but note that rodents’ muscle structure and biochemistry differ from people’s – as do their activity patterns. And rodents don’t make New Year’s resolutions!

Still, studies have found that marathon runners have high levels of a particular gut microbe, suggesting an exercise connection in people. And there is a lot of evidence for the key role dopamine plays in motivating overall behaviour. This reward system is such a central facet of physiology that it’s something that’s almost certainly true in other mammals – including humans.



## Natural Disasters

From UNHCR, National Centres for Environmental Information and Clear Insurance

Every year we read of natural disasters where hundreds, even thousands, of people are affected. Many become homeless, some permanently, while many just lose everything they own. Over the past decade, approximately 45,000 people globally died from natural disasters each year but the real effect is on refugees. Between 2008 and 2016, the annual average of people forcibly displaced each year by weather-related events – such as floods, storms, wildfires and extreme temperatures – was 21.5 million (UNHCR).

Records also demonstrate that all types of natural disasters are increasing, thought to be in part (at least) due to changes in the climate. The number of natural disasters world-wide that cost over a billion dollars has increased over the last forty years, rising from an average of three per year in the 1980s to 13 per year during the 2010s.

Over recent years, flooding and severe storm events have increased the most compared with all types of natural disasters. About 45% of all flooding disasters tracked by the National Centers for Environmental Information, and 54% of severe storm events, occurred between 2013 and 2022.

But not only are natural disasters occurring more frequently, but the average cost of natural disasters has increased as well. In 2022 there were 176 significant floods, 108 severe storms, 31 earthquakes, 22 areas in drought, 17 major landslides, 15 wildfires, 12 extreme heat waves, and 5 major volcanic eruptions, considerably more than for earlier decades.

Natural disasters in Australia include heatwaves, wild fires (bushfires), droughts, floods, storms and tropical cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides. The main cause of floods in Australia is heavy or long-lasting rainfall, which can make rivers exceed their capacity and overflow. In coastal areas flooding can be caused by tsunamis, very high tides, or tropical cyclones, which cause surges of seawater.



The worst wild fires in Australia's history occurred from September 2019 to March 2020, when fires heavily impacted various regions of New South Wales and north-eastern Victoria.

Several large areas of forest burnt out of control for four weeks before the fires emerged from the forests in late December. Over 10,000 buildings were destroyed with the damage bill reaching \$103 billion dollars, a similar amount to what Australia will spend on healthcare in 2022/23 and 15 times more than the cost of cyclone Tracy.

Climatologists warn that as global surface temperatures increase the possibility of more droughts, wild fires and increased intensity of storms will likely occur. As more water vapor is evaporated into the atmosphere it becomes fuel for more powerful storms to develop. Other impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, will make coastal storms, floods and inundation even more damaging, as erosion and flooding will occur further up the shoreline.

## Church engagement with Aboriginal peoples and cultures

National Church Life Survey

The 2021 National Church Life Survey (2021 NCLS) shows a significant increase in Australian church engagement with Aboriginal peoples and cultures in recent years. In late 2021 and early 2022, a majority (57%) of Australian churches indicated that they had acknowledged or engaged with Aboriginal people and culture through at least one of 10 different actions. This compared with only 37% in 2016.

Most common were spoken acknowledgments of country or welcome to country, as well as special services and events such as Sorry Day or NAIDOC week (reported by 22-23% of churches).

Catholic parishes led the way with 81% having undertaken at least one of the specified actions, followed by 59% for main stream Protestants, 41% Pentecostals and 49% other Protestants.

Just over 60% of capital city churches were involved in at least one activity compared with 59% of regional churches and 51% of rural churches.

Catholics were especially strong on special services and events (40%), acknowledgment of, or welcome to country (32

to 40%), integrating Aboriginal art, symbols or language into worship (25%) and having Aboriginal artwork in their buildings (18%).

Mainstream Protestant churches were strongest on acknowledgment of, or welcome to country in church services (31%), and 20% observed special Days. Mission and outreach programs were most commonly found in Pentecostal churches (19%). A small number of Catholic and Protestant churches had Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs).

You can read the full report at <https://www.ncls.org.au/articles/more-churches-are-engaging-with-aboriginal-people-and-culture/#:>

