



# Australian Labyrinth Network Inc. Labyrinths Matter

by Lorraine Rodda



Inside: What's News? Meeting Membership Needs, Labyrinth Activity in the Regions

Membership Edition

## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

At last, after a very long pause and many, many false starts, this newsletter comes from the heart of the Australian labyrinth community.

We conducted surveys to find out your needs. In this edition we focus of your interests and needs across Australia. We heard your voices about the cost and locations of events too. This edition covers:

**Updates:** Gathering, Trainings, and Insurance  
**Surveys:** Membership Insights  
**New Features:** Labyrinth Locator  
**Latest News:** Regional Matters

ALN's role is to be of service to our Members and as a resource to the wider labyrinth community.

Feedback most welcome [here](#)

## Gathering Team

So, with a substantial amount done and still, more to do, we are delighted to let everyone know the next Gathering is coming together beautifully. We are a six-person team, coming together with vigour, after the 2019 gathering invitation to commit to this job, (well maybe it was a bit more like being shanghaied into the roles, lol). Such is life, isn't it!

Like most other people passionate about labyrinths, we felt abundant in enthusiasm but poor in time. We took the gauntlet because we were so inspired and grateful after the significant achievements of the 2019 ACT Galong team who gifted us all with that fantastic Gathering.

# 2020

## GATHERING

*A few thoughts on the ALN's Gathering theme, Widening the Circle and what that means for members.*

**By Viviana Creagh**  
**ALN Council Carrier**  
**Portfolios - Annual Gathering & Membership**  
[peace254@bigpond.com](mailto:peace254@bigpond.com)

We have had a fabulous response to the early bird tickets, and there a few good rooms with ensuites left. Bookings contact Immanuel – Email [immanuelowelu@gmail.com](mailto:immanuelowelu@gmail.com) The complete program for the Gathering will be out shortly, so watch out for an email from the Gathering Team.

### Installing a permanent Labyrinth

This year we are gearing up to create a permanent labyrinth at Mt. Carmel. Leaving this ALN footprint helps to widen the circle for those who will come to walk this labyrinth in years to come. Many will be young people and teachers who attended retreats at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre; a synchronous alignment with ALN's World Labyrinth Day in Schools Project.



Actually, I still feel thankful for it, so if you were in anyway responsible for that time, please know that the ripples of your work and the good will and learning it created are still flowing out here...and yes, they actually began the widening of the circles!

Since we came home from experiencing "Together on the Path" last year, Elizabeth, Cheryl, Immanuel and I have figuratively and literally stepped straight into "widening the circles" having recently collaborated in running a three-day three labyrinth pilgrimage in the Illawarra area where we all live. I know too of quite a few other people in various states who also attended last year's Gathering that have undertaken various new labyrinth projects.

At Mt Carmel, we will hear how the circle of the labyrinth community has most recently opened and grown and is ever widening in our Country.

## Gathering cont'd

Mt Carmel Retreat Centre [Photo's here](#)



### Regional Representatives

Regional projects are definitely an important way that widening the circles will continue to occur. The ALN's model of encouraging Regional Reps to collaborate helps to facilitate these possibilities. The opportunity to meet and hear from some of the Regional Reps. will be part of this event. Members who are interested in expanding labyrinth access or practices locally can link in with this network to share ideas or get support and maybe collaborate in creating events.

[Discover more here](#)

### ALN partnerships with Members and Non-Members

Gatherings and other opportunities to experience, share, learn, and network are gifts that the ALN organisation delivers for us all. Examples include: our Annual Gatherings and the new state based facilitator Renewal Days planned for next year. The hope is to continue to share and encourage the benefits of membership and to encourage other labyrinth lovers to participate and also contribute towards these events.

In turn, know that your membership and participation enable work to be undertaken to keep us all connecting and communicating throughout the year.

Membership fees fund the ALN website that is ever growing in resources such as for the World Labyrinth Day in Schools project. It also covers our insurances e.g. Council's management, volunteer and public liability.

For those non-members who have an interest in attending events, joining ALN's membership or becoming a Regional Representative or a member of ALN Council – we would love to hear from you [here](#)

**Volunteerism** is at the heart of ALN. It is enable's the upkeep of the Labyrinth Locator, creation of newsletters and keeping social media active and up to date. Another exciting upcoming international project developed by Mark Healy with administrative help from the ALN is the 'Global Healing Wave of Forgiveness' this New Year's Eve. The ALN Council was excited to offer support for this community based labyrinth initiative. Participation details can be found [here](#)

**We mutually inspire one another to widen the circles for all Australians to experience the peace, hope and love that comes from walking a labyrinth path.**

**Often this is the motivation for joining an ALN workgroup or becoming the Regional Representative in your area.**

### Note of Appreciation

To all **Labyrinth Lovers** working with the community to bring the vision of widening the circle into reality, I thank you. To all **members** I thank you too as it's because of the ALN's existence that we can attract and finance outstanding guest presenters and keynote speakers such as Tony Christie. It also means that ongoing training will be made available and for people with labyrinth related business ventures it provides reliable access to an engaged nationwide community.

The 2020 gathering will be an exciting experiential and educational time, hopefully inspiring willing members to step up when the call for the next Gathering team of 2021 is issued. (So that's a little seed planting done). I'll also say that while being part of this Gathering workgroup has required a fair amount of work, it's all been fun. We have shared a great camaraderie, creativity, a wonderful sense of achievement. **Joy Bowles** has been in her ever-delightful way, literally a beacon of light, in regards processes and accessing the ALN systems for organisational information and communications which are already in place. Apart from the fun of brainstorming, research and discussions most of what's needed to organise a Gathering is possible with tweaking existing files in the ALN Wild Apricot database. **Last year's team** left us some great written resources with which our work was made much easier and we are grateful to also have the assistance of **Sue Sheridan** who was part of the 2019 and the 2020 team.

So, with those documents, Joy's help and advice and with the ALN council process of sanctioning the Gathering's significant decisions, we've felt confident and comfortable to both dream and deliver "Widening the Circle" to your doorway. A new labyrinth threshold for any of you who can step into the self and community care, love and fun that the 2020 Gathering is sure to bring. **Be assured you'll be welcomed, held and nurtured.**



*And a hundred thousand welcomes to be sure!*

## TRAINING

By Tina Christensen,  
ALN Council Carrier  
Portfolios - Chair, WLD in Schools, Renewal Day, Spring  
School 2020  
Advanced Veriditas Facilitator  
Veriditas International Council member  
[tinachristensen@me.com](mailto:tinachristensen@me.com)



### Australian Labyrinth Facilitators Renewal Day

Inaugural Offering - Saturday 8 Feb 2020 - Qld  
Nationwide Offering - August 2020

In 2017 we surveyed Australian-trained facilitators. The feedback was facilitators wanted *more connection and less formal learning environments*.

The results led to Christina Rowntree and myself exploring the beautiful question of what could an Australian facilitator renewal day look like?

- What might inspire facilitators to learn informally for a day with peers?
- How important are the dreams that inspired someone's original training?
- How could such a day be run nationwide with ease, grace and minimal cost?

#### What is a Renewal Day?

In years past, Veriditas, the US-based peak body for labyrinth training surveyed their alumni, and found people loving their training and then not using the skills learnt, not staying connected. In 2004 the Veriditas Council was formed to establish connections between veteran and newly trained facilitators. One such initiative was the Renewal Day.

In 2020, the ALN will support our first Renewal Day for Australian-based facilitators, connecting nationally, renewing locally.

**Renewal Days are open to all people who are Veriditas OR another learning body - trained in labyrinth facilitation OR...people without formal training but currently active in community labyrinth facilitation.**

We have advanced trained facilitators stepping up to guide the day for peers in Queensland next February and then in August 2020, days are being offered in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania as well.

#### Are you interested?

Registrations open next month, so watch your inbox for an ALN email with details. We anticipate it being a lovely thread in the weaving of our own labyrinth facilitator community. If you are interested, please email [tinachristensen@me.com](mailto:tinachristensen@me.com)

Also...we'd love to see a Renewal Day guided in ACT, NT and WA. If you're a Veriditas advanced trained facilitator, please email your interest and let's see if we can support you in creating something local. Thanks!

#### Spring School 2020

In November 2020 we will hold an ALN/Veriditas Spring School in Melbourne, Victoria. Pre-qualifying workshops and Basic Training, Advanced Training through to Train the Trainer are scheduled for the curriculum along with labyrinth construction workshops.

Facilitation training will be run by the Grand Dame of the labyrinth movement, **Lauren Artress** and labyrinth construction with labyrinth designer **Lars Howlett**.

Over time it is hoped that we build capacity enough among our facilitators to develop Australian based Labyrinth Education Programs around the country.

Stay tuned for more information coming soon!

Register your interest to attend, volunteer in support, join the Spring School workgroup at [tinachristensen@me.com](mailto:tinachristensen@me.com)

### Future Decisions Driven by Data

#### 2019 Survey Results

We wanted to check in with ALN members generally, post National Gathering in ACT, 2019. Understanding better the hopes and dreams for labyrinths in Australia would guide the choices made by the ALN's Council in this next stage of consolidation.

A total of 42/65 (65%) responses were received, from Gathering participants - which is a good response for surveys. If you are one of the 42, THANK YOU for taking the time to respond.

**The 4 questions asked were:**

**Question 1.** At a national Gathering are you more interested in connecting with the community of labyrinth lovers or attending learning-based workshops?

Community connection *and* learning based workshops were equally high priorities for attendees.

## 2019 Survey cont'd

**Question 2.** If a national Gathering was held in a different location would you attend?

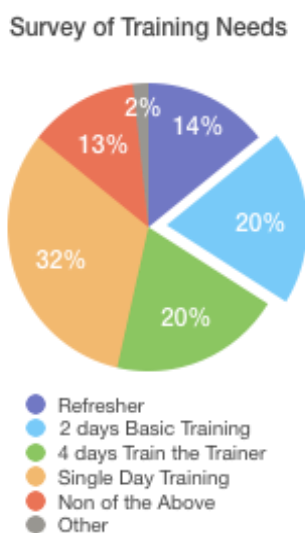
**Every Year** - 17/42 (40%) were interested in a Gathering every year, and only

**Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Year** 5/42 (11%) were interested in a Gathering every second year.

**Overall Responses** 19/42 (45%) said It would depend on location, time of year (those were the official options), cost, commitments, or what else is happening.

**Question 3.** If the Labyrinth facilitator training was held would you be interested in attending?

The pie-chart below shows the type and length of training people were interested in.



These responses will guide the ALN Council as we plan for ALN member training opportunities in the future, such as Spring School 2020.

**Question 4.** Any other comments about the Gathering or labyrinth training needs?

People expressed the desire for Gatherings and trainings to rotate around Australia, to enable people who wish to attend but for financial reasons cannot because of travel costs. Ideally State and Territory based networks will develop, benefitting from the ALN's reach.

From this information, the ALN Council is working to support the following initiatives:

1. Annual national Gatherings;
2. Bi-annual Spring School facilitator trainings ultimately evolving to an Australian-centric labyrinth facilitator and community education training model;
3. Annual State and Territory based Renewal Days;
4. Local networks growing with ALN support; and
5. Support integration of labyrinths into more mainstream services such as schools and/or allied health environments.

## 2017 Survey Results

**What do our Facilitators need from ALN Inc?**

**By Heather Middleton**

**ALN Council Carrier**

**Portfolios - Media Policy & Website**

**Advanced Veriditas Facilitator**

**ALN Regional Representative for Sydney and Northern**

**Region** [heather.middleton26@gmail.com](mailto:heather.middleton26@gmail.com)

**Your Say**

Meeting the needs and being of service to facilitators is one of the prime goals of the ALN. Back in 2017, we conducted this survey inviting as many Australian facilitators as we could find to give us some guidance about the direction for our newly emerging organisation. The survey was conducted by myself, Dr Heather Middleton, a freelance social researcher.

**Most responses:**

The facilitators indicated overwhelming support for an Australian-based network and Australian resources. The highest score came from closed questions, but there was an option for free comments throughout. These were particularly insightful! The highest score of 73% related to the following:

**Community Building in Australia**

- Belonging to an Australian community
- Website with Australian content
- Australian Labyrinth Locator
- Annual Gathering, regional training

**Resources**

- Spirituality of labyrinth research
- Podcasts, Blogs
- Insurance

**Structure**

- Open ALN structure with state representatives, local and regional activities

Access to research and resources on the spirituality of the labyrinth rated high at 51%, while belonging to a local network and having regular local gatherings were a popular, 46%. Insurance was cited as important by 37%.

It is interesting to note that a number of respondents indicated that they did not feel the need for additional input of any kind. Some free comments highlighted frustration with the lack of regular training in Australia and the necessity to go overseas for advanced training in particular.

There were one or two comments about the structure and direction of the ALN that are certainly worth drawing out: remaining quintessentially Australian and not dependent on an American 'parent organisation', the need for a state representative focus within a national framework, and the wish for the ALN management structure to remain non-hierarchical and free from a dominant group.

## 2017 Survey Cont'd

### What did the survey find?

- 60% of facilitators belong to a walking group mostly 10-20 people
- Most facilitate as required

### Who are our walkers?

Most labyrinth walkers were convened for the general public, but other users were religious groups, and schools.

Surprisingly, there were almost no activities in hospices, universities, or the corporate world.

### What do we do?

Labyrinths are most often used for community building or wellbeing, mindfulness or meditation, religious celebrations. There is some activity around other kinds of meditations, or seasonal and nature celebrations, while rites of passage, rituals special interest days and children's well-being are scattered across the country.

### What else do we do?

Aside for walking, we do so many creative things on the labyrinth.

- Dancing, including circle dancing
- Meditation sometimes with scripture
- Creating temporary art works
- Singing
- Fire, food sharing
- Vigils, prayer, rituals

[For the complete survey email here](#)

## AON INSURANCE

By Randal Dennings

ALN member

ALN Pro Bono Legal Advisor

[randaldennings@gmail.com](mailto:randaldennings@gmail.com)

The ALN has put in place an insurance package with its brokers AON, providing insurance coverage for a range of its risks, including public liability and volunteer protection for ALN approved events (such as the ALN Annual Gathering and World Labyrinth Day Events). We are currently working with AON to develop a package with a competitive premium for ALN members also, that it is hoped will provide coverage for most of the usual risks faced by labyrinth facilitators when providing their own non-ALN labyrinth events (including their own walks and workshops). We are asking for cover for the following possible risks:

- Injury to walkers from slips, falls or animal attacks e.g. magpies or dogs
- Protection against injury and loss for the Facilitator and any volunteers assisting
- Small business coverage against fraud, professional and managerial liability

We will keep you informed with further updates and indicative costings once available. In the meantime, ALN and AON are also working together to extend coverage for a range of Regional Representatives and other local ALN events.

For further information please contact:

Randal Dennings Phone: 0408 878711

Email [randaldennings@gmail.com](mailto:randaldennings@gmail.com)

## MEMBERSHIP INSIGHTS

By Joy Bowles

ALN Council Carrier

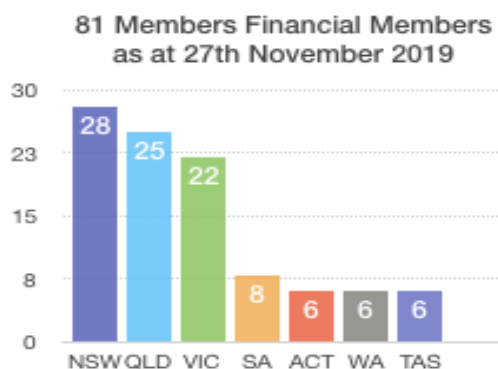
Portfolios - Secretary, Website

Trained Veriditas Facilitator

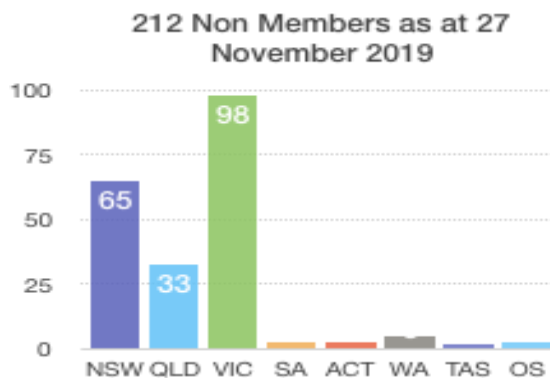
[ejoybowles@gmail.com](mailto:ejoybowles@gmail.com)

### Where do our members live?

The graph below indicates that most of ALN's financial Members live in states where Gatherings have been held.



During the period from the launch of membership in 2018 to year to date, the membership has doubled overall. As at the end of November, only 4 memberships from 2018 have lapsed.



### About our Mailing List.

Over three hundred names were transferred from Mailchimp to ALN's website in March 2018. Of these, 47 have become financial members, but there are still 267 who have not yet become financial members.

Forty-eight new people responded to our website sign-up form, of whom twenty-five people registered for the newsletter.

## AUSTRALIAN LABYRINTH LOCATOR

*Where are labyrinths located?*

**By Geoff Rodda**

**ALN Council Carrier**

**Portfolios - Labyrinth Locator and Branding**

**Honorary Life Member**

[groddabdav@iprimus.com.au](mailto:groddabdav@iprimus.com.au)

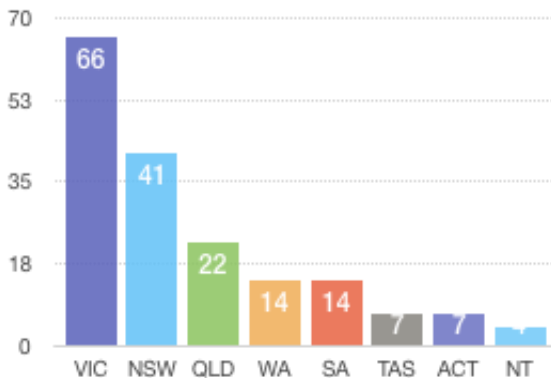
The original labyrinth locator designed by Cedar Prest has been updated to the redeveloped [Australian Labyrinth Locator](#) by Cameron Rodda of [Mountain Makers](#)



### New and proposed features

- Eighteen Regional Representatives are now located on the map along with their contact details
- As new labyrinths are listed on the Locator designated Regional Reps. are advised as well as Jeff Saward Administrator of the Worldwide Labyrinth Locator
- The next new feature enables the extraction of information by location type. eg. Schools, Churches, Parks, Health care settings etc.
- In the future, as a planning tool we will show the locations of ALN's Financial Members

### WHERE LABYRINTHS ARE LOCATED



At the end of November 2019 there are 175 Labyrinths encompassing 19 separate [Labyrinth Trails](#) in Australia.

## REGIONAL MATTERS

### Regional Representative Purposes

The commitment of a small amount of time each month yields great benefits for the region served. Regional Representatives may spend 1-3 hours per month (or more if they wish!) participating in labyrinth related activities.

For more information, contact the National Regional Representative coordinator, [Mark Healy](#)

### Queensland

**By Randal and Sue Dennings**

**Certified Veriditas Facilitators**

**ALN SEQ Regional Representatives**

[randaldennings@gmail.com](mailto:randaldennings@gmail.com)

There has been a lot of activity in SE Queensland including entry-level Docent Training for labyrinth helpers in the Anglican and Uniting Churches, as well as in community settings.

### Docent training at Pokolbin NSW

#### Done and delivered!

On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Port Stevens and Pokolbin ALN groups pulled together their first Labyrinth get-together and training day from 10am-3.30pm in a lovely country-side setting.

Elizabeth Schiemer, ALN Council Carrier organised a wonderful day of labyrinthian information, fun and activities, including two facilitated walks and a Docent training session Fifteen participants joined together from both areas enjoying good fellowship and a BYO lunch.

The Docent training was designed to assist those who wish to establish, develop and maintain their own local labyrinth practice - this can be later expanded with more formal training.

A Docent Starter Pack was also provided to Elizabeth for copying and distribution amongst interested members. The day was supported by the many experienced labyrinth facilitators, who were also participants. Participants sought information on:

- How to start up a local labyrinth group
- How to design, promote and deliver facilitated labyrinth walks
- How to build inexpensive but effective temporary labyrinths. E.g. rag, chalk, tape, natural products labyrinths were discussed and demonstrated

**Regional Matters Queensland cont'd**

*Photo: Labyrinth complete with Susan's "threshold" in place.*



As SEQ Regional Representatives, we enjoy sharing our love for labyrinths and encouraging others to explore further to the extent that they feel called to do so. A number of the participants have since confirmed they feel equipped and confident to run their own facilitated walks ... and that's what we were wanting to hear!

As presenters, we enjoyed the privilege to see others grow and deepen their labyrinth experience during the training day. One learning we took away from the day was for us to go with the flow and allow heaps of time and opportunity for questions rather than stick too closely to the agenda.

**A big thanks to Elizabeth Schiemer as organiser, and host Quanita Chivers and family for a splendid day of fun and learning at Pokolbin.**

**The Uniting Church Facilitator Training Day**

We had a ball on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October with the wonderful Uniting Church folk. They are up and running with bi-monthly public labyrinth walks. Sue Thomas had previously run a workshop for them and organised their lovely labyrinth - so well-done Sue!

*Photos show some of the folks at the Uniting Church training.*



**End of Year Docent Training Workshop & Social Event**

Held on Saturday 7 December 2019 10am-2pm at the Holy Cross complex, Cnr. Anzac Ave and Chelsea St, Kippa Ring. We met at the church entrance and were guided to the meeting place. The picnic lunch was a BYO plate and soft drinks to share was enjoyed by all.

**Cynthia Hoogstraten & Ramona Lane**  
[cynthiahighstreet@hotmail.com](mailto:cynthiahighstreet@hotmail.com) [nunyara2@bigpond.com](mailto:nunyara2@bigpond.com)  
**Advanced Veriditas Facilitators**  
**ALN Wide Bay Regional Representatives**

Creating labyrinths on the beach for use in a local church service, as well as using sand labyrinths as part of a Memory Walk and Memorial Service. A couple of recent activities are: [Stone Labyrinth here](#) [A permanent labyrinth proposal](#)

**Victoria**

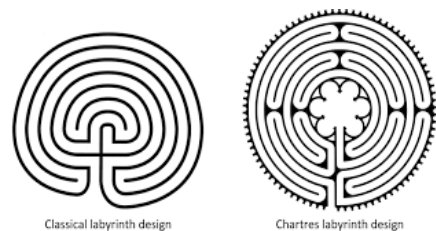
**By Lisa Shortridge,**  
**Trained Veriditas Facilitator**  
**ALN Goulburn Valley Regional Representative**  
[dr.lisashortridge@gmail.com](mailto:dr.lisashortridge@gmail.com)

Ten years ago, I was introduced to the labyrinth at a meditation expo in Melbourne. It was a pivotal moment for me and since then, I have become a great labyrinth enthusiast. I am now a Regional Representative for the recently formed Australian Labyrinth Network. Early on, my dream was to make our area the labyrinth capital of Victoria and, guess what...WE ARE THERE!

The ALN has developed an Australian Labyrinth Locator, and it is obvious that we have lots of labyrinths here in the Goulburn Valley.

If you do an internet search for Labyrinths, you will see they come in many different patterns. I work mainly with the older patterns, as I believe the people I call the "Ancients" knew about the flow of energy and the creation of sacred space, which has largely been lost to our modern Western culture.

The labyrinth patterns below show on the left the Classic 7-path design which is 4000 years old, and on the right the Chartres Cathedral 11-path design which is 800 years old.



The triple Spiral pattern below is 10,000 years old. These are three of the four I have at my place, so the next time you hear of me holding a labyrinth walk come and check them out!



### Regional Matters Victoria cont'd

A labyrinth can come as a pattern laid on the ground large enough to be walked, a pattern carved in wood or clay to be used with the fingers or a virtual labyrinth found online. It has a single path that meanders from the outside to the centre and the return journey is made by retracing that same path from the centre back to the outside.

It can be used for relaxation, meditation, prayer or contemplation. The journey inwards is often quite different to the journey back out, the centre a lovely place to pause and rest. Most find a gentle slow walk very relaxing. Once familiar with the labyrinth it can be used for almost anything, and the person using it can bring their own knowledge and skills to the path.

*The photo below is of the four labyrinths we have at our home in Kialla.*



I bring meditation and mindfulness and concepts of wellbeing to the labyrinth in the walks that I facilitate. There have also been times of celebration and dance. Personally, it's a great way to begin the day, to relax, work on plans and projects and gain some insight into life's challenges.

An artist could gain creative inspiration, a student increased concentration, a divorcee understanding and forgiveness. As we get to know the path of the labyrinth, we have the opportunity to understand ourselves better and see how we respond to the world around us. Group walking is like a microcosm of life and helps us to understand our reactions and responses to others on the path.

A labyrinth can be walked once, or multiple times. Like any contemplative practise the more regular the use, the more benefit is gained. Regular labyrinth walking quietly, gently and slowly aligns us with our true purpose.

*Thich Nhat Hanh has a beautiful poem that is lovely to take with you into the labyrinth*

May I dwell in the heart

May I be free from suffering

May I be healed

May I be at Peace Barossa Valley Region, SA

**By Norma Rees**

**Advanced Veriditas Facilitator**

**ALN East Gippsland Regional Representative**

[4normarees@gmail.com](mailto:4normarees@gmail.com)

A budding regional group has facilitated the installation of a grass labyrinth with an inset brick pattern at the Lakes Entrance St. Brendan's Catholic School. All students participated in the "World Labyrinth Day in Schools " walk in May 2019. On World Labyrinth Day 2019, a "Walk for Peace " was offered in Lakes Entrance.

There are now three labyrinths installed in the area available to the public for walking at any time. Fortnightly facilitated labyrinth walks are offered from October - May.

### Australian Capital Territory

**Alison Meretini**

**Certified Veriditas Facilitator**

**ACT State Representative**

[alison@rachumlabyrinth.com](mailto:alison@rachumlabyrinth.com)

The ACT Labyrinth Hub meets at the National Arboretum in Canberra every month for labyrinth walks - all welcome. Here's the [link to our forum page](#).

### South Australia

**Carol Schroeder**

**Certified Veriditas Facilitator**

**ALN Barossa Valley Region,**

[csc5644c@bigpond.com.au](mailto:csc5644c@bigpond.com.au)

Facilitated a practical and experiential Labyrinth workshop for teachers in Adelaide. Promoted World Labyrinth Day in schools as well as holding a World Labyrinth Day event at the Barossa Community Labyrinth. Held " Seeds of Reconciliation " walks for school groups at the Barossa Labyrinth, as well as engaging in a Winter Solstice Women's Circle with a portable labyrinth. A Winter Solstice event was also held at the Shiraz Trail Labyrinth in McLaren Vale. Two 3 circuit portable tape labyrinths were also made for an Early Years school and an experiential workshop was also held for staff and children at an Early Learning Centre.

### Western Australia

**Ned (Edward) Crossley**

**Trained Veriditas Facilitator**

**ALN State Representative**

[wandoo@treko.net.au](mailto:wandoo@treko.net.au)

The prime activity is the Annual Festival at Fairbridge. The entry fee is waved for our volunteers in exchange for undertaking various roles and in our case, curate the labyrinth and hold the space for walkers.