



WEDNESDAY, June 3, 2020 - WEBINAR PANELISTS

‘UNITY’

THOMAS MAYOR



Thomas Mayor is a Torres Strait Islander man born on Larrakia country in Darwin.

As an Islander growing up on the mainland, he learned to hunt traditional foods with his father and to island dance from the Darwin community of Torres Strait Islanders.

In high school, Thomas’s English teacher suggested he should become a writer.

He didn’t think then that he would become one of the first ever Torres Strait Islander authors to have a book published for the general trade.

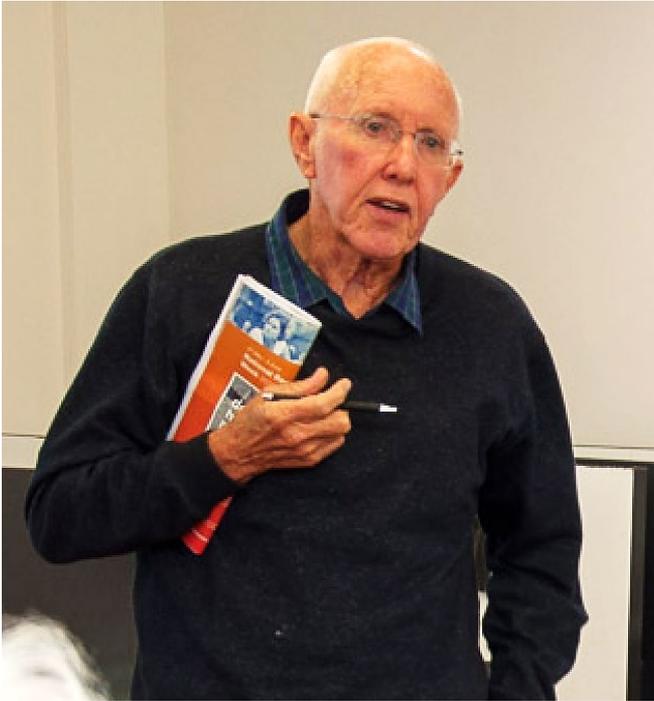
Instead, he became a wharf labourer from the age of seventeen, until he became a union official for the Maritime Union of Australia in his early thirties.

Quietly spoken in character, Thomas found his voice on the wharves. As he gained the skills of negotiation and organising in the union movement, he applied those skills to advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples, becoming a signatory to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a tireless campaigner.

Following the Uluru Convention, Thomas was entrusted to carry the sacred canvas of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. He then embarked on an 18-month journey around the country to garner support for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice, and a Makarrata Commission for truth-telling and agreement-making or treaties.

He’s visited communities big and small, often with the Uluru Statement canvas rolled up in a tube under his arm. Through the story of his own journey and interviews with 20 key people, Thomas taps into a deep sense of our shared humanity. Thomas believes that we will only find the heart of our nation when the First peoples – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – are recognised with a representative Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

ROSS DANIELS



Ross Daniels was the chairperson of Amnesty International's International Executive Committee and prior to that was the President of Amnesty International in Australia.

Daniels is a keen campaigner for human rights around the world; he is a frequent speaker on this topic at seminars and conferences.

Ross has been actively involved in a range of human rights groups, including Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) and the Human Rights and Peace Society Nepal.

<http://antarqld.org.au/>

He has served on the boards of many community and welfare organisations besides Amnesty International. He is currently a member of the council of the Queensland University of Technology. He has also been the president of the Queensland Council of Social Services.

Daniels has been a lecturer at the Queensland University of Technology for 20 years. Before this he was a social worker for 12 years. He met his wife Sharon while they were both social workers. He and Sharon have four children.

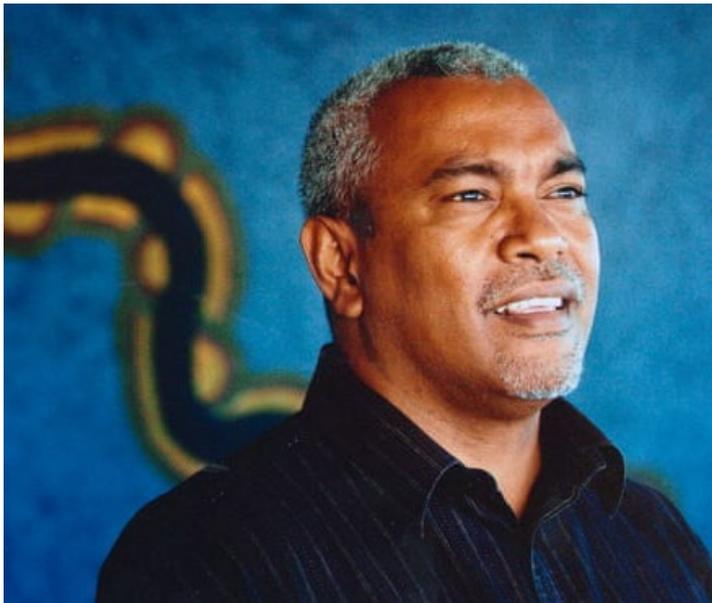
He holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree, a Bachelor of Economics degree and a master's degree in social planning and development, all from the University of Queensland.

He has retired after 25 years of lecturing in human rights at the Queensland University of Technology.

Ross is particularly interested in resolving the removal of Indigenous children from their families and working on different models of care.

He is keen to see more people actively involved in the important campaigns of ANTaR Queensland.

MR CHARLES JIA



Charles Jia (Charlie) is currently managing the MOMENTIM project for the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) as the Regional Coordinator, Men's Mental Health.

He coordinates the important Movember funded project.

MomenTIM's single goal and complex challenge is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

men, across 3 regional locations in Australia (Deception Bay, Mt Isa, and Wellington near Dabo).

Young male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a disproportionately and unacceptably high rate of mental health issues, often leading to self-harm and suicide. It's a spectrum of suffering linked to heightened and ongoing exposure to documented risk factors such as drug and alcohol use, stress and social disadvantage.

Charles is fostering strong relationships, positive leaders and real prospects to create a pathway out of this situation.

The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) leads the planning, development and delivery of comprehensive primary health care services to the Indigenous population of South East Queensland (SEQ, with 20 multidisciplinary primary health clinics.

Using the IUIH Model of Care, we are empowering communities in South East Queensland to take responsibility for the delivery of health services to Indigenous Australians, by Indigenous Australians. In this way, IUIH is not only helping to Close the Gap in life expectancy but is laying the foundations for better education, real jobs in the real economy and safer communities.

Charlies is author of the famous **GUARDIAN** article, ['What if Aboriginal people helped all Australians to connect to country.'](#)

Picture this: every time Malcolm Turnbull addresses the nation, he acknowledges the Aboriginal country he was born on. Charlie Jia imagines a new kind of united Australian identity.

Semara Jose



Semara Jose is a proud Gudjula, Eastern-Kuku Yalanji and Darnley Island woman.

Born and raised in Cairns, she is the co-founder and chairperson of [Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good](#) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation.

With a passion for youth leadership, she empowers young people to create change for themselves, their families and their communities.

Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation. The group is currently set up for young people aged 17 to 25. DIYDG is based in Cairns and offer an opportunity for all young people young people to give back to their community in a safe an supportive environment. DIYDG aims to provide opportunities for young people to connect in healthy & productive ways.

[The mission of the organisation](#) is to inspire, equip and empower young people to take action and change the world. Their vision is that one day every young person will discover their power to make a difference.

DIYDG presented at the National Indigenous Youth Empowerment Summit in Cairns. They deliver leadership workshops, volunteer activities, training camps, professional development programs and educational activities to support indigenous youth leaders of today and tomorrow.

In addition to her role with DIYDG, Semara has also been a Board Member for Wuchopperen Health Service -- a community controlled Aboriginal Health Organisation providing comprehensive primary health care services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Cairns