

UPF Melbourne's Nelson Mandela Day Commemorative Committee of Australia

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Melbourne, Australia -- Throughout the year 2018, the Nelson Mandela Day Commemorative Committee of Australia and UPF-Australia collaborated to create numerous events to honor Mandela. Dr. John Bellavance, vice-president of UPF-Australia, acted as the vice-chair of the Nelson Mandela Day Commemorative Committee (NMDCC) in 2018. Reflecting on his year of service, he says, "It was an honor to work with the committee to celebrate the life of this great man of peace and reconciliation." He also points out, "UPF has played an important role in building up this organization over the years. Many of the committee members are also UPF Ambassadors for Peace."

The 2009 UN General Assembly Resolution that inspired Nelson Mandela Day is more than just a celebration of Madiba's legacy, as Mandela proclaimed this in his own words: "As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest." In 2018 the NMDCC also marked the dawn of the UN Declaration (2019–2028) of the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace.



The NMDCC is part of a global movement to honor Nelson Mandela life's work and act to change the world for the better. This year we were fortunate to have the CEO of the Nelson Mandela foundation, Sello Hatang, visit UPF-Australia. This opened the way for the formalization of the relationship between the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the NMDCC.

In 2018, the NMDCC celebrated the Nelson Mandela Centenary in Australia. It was successful in promoting the values that have embodied Nelson Mandela's life: democracy, equality, reconciliation, diversity, responsibility, non-racial discrimination, respect and freedom. Additionally, Mandela promoted the concept of Ubuntu, a quality that includes the essential human virtues of compassion and service to others.

The events organized by NMDCC had the aim of bridging ethnic and cultural barriers within Australia by providing multicultural celebrations and programs honoring Nelson Mandela's life. Through the hard work of committee members, volunteers, supporters and partners, we were able to present magnificent events.



Third Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture

The Third Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture celebrating the centenary of Mandela's birth was delivered by the Hon. Julia Gillard, Order of Australia, 27th prime minister of Australia, on July 13, 2018, at the Melbourne Town Hall. Reflecting on her lecture, the 27th PM tweeted thus: "Tonight it was my great honour to deliver the Nelson Mandela Day Australia Centenary lecture, celebrating 100 years since Mandela's birth, and the great legacy of his life's work." At the program, she was presented with the Nelson Mandela Ubuntu Award by the committee chair, Arthur Moleko.

Celebrating the Centenary of Nelson Mandela's Birth

Additionally, to celebrate the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth, the NMDCC, supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission and "Madiba -- The Musical" welcomed the public to a day of performances and spoken word.

Nelson Mandela 365 Youth Ambassador Human Rights Program

The NMDCC worked to co-design a program, 365 Nelson Mandela Youth Ambassador Human Rights Program. The program worked with a diverse group of 23 young Africans in Victoria, Australia, to build their knowledge of human rights and equal opportunity laws, as well as providing advocacy, leadership and community engagement skills. Nelson Mandela's legacy and values have underpinned the design of the introductory sessions. Thank-you to Dr. Steve Rametse for supporting the 365 Program with a presentation on the philosophy of Ubuntu and speaking at the participants' graduation.



NMDCC Farewell to a South African Icon

The NMDCC held a memorial service for the late freedom icon Mamma Winnie Nomzamo Madikizela Mandela.

UN Day for the Elimination of Racism

The NMDCC organized a very engaging inaugural UN Day for the Elimination of Racism on March 23, 2019. The keynote was given by Mr. Chin Tan, the Race Discrimination Commissioner for Australia. Dr. John Bellavance, acting chair, also spoke about the need for shared values in our global village.