

r e c o n c i l i a t i o n



v i c t o r i a

Victorian Reconciliation Network Forum and Tour on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Friday 31 March - Sunday 2 April 2017

FORUM NOTES

Date: Friday 31st March to 2nd April 2017

Time: Friday 6pm to Sunday 2.30 pm

Venue: [Derby Hill Blue Light Youth Camp](#), 16 Phoenix St, Maldon / Castlemaine / Boort

Attendees: *45 people attended over the course of the weekend, representing 15 LRGs as well as individuals interested in reconciliation*

Greg McHenry, Edwina McHenry, Peter Sharp, Christine McKenzie (Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Group)

Jane McLachlan, Aaltje Harvey, Sue Harris (Banyule Rec Gp)

Keith Gove (RecVic Council), Ro Bailey, Tom Moloney (Stonnington Rec Gp)

Sylvia Edgar, Helen Bennett (Port Phillip Rec Gp)

Aileen Traynor, Deb Chapman (Moreland Rec Gp and Reconciliation Victoria Staff/Council)

Erin McKinnon (Macedon Ranges Rec Gp)

Georgina Gartland (Concerned Australians/Whitehorse Rec Gp)

Jan Aitken, Vera Herman (Nillumbik Rec Gp)

Fran Smullin, Dierdre Robertson (Shepparton Rec Gp)

Ian James (Yarra Ranges Rec Gp)

Damian O'Keefe, Shelley Wills (RecVic Staff)

Michelle Isles (RecVic Council and Moonee Ponds Reconciliation)

Stephanie Armstrong, Tashara Roberts, Diana Collier (Bendigo Reconciliation Gp)

Tom Gay (Maroondah Reconciliation Gp)

Nate Perry (Hepburn Shire)

Richard Hughes (ANTaR)

Chris Adams (Darebin)

Paul Tant (Ballarat)

Petr Svoboda (City of Moreland)

Lisa Hall, Gen Blades (Castlemaine Steiner School)

Vic Say (Castlemaine ANTaR)

Jasper Browne, Andrew Beswick (RecVic volunteers)

Margaret Spong

Carole Browne (ANTaR and RecVic member)

FRIDAY 31 March

Welcome to Country and presentation by Raquel Kerr, Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation - sharing her story and the landmark Victorian [Recognition & Settlement Act](#) and how it works in practice. The Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition & Settlement Agreement provides the Jaara with legal rights to practice culture, to access and use their land and resources and to have a say in what happens on their Country.

SATURDAY 1 April

Tour with Uncle Rick Nelson

- 'Meeting Place' – Yapeen School, Franklindford – site of NorthWest Protectorate and surrounds (school and cemetery)
- Castlemaine Information Centre
- Tour at Vaughan Springs, Eureka Reef (stone wells, grinding stones)

Reconciliation Forum

- Reconciliation Victoria Update / Q&A (See **Appendix One**)
- Strategic Plan – LRG priority Area & Grassroots Rec update
 - An overview of the strategic plan was provided - which has recently been finalised, note that a user friendly 2 page strategy document will be released shortly.
 - A detailed overview of the strategic priority area was provided focussed on building the capacity of local reconciliation groups and networks
 - Jasper and Andrew provided an overview of the Grassroots Reconciliation Project,
 - Group discussion on strategic directions, education and constitutional recognitions and treaty – and in particular noting that it was not yet time for LRGs to get involved with treaty (refer to RecVic advice document)
 - Group brainstorm on what RecVic can do to support LRGs (Local Reconciliation Groups) – See **Appendix Two** for ideas developed during the brainstorm. This brainstorm will inform the implementation of the building LRG capacity strategic priority.
- Con Rec/Treaty Advice doc – due to time constraints, this document was not discussed but attendees encouraged to provide feedback. The document will be sent to all LRGs once finalised
- Local Reconciliation Group Round Up - 2017 NRW plans
 - BENDIGO – By invitation forum adding to the 2016 conversation (CEOs/Leaders/Execs), key ideas (identity/sharing RAP/cultural safety)
 - BANYULE – Partnerships with Council, libraries, Rec Banyule focussed on joint planning: films for primary schools, 4 suburbs, 5 sessions, intro, discussions, study materials; film for adults & secondary school students – 3 sessions; exhibition of art of local Aboriginal artists re anniversaries; Sorry Day Smoking Ceremony, flag raising, film, morning tea; Arts & Crafts session; VACL evening in the library on language revival
 - MACEDON RANGES – Film screening
 - GEELONG ONE FIRE – 'Reconciliation in the Park' – free public event organised with and by Wauthaurung mob (food, music, learning, basket making, local & state govt MPs attending & speaking) - growing in size and cohort every year
 - YARRA RANGES – Library display, assist Mullum Mullum with Trivia Quiz
 - NILUMBIK – in partnership with Shire – Flag raising at school, Brent Watkins didg & hip hop, schools giving speeches on importance of Reconciliation to their school, posters and 3D models re NRW and Sorry Day displayed in local libraries for month of June
 - SHEPPARTON – Activity with Shepp Interfaith Network – still being developed
 - STONNINGTON – 3 day event at Prahan Market in partnership with Council – art exhibitions, bush cooking demos, etc in honour of anniversaries. Rec Group hope to have an info table as part of this event
 - PORT PHILLIP – Annual Sorry Day lunch MC'd and entertainment by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – local community and organisations will attend
 - MORELAND – Council doing Wurundjeri Games in Glenroy, recently launched Moreland Reconciliation Network so not likely to do a formal activity this year – apart from sharing NRW info, resources and Melbourne events with new members

- CASTLEMAINE
- ANTaR Vic Update was shared:
 - Brigid has been working as Office and Volunteer Coordinator since the beginning of December and will continue until the end of March.
 - In the past few months communication has been a priority. E-news has become more regular and we have been able to be more focus on social media and the website more with the help of volunteers.
 - ANTaR Vic held stalls at Share the Spirit and Belgrave Gardens for Survival Day and together they made over \$1,200. Both stalls had many new volunteers working, several of which have continued to help out with research for the anniversary which will be held at the end of the month. At the moment we have three volunteers helping at the office on a weekly basis.
 - On 30 April an exhibition commemorating 20 years of ANTaR Victoria will be held at the Fitzroy library. Guest speakers are yet to be announced.
 - In May an Office and Volunteer Coordinator and Communications Officer will be employed. Both will be part time.

SUNDAY 2 April

Boort tour of cultural sites with Jida Gulpilil

Appendix One

Reconciliation Victoria Update for Local Reconciliation Groups (LRGs) - March 2017

1. RecVic Staffing & Volunteers	6. NRW – Community HART Awards & Small Grants
2. Strategic Planning	7. Reconciliation in Local Government & Maggolee
3. Communications Strategy & Plan	8. Local Reconciliation Networks
4. Treaty / Constitutional Reform	9. ARN Engagement
5. Reconciliation in Education	

1. Staffing/Volunteers

- Erin McKinnon, Statewide Coordinator commenced parental leave in late Dec and Aileen Traynor is acting in her role until mid-year. Aileen has been with RecVic since Feb 2016 as Program Manager and has volunteered with the organisation prior to that in addition to being involved in reconciliation at a local community level and working with Indigenous youth leadership and pre-employment training programs.
- Damian O’Keefe continues in his role looking after communications, forums/events, providing support to local reconciliation groups, responding to general enquiries and much, much more!
- Emily Chauvel Byrne was re-employed in Nov 2016 one day a week in a short-term role to keep our networks informed across both the Treaty Process in Victoria and the Constitutional Reform National Agenda.
- Recruitment for a Projects Coordinator commenced in late Nov (to backfill the vacancy due to Aileen’s acting role commenced) however after careful reflection and consultation, the decision was made to continue with casual employment arrangements in the short term to allow the organisation to meet project deadlines and provide the flexibility to recruit into the role longer term as soon as the organizational structure has been reviewed. This review will commence in April to ensure the organisation is set up to ensure successful implementation of the new strategy.
- Shelley Wills is currently on board as Interim Projects Coordinator in a casual role. Shelley brings a strong understanding of reconciliation after living and working on Tiwi Island and Darwin for over 3 years and working with local Aboriginal communities in Melbourne around community health. She brings strong expertise around project management, human resources, communications, strategic thinking and working respectfully alongside and led by Aboriginal voice.
- Volunteers: Ella Adams continues to support updating Maggolee content and Jasper Brown has led the Grassroots Reconciliation project reviewing the history, evolution and models of local reconciliation groups. Alana Picone helps update both the RecVic and Maggolee website and Andrew Beswick has recently commenced to support the Grassroots Reconciliation Project. Julie Catlin continues to volunteer laying out monthly eNews. We are currently in conversations with a few other specialized volunteers who will support NRW logistics and as well as the development of our Communications Strategy & Plan.

2. Strategic Planning

- Following broad consultations and with the support of external facilitators with expertise in strategy development (Pinnacle Group Australia) RecVic Council recently finalised the new strategy. Consultations included online, phone and face to face feedback with key stakeholders, including local reconciliation groups.
- The new strategy provides an opportunity for RecVic to better utilise our limited resources to impact our broad mandate.
- The strategy includes a vision, guiding principles, our role as a facilitator and coordinator and defines meaningful reconciliation along with key priority areas for RecVic to focus on in the first instance. Key priority areas are:
 - Local Government
 - Local Reconciliation Groups & Networks
 - Education

- Development of an external 2 page strategy summary and operations plan is underway which includes a focus on building our internal capacity to ensure we can effectively implement our new strategy.

3. Communications Strategy & Plan

- A Communications Survey and competition was sent out in the February eNews to understand how we might improve our communications around reconciliation. The results, along with consultation and research informs a Communications Strategy and Plan that is currently being developed.
- The survey told us that whilst the eNews has a great reach and is well received, many people who read it aren't actually signed up themselves but rather have it forwarded on from a friend.
- We really encourage members and reconciliation friends to sign up to the eNews directly if you haven't already and to ask your friends and family to do the same. This will help to ensure we truly capture our audience and can communicate separate campaigns between publications.
- The Communications Strategy will inform our voice and interface with the public and will assist the team to use our limited resources more creatively, to engage with a wider audience across Victoria.
- If you weren't able to complete the survey and have any thoughts around our communications approach that you'd like to share with us please get in touch with the team.
- Published monthly eNews in [January](#), [February](#) and [March](#)
- Regularly updated [News](#) section of RecVic website

4. Treaty / Constitutional Reform

- **Website** - pages have been updated. Let us know what you think? Is it user friendly? What information/resources best support LRGs?
- **LRG Considerations Document developed** – we welcome your feedback, the document has been developed to assist LRGs to understand where things are at and provide recommendations on how to approach any related activity. If you would like to know more about anything that is discussed in this update, please visit our website or contact Emily directly.
- **Constitutional Reform**
 - The Referendum Council released a discussion paper in October 2016 - the paper lists five options for reform that the Council is seeking submissions on.
 - The Referendum Council commenced a series of national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led dialogues consulting on the model for change.
 - The final dialogue will be held in May 2017 in the Torres Strait followed by the National Convention in Uluru.
 - They have released two videos discussing 1) Getting rid of s25 & 2) Changing the constitution to help stop racial discrimination. Check out their website & ours.
 - The Referendum Council pushed out the date for its final report to June 2017, in doing so, that would likely push out the possible date for a referendum to 2018 at the earliest.
 - The Victorian Constitutional Recognition Coalition is looking to meet again in April and may expand to include Treaty as a focus, when and if appropriate.
 - Recognise have released two new flyers. You can find them on their website and ours. We have limited copies available at the office.
- **Treaty**
 - The Treaty Interim Working Group conducted 16 community consultation events across Victoria in 2016. The Working Group reported back at a State-Wide Forum in December 2016 & an Interim Report was released in February this year.
 - The final consultations for the design and creation of a representative body to help facilitate the negotiation of Treaty/Treaties have begun with consultations across the state were held during March.
 - The agreed approach is made up of 3 parts
 1. Community Consultations;
 2. Treaty Circles; and
 3. Online Message Stick.

- The current proposed timeline is a 3 step process, as presented in the Treaty Circles Handbook is as follows:
 - Step 1: Establish a Representative Body (within the next 18 months)
 - Step 2: Consult on what is a Treaty
 - Step 3: Negotiate Treaty/Treaties (beginning in 2019, this may take many years)
- Other States are following course: It is significant that since the Victorian government announced their intentions to enter into treaties with Traditional Owners.
 - South Australia - committed to negotiating a treaty with the Traditional Owners within 12 months
 - Queensland and the Northern Territory - indicated an interest in working towards a treaty with Traditional Owners.
- **Where to from here?** Local Reconciliation Networks have a long history of activism and campaigning, we know that when the time is right and we have been invited to become more actively involved we have a large membership of groups ready. Our approach is guided by the relevant lead bodies, and we are aware of the complex and political context we are in, especially in Victoria. As the next stage of reporting eventuates and appropriate government response, we hope to understand more about what our role can be.

5. Reconciliation in Education

- We have spent time over the past months reviewing work that we have done in the education space and commencing conversation with relevant state based bodies to consider our potential role in the sector. There is some great work being undertaken by LRG's with their local school communities and encourage LRG's to share this work with RecVic. Down the track we would love to capture some of this work in case studies to share more widely. We will keep you informed as we progress this area.
- An Education section has been incorporated into the monthly eNews (as of Feb 2017) and focus has been given to sharing reconciliation related education resources and initiatives through social media platforms
- The Victorian Department of Education together with VAEAI (Victorian Aboriginal Educations Association Inc) launched the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan (supported by VACCA and VACCHO). This plan includes outcomes and actions focussed on ensuring all Victorians understand and respect Koorie culture and history, working towards building a Victorian community that values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including through embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the Victorian curriculum.

6. National Reconciliation Week (Week) - Community HART Awards & Small Grants

- This year will mark our 4th Community HART (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) Awards in partnership with VLGA (Victorian Local Government Association) and supported by Bank Australia
- Award Nominations currently open and close 3rd April. Awards will be presented on Friday 2nd May at the Koorie Heritage Trust
- Currently in discussions with The Long Walk to discuss how we will work together in 2017 looking at a more strategic approach
- The office is involved in a Federation Square NRW Planning Committee consisting of a range of mainstream and Aboriginal organisations to support a comprehensive week of events during NRW including significant screen time showing content to support reconciliation – an exciting development! There may be opportunities for LRGs and members to support some activities in a volunteer capacity – stay tuned for more info
- Small Grants – currently being reviewed and applicants will have responses in the first week of April. A second round of applications are open until Friday 14th April – please share with your networks and local public schools who may be interested.

7. Reconciliation in Local Government and Maggolee

- LGV funding renewed for another 3 years
- Local Government Victoria launched the Victorian Aboriginal & Local Government Action Plan

(VALGAP) in December which included RecVic as a lead on two actions and playing a supporting role on two additional actions. RecVic will sit on VALGAP Reference Group along with other leads and supporters with a focus on implementation.

- Relationship building continues with local government peak bodies
- We saw a lot of momentum this year in the lead to up 26th Jan – both in social media and with local Councils reaching out and considering how to respectfully include or acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the day and/or at events. City of Yarra Councillors even voted to consult with the local Aboriginal community about how to approach 26th January.
- Exploring idea of working with LG peak bodies to host a Local Government event for Councillors and CEOs around reconciliation – possibly around LG understanding treaty and their possible role or using momentum re 26th Jan to engage LGs around reconciliation
- Maggolee website updated regularly with relevant news, events and information (volunteer supporting website updates). Please refer to Maggolee website for up to date information and developments.

8. Australian Reconciliation Network (ARN) Engagement

- The annual ARN face-to-face gathering took place 14-15th March 2017. Co-Chairs and the acting Statewide Coordinator attended the forum
- ARN to start working strategically and coordinate around a few key priority areas to look at how together we can make strong impact in key areas
- Tasmania looking to start up a Reconciliation Council

9. Local Reconciliation Networks

- Planning for the Victorian Regional Reconciliation Forum on Dja Dja Wurrung country has been a significant and exciting focus (second overnight forum)
- Grassroots Reconciliation Project underway implemented by volunteer Jasper Brown. The project aims to support and build the capacity of existing and future Local Reconciliation Groups and to document, analyse and compare models of LRG operation, structures, priorities and activities.
- Jasper has interviewed 5 LRGs to date and is in the process of developing an online survey to obtain relevant info from remaining groups. This project will inform our future approach to working with LRGs and look at how we can better support LRGs, understand what works, promote effective models and improve our capacity to share information.
- Project results will be shared with Local Reconciliation Groups and will inform development of actions related to local reconciliation networks strategic priority.

10. The Office and Council members continue to attend a range of events and meetings related to reconciliation

Appendix Two

Reconciliation Victoria Forum 1 April 2017

Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Notes from small group discussions: *What could build the capacity of local reconciliation groups?*

Statewide Sharing

- Sharing success stories, strategies and planning between groups
- Sharing with groups what is working or not working. Sharing with Aboriginal groups what they need
- Review of activities on local level, by local group - a process to follow? Provision of facilitator.

Materials

- Cheap handouts in concertina form, with historical facts on the outside and answers to FAQs and contact info on the inside.
- Assist with educational material for festivals

Community Outreach

- Engagement of non-Aboriginal people
- Engaging young and new people
- Support for developing Facebook - social media - young people
- How do we utilise social media?
- Strategies and tips on how to have a conversation, what to say (similar to Edmund Rice centre strategy info)
- How to use membership base?
- Assist organisations to establish and implement Reconciliation Action Plans, and hold them to account
- Improve relationships with local media and alternative media, online media. Council website 'What's On' / Maggolee? Two way traffic.
- Local groups must be vocal with social justice advocacy. May require different tiers:
(1) Aboriginal social justice priorities, (2) education for non-Aboriginal people

Relationships with Aboriginal people or groups

- Understanding different agendas for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
- Assistance with gaining Aboriginal representatives and members of the Reconciliation group committee
- Assistance with diverse and broad links with Aboriginal community in local area.
- How to build respect and work together with Aboriginal people? A makeover of Reconciliation groups?
- How to engage local Aboriginal community without overloading them, respecting their need for space
- Education: link groups to local Aboriginal community. Start with LAECGs, LANs.
- Help to identify Indigenous people!!

Local Government relationships and networks

- Coordinate networking of council officers passionate about reconciliation
- Work in partnership with LGOs / VLGA to gather council officers around reconciliation
- Facilitate agreement between LG and TO's at regional level
- Support in developing relationships with local government - a vital factor