



# Convergence Newsletter

Nr 52 — April 2019

Welcome to this autumn edition of the Convergence newsletter. We reflect on the appalling events of the last few weeks and how Convergence has helped shape our response. We also look back to the last Mini Gathering and to the one to come, and invite everyone to a party.

The next Mini Gathering is from 10–12 May and there’s lots to do, so please come! We’ll focus on the last of the Leigh Lodge painting, and planting native trees along the boundary fence.

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## Convergence notices and newsletter

There now is an email list for Convergence notices, which are sent out more often than the newsletter, and are better for news that can’t wait. You can get more information and opt-in here: <http://convergence.org.nz/notices>

Send notices you would like to be included to [mynotice@convergence.org.nz](mailto:mynotice@convergence.org.nz)

Contributions for the next newsletter can be sent to [mynotice@convergence.org.nz](mailto:mynotice@convergence.org.nz) . To receive the newsletters ask [info@convergence.net.nz](mailto:info@convergence.net.nz) for it (note .org/.net). The newsletter is produced approximately 4–5 times a year (before Mini Gatherings).

## **May Mini Gathering: Leigh Lodge and tree planting**

*Fri 10 – Sun 12 May 2019*

The May Mini Gathering is going to focus on two things: finishing off Leigh Lodge painting, and maybe starting to clean up the rooms; and planting native trees along the boundary fence.

May is the perfect month to plant native trees. The soil should be wet enough and the trees have the winter for their roots to establish before a burst of spring growth. I'm hoping to get 30-ish trees planted and very thoroughly mulched, as a trial to see if a lot of mulch means they thrive next summer. The site owners have asked us to start by planting along the boundary fence, to screen the site from the road.

We'll have most of the gear we need, but if you've got them, please bring sturdy gardening gloves, a spade, and gear for digging into stony soil, like crowbars or pickaxes. I'll bring my geological hammer from varsity days, along with trees, fertilizer and plastic tree protectors.

Leigh Lodge is nearly finished (yay!) but still has needs some painting, especially of the accessible toilet, some doors, some trim, and a top coat on some walls and ceilings. The whole place needs to be thoroughly cleaned too. It's a great chance to learn or brush up your painting skills.

If there's spare time after the lodge and the trees, next on the agenda is cleaning up around the Convergence container. There's a pile of scrap wood that needs to be turned into firewood and the whole area needs to be sorted out.

As always, we'll have shared lunches and shared Saturday night feast (cooks welcome!). There'll be enough beds in the cabins for everyone, and there are heaters in the cabins too. The fires in Amberley Hall will keep it good and warm, a great place to relax and catch up with people.

— Rebecca

## **There and back again**

Our beloved Convergence was in January, but now in late April that feels like a lifetime ago. Perhaps it is because half a year has almost gone, or more likely it is because we have all seen so much change so fast between then and now.

Who would have predicted as the closing ceremony came to an end, that within a few months the terror which has plagued so much of the world for so long would arrive here in this land and in the city closest to the Convergence site? Sometimes a single act by a lone individual can change the world, and the act of madness which occurred on 15 March has changed the lives of many more than just those caught up in it.

Strangely enough it feels to me that Convergence has been good preparation for dealing with the after effects of the attack, and of the more recent horrors in Sri Lanka. How often during the event does our thinking get challenged? How often do we end up looking at old things from a new angle? How many times does our sense of what is real and true get flipped on its head? I feel that being challenged in this way was good practice for more difficult challenges we all faced in March. Personally, while the challenges were great, I feel that having attended Convergence helped me to deal with them in a much better way than I would have if I had never attended.

The other thing that struck me about the response to the terrible business was the way that the Prime Minister and the Muslim community responded. The main response from all concerned was Love. Some Muslims even expressed Love towards the perpetrator. If you asked me the main driving force behind Convergence I would have said “Love”. Giving Love to all those affected by this tragedy seems to be a very Convergence response, and while surprising coming from mainstream leaders, it was also very gratifying. I am sure that none of those involved have ever been to Convergence, so it would be nice to think that what we have been doing for all those years has started to spread out into the wider world! At least we can hope so.

Anyway the May working bee is upon us, so there is another opportunity to escape from various horrors, burning cathedrals, bombed out churches and such, re-connect with some goodness and help to make sure that Convergence keeps on happening (by meeting our working obligations to the Trust). The world has shown that it needs, can use and can embrace the good things that we do at Convergence. Let’s all help to keep that happening.

— M

## **Last Mini Gathering: paint, paint, and more paint**

As usual, the Mini Gathering started on Friday, with people trickling in over the day and evening. By Saturday morning, a good group of us had gathered, all full of enthusiasm for painting. After a lazy breakfast, we headed down to Leigh Lodge to see what we would see.

I must admit the Lodge was a bit of a daunting sight, with paint pots standing everywhere and all but one of the rooms still needing lots of paint, but we gulped and got to it. Don was well prepared, with a great supply of ladders, brushes and long-handled rollers. We studied the painting plan, figured out what paint went where, stirred the guts out of a bunch of paint pots and dusted off our painting skills. It’s over 10 years since I painted a house and it took me a while to get the knack back, especially how to roll a ceiling. But once I did, I loved the feeling of turning bare surfaces into something tidy and good-looking. By the end of Sunday, we got 2 or even 3 coats onto most of the remaining surfaces, and a first coat down the length of the hall — a job well done.

The site owners have kept working at it too, and the Lodge is nearly but not quite finished, so the May Mini Gathering is another chance to come and paint. It’s mainly down to door frames and other trim now. By midwinter, it should be finished and available for us to stay in, which’ll be a wonderful increase in comfort. I reckon I’ll enjoy it even more for knowing that some of the painting is mine.

— Rebecca

## **Mini Gatherings in 2019**

- ◆ 10–12 May
- ◆ 12–14 July (mid-winter social)
- ◆ ?? Oct (to be decided; 25–27 Oct is not available)
- ◆ 6–8 Dec (BBQ, final site prep)

## Kindness

At first words fail  
Run down the back of a dry throat  
And strangle in your gut  
While the mind recoils in horror  
Seeking sanctuary in some forgotten corner  
You cannot see  
You cannot read  
You cannot listen  
You cannot feel  
You cannot hear  
The sirens around your city  
Close and far away the Eagle  
Helicopter spins in lazy circles  
Blades chopping ever downwards  
Deeper into the earthquake memories  
185 died — do you know their names?  
Or when the Port Hills  
That tawny coated beast sprawled between Port and City  
Licked with tongues of orange fire  
At houses in the night and helicopters  
One died then  
Such deep pain lives there  
And Salvation in those memories  
Because we cared  
We shared the pain  
We connected  
And so again we gather the hurt, the broken, the grieving in Love  
We bring flowers and road cones and on cards and signs and with chalk  
words come  
Finally  
And with our actions we write our own manifesto  
It is a simple one  
Kindness

— M

## In the news

As it happened, our last Convergence was infiltrated by journalists, and we ended up in the press!

Bob's lovely personal account is well worth reading. It's here

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/opinion/109837940/converging-as-one-brings-a-visceral-mind-blowing-fun-for-one-old-festival-hippie>

## **Amana's birthday leaving party**

*Sat 18 May 2019 start 7.30 pm*

Celebrate your inner child and grow young disgracefully. Pot luck, bring musical instruments and yourself. Turn up and play.

41 Grantley Street, 03 382 9077.

## **Sleep-out for rent**

Self-contained, off-street parking, electricity included, \$200/week, 4 weeks bond, fortnightly in advance.

03 382 9077 evenings after 6 pm (leave a message).