

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



v i c t o r i a

STRATEGIC PLAN

Summary

2018 - 2023

About Reconciliation Victoria

Reconciliation Victoria was established in 2002 following the 'decade of reconciliation', supporting the recommendations of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's final report which included the establishment of a national body, Reconciliation Australia, and state reconciliation councils to carry on the work of reconciliation.

Across the 15 years of our journey as an organisation, many committed and passionate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal Victorians have been part of Reconciliation Victoria's family and contributed to a strong grassroots reconciliation movement in this state. Like many small organisations, we have the ongoing responsibility of trying to affect change across a broad mandate. We have recognised the need to change the way we work to maximise our impact as a state-wide body promoting reconciliation in Victoria.

Vision

A Victorian identity that reflects our true history, promotes and celebrates Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander culture, equity and self-determination.

The Way We Work

We acknowledge that power, privilege and racism shapes relationships

We develop just, respectful and meaningful relationships with and between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Victorians

We ensure that the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to self-determination is at the forefront, always guiding our work

We work with integrity and hold ourselves and others to account

How we define meaningful Reconciliation

Based on Reconciliation Australia's State of Reconciliation in Australia Report (2016), Reconciliation Victoria defines meaningful reconciliation through five key inter-related dimensions which provide a valuable framework to understand what is meant by 'reconciliation', and assess progress and priorities for a reconciled state. Reconciliation Victoria's interpretation of the key dimensions and description of how this could be applied in Victoria is as follows:

- **Overcoming racism and understanding white privilege and power relations:** Strong legal protection against racism; zero tolerance for racism across the community; strong cultural awareness and competence within organisations and communities.
- **Achieving equitable outcomes in justice, health, education and employment between Aboriginal and other Victorians:** Appropriately resourced programs enabling the achievement of equity through self-determination; Victorian government achieving Closing the Gap targets.
- **Developing a new State-wide identity:** The sovereignty of Aboriginal people is recognised by all (including through establishing a Treaty); the significance of self-determination is recognised and valued; all Victorians have an opportunity to connect with a shared sense of place.
- **Ensuring government, corporate and community accountability:** State government policy outcomes are transparent; appropriate protocols/principles inform state government policy development; organisations are accountable for their reconciliation plans and commitments, and are developing MOUs with Aboriginal groups and communities.
- **Addressing historical injustice:** Truthful education of Australian history and integration of Aboriginal history into curriculum; full implementation of the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) recommendations to address lack of justice for those affected by Stolen Generations; full implementation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report recommendations (1991); and truthful community narratives of local history [e.g. memorials to frontier wars, place names reflecting shared history and local Aboriginal language].

Our Role

Reconciliation Victoria is moving toward a facilitation role for reconciliation activities across the state. This role is underpinned by the theory of Collective Impact¹. It seeks to enable organisations and groups undertaking reconciliation activities in Victoria to develop a shared understanding of meaningful reconciliation, and collaborate and share resources to achieve greater outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In this facilitation role, Reconciliation Victoria will:

- Further develop our understanding of effective reconciliation activities and approaches across Victoria.
- Identify key gaps within the reconciliation movement and support key stakeholders and the wider community to address them.
- Facilitate networking and collaboration opportunities within and between sectors, groups and communities.
- Contribute to building the capacity of relevant sectors through promoting best practice, fostering community informed thought-leadership and building on emerging leadership across Victoria.
- Play a key role in influencing policy to address systemic issues that negatively impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

We recognise the importance of our role often as a point of contact for people interested in reconciliation. We will continue to welcome and support this interest, through improved online resources and referring people on to their local groups or networks and other appropriate organisations.

¹ https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Reconciliation Victoria works collaboratively with key stakeholders across all areas of our work. This includes working collaboratively with Aboriginal communities and key stakeholders, which includes Reconciliation Australia and other State Reconciliation bodies, to share information and develop strategies for working together that are mutually beneficial in advancing reconciliation across Australia. Reconciliation Victoria's point of difference is the relationships and local context that informs our work, and in turn, supports and strengthens Reconciliation Australia's work in Victoria.

Strategic Priority Areas and Goals

Over the next few years, Reconciliation Victoria will build on our strengths developed by engaging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community and focus our facilitation and coordination efforts around the local government, local reconciliation and education sectors informed by our relationships with Aboriginal communities. These sectors have been identified as initial priority areas due to our experience and demonstrated outcomes in these areas, together with the ability to achieve significant and widespread progress in reconciliation.

Whilst these strategic priorities will be the focus of Reconciliation Victoria's work, we will remain connected to grassroots community and responsive to changes in the political environment around issues that impact reconciliation in Victoria (for example treaty or other relevant developments).

1. Local Government

Reconciliation Victoria sees local government as pivotal in progressing meaningful reconciliation given their capacity to engage with communities through a place based approach. As such, Reconciliation Victoria has been working with stakeholders in the local government sector for a number of years including peak bodies, individual councils and the State government. We will work to embed the developing leadership, commitment and action across the sector to ensure sustained and transformative change.

In particular, our role will focus on facilitating opportunities to:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the impact and effectiveness of local government reconciliation commitments and share effective practice
- Recognise and share good practice
- Increase Aboriginal voice across all aspects of Local Government - this includes increasing participation of Aboriginal people in governance, employment, consultation and ensuring a presence in decision making
- Advocate for systemic change to progress meaningful reconciliation within and across Councils

2. Local Reconciliation Groups and Networks

Similar to local government, Local Reconciliation Groups are an important part of progressing reconciliation as part of a place based approach led by local Aboriginal people. Reconciliation Victoria has supported the grassroots network of local reconciliation groups in Victoria over many years. We see significant potential to enhance our strategic coordination of the network and to support and promote the groups within as they continue to adapt and develop.

In particular, our role will focus on building capacity and facilitating opportunities such as:

- Documenting and sharing effective models and approaches
- Providing templates and resources for group establishment, structure, activities and initiatives
- Facilitating sharing of good practice and thought leadership
- Supporting the growth of Local Reconciliation Groups and Networks across Victoria, including a focus on engaging young people in reconciliation
- Clearly defining the relationship between and among local reconciliation groups and Reconciliation Victoria – how we work together and support each other's work

3. Education: Schools and Early Childhood

Reconciliation Victoria believes educating students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and Australia's true history, is fundamental to achieving long-term change and meaningful reconciliation.

To identify our role in the priority area of Education, Reconciliation Victoria will work with Narragunnawali and key education and training stakeholders to more deeply understand the sector's needs in the reconciliation space and to identify what could be our unique contribution/role in supporting Victorian schools and early childhood centres in understanding and promoting everyone's role in reconciliation. We will work with key stakeholders including, but not limited to, VAEAI, the Victorian Education Department (referencing the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan) and the Catholic and Independent school sectors to support a collaborative and holistic approach.

Our work could directly involve or support:

- Facilitating relationships and connections between schools and local reconciliation groups and networks, including Aboriginal community members and organisations, with the aim of fostering school communities that have a reconciliation culture that encourages respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities and individuals;
- Advocating and supporting a systemic approach to the implementation of the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' cross-curriculum priority;
- Investigation of the gaps and requirements for attaining high-level and consistent outcomes against the relevant teacher standards, including effective regulation and accountability;
- Mapping and identifying any gaps in relevant and effective curriculum resources, as well as opportunities for these to be shared.

Ensuring Success

Reconciliation Victoria will develop 2-3 year operational plans with detailed activities and timelines related to each strategic priority. Additional activities will focus on developing our internal capacity to ensure we reach our long-term goals and position ourselves to a new way of working.

Reconciliation Victoria will regularly review our progress against these strategic priorities and goals, informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our network and stakeholders, with a view to potentially expanding our engagement to other sectors beyond these as resources allow.