

2017 Annual General Meeting
11am, Saturday 28 October 2017
Community Hub at The Dock, 912 Collins St, Docklands
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Attending:

Jan Aitken, Ro Bailey, Leah Barham, Helen Bennett, Karen Berger, Melissa Brickell, Virginia Burns, Gwen Catamura, Deb Chapman, Vicki Clark, Laura Coburn, Dorothy Connop, David Crawford, Verdine Crawford, Gail Cumming, Sue D'Amico, Katherine and Ken Davies, Joyce Dodge, Belinda Duarte, John Farlow, Walter Franz, Angus Frith, Georgina Gartland, Keith Gove, Vicky Grosser, Farah Hassim, Helen Hill, Lee Hunt, Nazra Ibrahim, Michelle Isles, Ian James, Sue Jones, Brigid Knight-Braniff, Mary Mihelakos, John Murray, Demian Natakhan, Kate O'Donnell, Jennifer Peristein, Dierdre Robertson, Daniel Robinson, Giovanni Sanna, Vic Say, Margaret Spong, Howard Tankey, Pamela Tankey, Peter Thomson, Gloria Wallace, Bob West.

Local Reconciliation Groups represented:

Boroondara, Brunswick (in formation), Castlemaine, Concerned Australians, Darebin (in formation), Geelong One Fire, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Queenscliff, Stonnington, Shepparton, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges

Apologies:

Carol Brown, Tom Maloney, Rosemary Rule, Kath Travis, Erin Mckinnon, Uncle John Baxter, Bobby Philips, Jill Gallagher

1. Welcome to Country: Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Ron Jones

2. Minutes of previous AGM: Accepted

Moved: Deb Chapman

Seconded: Georgina Gartland

3. Chairpersons' report

Belinda Duarte:

- Expressed disappointment with the Federal Government's rejection of the recommendations within the Referendum Council's final report.
- There were several historic milestones this year: including RecVic's involvement in Sorry Day activities; the Victoria State Government building towards a Treaty and ongoing work in building respect and justice in Victoria.
- RecVic developed and implemented a new Strategic Plan taking a "collective impact" approach and trying to maximise and strengthen the impacts of meaningful reconciliation. Local Reconciliation Group networks will continue to be the key focus of

our work, as well as Local Government and the role that they play in reconciliation. RecVic can play a leadership role working with and listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.

- The focus going forward will be on schools and education and identifying the best role for RecVic in this space, where we can make most impact.
- Copies of the Strategic Plan are available for AGM attendees together with the 2017 Annual Report.
- Former council member John Smith was acknowledged for his contribution to Council. Keith Gove's mentorship was acknowledged and Keith has advised that he will be continuing as Secretary.
- Acknowledgement was also made to Aileen Traynor for hard work and tenacity. As well as Shelley Wills and Sue Damico who joined RecVic recently. A thank you was also made to all our amazing volunteers and Tabitha Hanson who provided casual support to the organisation this year.
- The Annual Report was tabled and volunteer Alana Piccone was thanked for designing the report.

Motion: The Chairpersons report be accepted.

Moved: Vicki Clark

Seconded: Georgina Gartland

4. Financial Report and Statement: John Farlow, Treasurer.

- Treasurer John Farlow presented the 2016/17 Financial Report. RecVic's accounts were audited at the end of the financial year and this resulted in an unqualified audit. There is a surplus of just over \$14,000 which will be put in reserves so that we can continue to operate during periods when waiting for government funding.
- In general, the year was a positive one with grants up on last year and some fee for service which generated some revenue for the organisation.

Motion: That the Financial Report and Statement be accepted

Moved: John Farlow

Seconded: Vicki Clark

5. Statewide Coordinators Report

Aileen Traynor:

Delivered on behalf of Erin Mckinnon, who was in the role of Statewide Coordinator for first half of year and is now on maternity leave.

Highlights from the 2016/17 year included:

- Strengthening procedures and processes and developing and implementing the Strategic Plan.

- Developed a vision of what a reconciled state looks like.
- Developed a Communication Strategy.
- Change in approach and language resulted in growth in response to digital media platforms.
- LRG forum on Dja Dja Wurrung country is a strong example of self-determination. Thanks to Damian O’Keefe for organizing
- Community HART awards, with VLGA – We will continue to develop awards and grow and share the impact of great local work.
- Supporting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led events.
- Commenced grassroots reconciliation project.
- And usual work such as Monthly eNews and Maggolee website
- Thank you to all staff & volunteers and council members, particularly co-chairs, Belinda and Michelle. Thank you to Erin who is on maternity leave and thank you to all volunteers in the Reconciliation networks who champion reconciliation locally.
- Looking forward to historic Treaty conversations continuing in Victoria.

Motion: That the Statewide Coordinators’ Report be accepted.

Moved: Keith Gove

Seconded: Melissa Brickell

6.Election of Council

No nominations received for Council.

Agenda Item 8: acknowledgment of Peter Lewis, long-standing Council member of RecVic and Antar, and advocate and champion for many years is standing down from Council.

Also, thank you to the long-standing support of Vicki Clark, for 18 years of tireless commitment to reconciliation and RecVic.

No other business

AGM closed at 11.41am

Annual Statewide Reconciliation Forum

“From Talk To Action” Lessons in Walking Together: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people walking towards true and sustainable reconciliation.

Panel discussion: Vicki Clark, Melissa Brickell and Jacob Boehme.

First Speaker: Vicki Clark

Vicki spoke about what reconciliation means to her today and reflected on Mungo Man and his return to Country on November 17, 2017. She feels that this proves to the world that Aboriginal people were/are sacred in their ceremony and ritual, and have been on Country for more than 65,000 years.

She spoke about the community’s disappointment at the Federal Government’s decision not to accept the recommendations of the Referendum Council’s final report: “these fellas just don’t get it”.

Vicki reflected on her time as a judge for the Hart Awards, and was “blown away” by what was happening in Regional Victoria. She believes that the reconciliation movement is still alive. “If there wasn’t a movement for reconciliation we wouldn’t see Aboriginal flags flying around the country”.

She challenged the attendees to reflect on “when was the first time the seed of reconciliation was planted in you? What did you do about it? You probably broadened your knowledge and shared with other likeminded people and colleagues and family”. She also challenged all attendees to bring a new person along to the AGM next year.

Vicki spoke about how 65% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons are under 30 and that it is the responsibility of all of us to nurture our young. We want to hear from young people all the time. “How do we build the capacity of our young so that they can be in these spaces?”

Open the Doors foundation, another organization Vicki is involved with, was first established in 2002 by Aboriginal people. The Foundation was set up to help Aboriginal kids from Prep to Year 12. It is the only organisation that looks after the kids the whole way through their school life and in an education of their choice. It started with 32 kids a few years ago and in 2017 they helped 557 kids. It is important that our kids are to be brought up in culturally safe spaces at school and at home and that they have a quality education.

Finally, Vicki spoke about the need for a Treaty and how we need to stay focused on this outcome. She also advised the non-Aboriginal attendees to not get involved in Aboriginal politics. “This is for Aboriginal people only.”

Second Speaker: Melissa Brickell

Melissa started by reading her poem “this IS Aboriginal land” ... A poem she wrote in 1993.

She reflected on her journey over the last 32 years and how she has worked towards seeking a tolerant and forward-looking society to uphold and promote human rights for Aboriginal people. She argued that there is a need to repair the fundamental human rights of Aboriginal people. “They need justice, better relationships, acknowledgement and treaty.”

Melissa argued that there is a need for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons to understand what the country and sea mean to First Peoples. It is good that the truth is now being taught in the schools, but the media still treats Aboriginal people very badly and we need to find other ways to capture the hearts of people.

She continued by saying that there is still unfinished business and that she believes that we will never achieve reconciliation without an apology, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples are still waiting for this.

Melissa has been working on reconciliation for 32 years. It’s 230 years since the invasion and she does not believe that she will see reconciliation in her lifetime. She finds comfort in knowing she has worked very hard, together with the community. She thanked everyone for the unity.

Prior to finishing her talk, she spoke about the following 3 key points:

1. The need to be willing to juggle family and social life.
2. We must try to stay focused on reconciliation itself, be mindful and stay alert to getting pulled in other directions.
3. We must try to maintain the commitment for as long as possible, stay involved in the process of reconciliation for as long as you can.

Third Speaker: Jacob Boehme

Jacob Boehme, the Creative Director of Yirramboi First Nations Art Festival reflected on his personal experiences in organising the Yirramboi International Gathering of First Peoples Arts and Culture Festival, which took place in Melbourne earlier this year. The event went for 10 days and 251 First Nations were represented.

Jacob spoke passionately about the Festival and of the new direction he wanted to take it in. Two notable changes were the convening of an Elders Council and ensuring that the Festival was managed, run and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Elders Council acted as an advisory body and they were treated with and given the respect that they are traditionally given. They were given a separate space at festival events called the Elders Comfort Program, and traditional protocols were embedded. An example of this was that the Elders were the first to be seated and exited from all shows and they also received discounted tickets.

The second change was to ensure that the entire Festival was managed, run and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All staff, which included management, bar staff, operational staff and performers were First Nations people.

There were four non-negotiable principals that guided the Festival.

1. Festival managed, led and staffed by First Nations people;
2. There was visibility and dialogue;
3. At all times, new and innovative ways were sought to seek out and develop Indigenous art;
4. The Festival had to embrace new ideas of collaboration and exchange.

The aim of the Festival was to provide an alternative model to the usual transaction with audiences, and shift how we perceive and talk about Indigenous contemporary arts and to lead culturally informed dialogue.

Jacob spoke about the transfer of power from non-Aboriginal people to First Nations people and the shift in thinking that had to occur. "For Aboriginal people to reach their full potential and to realise self-determination Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be in control of all aspects of their lives."

He then went on to state his deep disappointment and dismay about the recent decision by the Turnbull Government to not support the recommendations of the Referendum Council's final report.