

Community Development Queensland Seminar 2019



Date: Thursday 26th September, 2019, 4-6pm

Venue: Griffith University, South Bank Building SO7, The Graduate Centre, Room 1.23

This building is directly behind the Ship Inn, Southbank. This end of Southbank is near the Goodwill Pedestrian Bridge. Please join us for a drink at the Ship Inn following the seminar.

We are very happy to host the last Community Development Seminar for 2019.

We view these seminars as an important way to foster a community of practice for CD on a range of pertinent contemporary topics. There's no need to RSVP; just come along.

Animating Freedom in the Context of Historical and Continuing Colonisation: A Radical Community Development Response **Presenter: Jason MacLeod**

West Papua has arisen. The roots of this latest civilian insurrection go deeper than the violent racist attacks that ignited the current firestorm engulfing West Papua and Indonesia. The country is occupied, and that occupation is supported by the international community in general, and the Australian government and its corporate allies, in particular.

Given the entrenched and repressive nature of that occupation, what might it take for Papuans to win freedom in West Papua? This CD Qld seminar, based on the 2019 Backhouse Lecture in Hobart,¹ explores that question from a radical community development perspective, and from the stance of a practitioner engaged in what some have called decolonising solidarity.²

In 1991, Jason MacLeod travelled to occupied West Papua. That visit changed his life. Eight years later, in 1999, Jason made a thirty-year commitment to journey in solidarity with West Papuans as they search for nonviolent ways out of occupation. Since then he has been regularly traveling inside the country, up to five times each year. He has walked alongside Papuan leaders as they journeyed from West Papua to Washington; Port Moresby to Port Vila. It is a passage that has taken him deep into the mountains and forests of West Papua; from the halls of power to the inside of police interrogation rooms.

An outsider who has also been invited to sit inside the freedom movement, Jason has watched the struggle transition from fragmented armed groups waging guerrilla war in the jungles and mountains of New Guinea, to a largely nonviolent, unifying and transnational social movement. Often, he has been the only foreigner invited into historic meetings. He has celebrated as West Papuans captured the attention of people and governments in the Pacific, and despaired as his friends strained, and sometimes perished, under impossible tensions.

Through personal stories Jason will share his practice framework of accompanying the West Papuan struggle for self-determination. And while he will speak about West Papua, this seminar is not really about West Papua, much less about West Papuans. It is more a deeply personal reflection on what one person thinks it takes to animate freedom in the context of historical and continuing colonisation: a sketch of dangerous territory, and a path through it. At the heart of this framework are the five elements: going deeper (earth), seeing far (air), acting together (fire), holding relationships (water) and a sense of mystery at the heart of it all (spirit).

¹ Jason MacLeod. 2019. *Animating Freedom: Accompanying Indigenous struggles for self-determination*, Backhouse Lecture, Queensland: Interactive publications.

² Clare Land, 2015, *Decolonising Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles*, London: Zed Books.

Bio:

Jason MacLeod has been accompanying the struggle for liberation in West Papua since 1991. An educator, organiser and researcher, Jason works with local communities, campaigns and environmental and social justice movements in Australia, Asia and Oceania. He has previously taught community development at The University of Queensland, and civil resistance at The University of Sydney. Together with Biwangko, a West Papuan woman, he coordinates Pasifika, a social movement capacity strengthening organisation. He is a Quaker and descendant of crofters from the Isle of Lewis, Scotland. He lives on Jagera Country, Inala, with his family as part of a small co-housing settlement. He aspires to grow potatoes and raise a tiny flock of free-range chickens. Whenever possible he likes to hike, climb, and fly off mountains with his paraglider.



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