

2020 HART Awards

FINALISTS

HELPING ACHIEVE
RECONCILIATION
TOGETHER



SUPPORTED BY



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

THANK YOU

Terry Garwood, Tom Cazaly and Cr Marg Attley OAM for judging this year's awards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Vicki & Trevor Clark for the prizes awarded to the winners of each category.

Artwork and Graphic Design by www.mazartdesignstudio.com

MESSAGE FROM VLGA AND RECONCILIATION VICTORIA

The 7th Annual **HART Awards** celebrates and honours the efforts of local governments and community groups across Victoria, which are **Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together** throughout the year.

We are inspired by the number, variety and strength of nominations this year. We are particularly encouraged by the many local governments progressing the important work of reconciliation in schools and early years' centres, a positive trend that shows more and more local governments are embracing the importance of truth-telling and Aboriginal culture and perspectives in schools and early years spaces. We were also excited by the range of nominations from exhibitions and tributes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to festivals and the critical work of identifying and addressing organisational white privilege. The 2020 nominations highlight the diversity of approaches across the state, empowering local community and building strong relationships.

Reconciliation is not a static or generic term but an approach that can be interpreted and utilised in a myriad of ways; its strength comes from the people involved and the commitment to deepen relationships based on mutual understanding, respect and Aboriginal self-determination.

Each year, the stories of the finalists demonstrate that when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and organisations commit to meaningful, long-term, two-way relationships, we can achieve tremendous change.

2020 is no different - we have seen more people engaged in meaningful reconciliation activities, we have seen local governments take leadership, and community groups develop and champion initiatives that deserve to be shared.

In sharing these stories, we are shining a light on the local initiatives and champions who make a real difference in their communities, so that others might take ideas and inspiration forward into their own workplaces and communities. We thank each nominee and finalist for the important work they are doing.

We are proud to present the finalists for the 2020 HART Awards – Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together.



Cr Lambros Tapinos
VLGA President



Shane Charles
Reconciliation Victoria
Co Chair



Michelle Isles
Reconciliation Victoria
Co Chair

ABOUT THE HART Awards

The 7th annual HART Awards (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) are delivered in partnership between Reconciliation Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), supported by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria. They are designed to recognise Victorian partnerships and initiatives that contribute to local reconciliation outcomes.

Since the success of the inaugural awards in 2014, each year has seen an impressive number of quality nominations, featuring a breadth of initiatives across the state. Nominations are submitted by Victorian local governments, schools, early years centres and community groups that demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal people working together, and initiatives that have contributed to reconciliation through relationships, respect and understanding and which demonstrate a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.

HART 2019 RECIPIENTS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2019 WINNER

Glenelg Shire Council
*Demystifying History Documentary
and Combined Citizenship Ceremony*

2019 HIGHLY COMMENDED

Darebin City Council
*Ongoing Commitment to the Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander community
and reconciliation*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR CONTINUED LEADERSHIP IN RECONCILIATION

City of Yarra

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS

2019 WINNER

Darebin City Council
NAIDOC Schools Yarning Conference

2019 HIGHLY COMMENDED

Wyndham City Council
*Reconciliation Action at Scale
– Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives*

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

2019 WINNER

Whittlesea Reconciliation Group
Kulin Village @ Whittlesea Community Festival

2019 HIGHLY COMMENDED

Balnarring Preschool
*Bunjil Nest Project – Womindjeka Balnarring
Ngargee including book launch*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR EMERGING WORK IN DRIVING SYSTEMATIC CHANGE

Bendigo Reconciliation Committee



2020
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Awards

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION **FINALISTS**

LORD SOMERS CAMP AND POWER HOUSE

Be Deadly @ Somers

Through a partnership with the Be Deadly organisation, Lord Somers Camp and Power House run the 'Be Deadly Camp' which is focussed on the skills development of young Indigenous kids. Isaac Young, founder of Be Deadly, created the program after identifying a need in the community to foster a greater connection to Aboriginal culture.

The camp strengthens each participant's personal, social and community connection to their own culture, while utilising their culture as a framework for learning. Run by Indigenous leaders, the program is organised by a dedicated group of volunteers who provide meaningful community engagement for each child, while allowing them to grow their peer support network. The success of the camp is shown by the fact that many of the young people who take part in the camp return in future years as camp leaders and volunteers themselves.



GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST COMMITTEE AND WATHAURUNG ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Guided Surf Coast Walk

In close partnership, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee and Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation have created a unique coastal experience that educates the public in recognising and understanding the deep continuing connection of Traditional Owners to Country. Led by proud Wadawurrung woman Corrina Eccles, the Guided Surf Coast Walk is a three-day, 47 kilometre guided walk from Point Impossible to Aireys Inlet, sharing along the way cultural knowledge, stories and values of stunning Wadawurrung Country.

The initiative is founded on solid environment and culturally sensitive considerations and has not only helped to diversify the local tourism industry, but has educated participants and the broader public in cultural knowledge. Each walk has sold out far in advance, showing the support for this important initiative that will likely last for years.



VACCHO

Ngangkari Traditional Healing for Victorian Communities

After the recent devastating bushfires, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation worked in collaboration with Ngangkari, Traditional Healers from the APY Lands of Central Australia, to provide Traditional Healing to the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of affected communities.

From the original idea appearing on a Tuesday, VACCHO and the Ngangkari were on the ground by Friday, quickly providing an invaluable resource that was deeply meaningful to all members of the community. The ongoing engagement of the Ngangkari will ensure that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians are able to access Traditional Healing through a holistic reconciliation process of sharing and caring for Country and each other.



BUNDJIL NEST PROJECT

Womindjeka Balnarring Ngargee (Festival)

Womindjeka Balnarring Ngargee (Festival) is an event where the community gather to share, begin conversations and walk with First Peoples. The festival honours and celebrates First People's culture, involves the whole community in caring for and learning with Country, and demonstrates a longstanding commitment to reconciliation.

In its third year, the festival began this year with John Wayne Parsons singing N'Arwee't Carolyn Briggs onto the stage in a traditional language song written by N'Arwee't Carolyn's daughter. Growing from the Bundjil Nest Project, a collaboration between Balnarring Preschool, Primary School, Early Learning Centre and St Joseph's School, Womindjeka Balnarring Ngargee demonstrates reconciliation in action by beginning conversations that might not otherwise be had.



ST JOHN OF GOD HOSPITAL BENDIGO

Weenthunga – St John of God Collaboration

St John of God Hospital Bendigo have demonstrated a longstanding commitment to working collaboratively with Weenthunga over the past 6 years, centred on support for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to pursue health careers. Over this time, St John of God Bendigo have hosted Weenthunga's Women's Talk Health Day visits annually, provided scholarships and offered work experience and placement opportunities to young women in the Weenthunga program.

St John of God Bendigo have also been actively involved in local reconciliation and NAIDOC Week initiatives and reflected on organisational white privilege through conversation circles and discussions with senior staff. This close working relationship has been based on principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility under the leadership of Phil Bretherton and Denis Byrne from St John of God and Auntie Steff Armstrong from Weenthunga.



A pathway of Reconciliation activities

It's important to note that reconciliation activities exist along a path.

Some community engagement activities invite people to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge and start to raise awareness of our true history and its ongoing impact. These activities move people to learn more and discover how they might be involved in reconciliation.

Some activities seek to change the way we work and begin to challenge the power dynamics that exist in our institutions, systems and structures as a legacy of colonisation. These activities strive to embed Aboriginal self-determination and ways of working in our mainstream institutions.

We believe it's important and necessary to have activities all along the path to create widespread change and reset the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

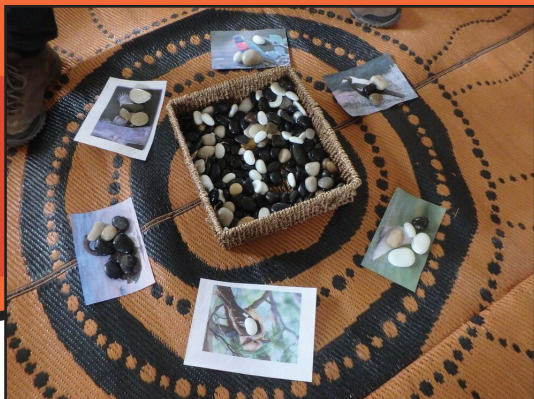
LOCAL GOVERNMENT – SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS FINALISTS

BAKERY HILL KINDERGARTEN

Kunuwarra – A Children's Vote for Wadawurrung Name Change

Drawing on the local environment of Bakery Hill Kindergarten, which includes a 180 year old bluegum tree, educators and children took on the project of changing the name of their groups to Wadawurrung bird names. Each child voted for their preferred name by placing a stone on a picture of their preferred bird, with Kunuwarra the black swan being successful. The project meant that the children were able to learn about and honour the land on which they live and play.

The project has had a ripple effect in the kinder community, not only giving parents and families more opportunity to engage with local culture, but also by inspiring other groups at the kindergarten to get involved. Shortly after, another 4 year old group voted to adopt the name Kuwarrk, and a three year old group will vote on their new name before the end of the year. The Kunuwarra voting process was documented in a book given to each child as a gift, meaning the project will live on in their families for a long time.



MELBOURNE GRAMMAR GRIMWADE HOUSE

Australian Indigenous Messengers

Australian Indigenous Messengers (AIM) is a group of eight Year 5 students formed to unite in advocacy with the Boon Wurrung people. Through research, observations and a campus survey, the students revealed a significant lack of understanding amongst their peers of language and culture specific to the Traditional Owners of the land where Melbourne Grammar stands.

AIM determined that more than half of the student body knew nothing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. By immersing themselves in diverse experiences and collaborating with Boon Wurrung Elders and representatives, the AIM team led a student driven project where they would design and create a language kit for use at Melbourne Grammar and hopefully, throughout the broader school community.



BALNARRING PRESCHOOL

Living and Learning with Country Pedagogy and Practice

Balnarring Preschool has committed to reconciliation by embedding the perspectives of First People in all areas of the centre and programming. For ten years Learning with the Land has been an explicit part of the preschool program, acknowledging the importance of the environment to First Peoples cultures and a desire to hear their stories and learn.

Pedagogy and practice have been guided at Balnarring by First People's voices, and has created a culturally safe space at the preschool. Practices are authentic, applied daily and continually guided by First Peoples, and have grown into initiatives like Bunjil Nest Project which has been a HART Awards nominee three years in a row.



SCORESBY WEST PRESCHOOL

Embedding Culturally Inclusive Practice

Scoresby West Preschool decided that it was essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture was embedded in programs across the preschool, and become a space where the Indigenous culture of Australia is recognised, respected and celebrated.

An Acknowledgment of Country was developed, Indigenous stories and art were included in daily programs and a large mural was painted by an Aboriginal artist that included many of the children's favourite Aboriginal stories. Families have been encouraged to take part and ask questions, particularly through the kindergarten's bush tucker garden that is shared with children and their families. The discussion that these reforms have led to children developing an awareness for Indigenous people and their traditions while embedding an understanding and respect for culture.





ST LEONARD'S COLLEGE

The Warruwi Program

For the last 5 years, St Leonard's College has developed an ongoing relationship with the Warruwi Community School on South Goulburn Island, Northern Territory. Students and staff visit Warruwi every year and Warruwi students are supported to attend the College to complete their studies.

The relationship provides a unique opportunity for students to connect with a remote Indigenous community and to gain an understanding of their lifestyle and culture, particularly the similarities and differences to their own.

The program is based on empowerment, trust and sustainability and would not have been possible without the long-term commitment and respect that the communities hold for each other.



ACTION ON ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (AAPEC)

Possum Skin Pedagogy: A Guide For Early Childhood Practioners

AAPEC is a collective of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal early childhood professionals committed to embedding Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood services with a focus on local Victorian cultures.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, AAPEC developed the "Possum Skin Pedagogy" guide in order to address some of the complex issues in embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the early years and to provide a framework for philosophy and practice.

The guide is available for free, with over 45,000 individuals accessing it already. The guide contributes to a deeper understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities by exploring different protocols and narratives. These include the narrative of journey and healing which is essential for moving the community towards reconciliation.



St Leonard's and Warruwi working together

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ST LEONARD'S COLLEGE AND WARRUWI COMMUNITY SCHOOL



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINALISTS

CITY OF BALLARAT

Survival Day Dawn Ceremony

To honour those Sovereign First People who fought and died in the Frontier Wars that began on 26 January 1788, the City of Ballarat's Koorie Engagement Action Group held a Survival Day Dawn Service. It was a powerful day that recognised that January 26 is a day of mourning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It was an inclusive ceremony that brought together over 1000 people, and promoted understanding, respect and advanced reconciliation in the Ballarat community.

It not only provided a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to mark the day, but allowed non-Indigenous residents that chance to reflect and engage in conversations that sparked education and continuing action.



MILDURA RURAL CITY COUNCIL

Mildura Corroboree

As part of the 2019 NAIDOC celebrations, Mildura Rural City Council and their Aboriginal Action Committee partnered with local Aboriginal community and organisations to host the Mildura Corroboree. The Corroboree was the site of cultural workshops, stalls, entertainment and food that showcased the rich traditional culture and history of the Traditional Owners of the land.

The event was powerful and moving, creating short and long term opportunities for collective action within the community, providing the opportunity for understanding and recognition of culture, promoting healing and making strong pathways for true reconciliation. The strong collaborative efforts and involvement of community over the planning reinforced what is needed for genuine community engagement and how working together can truly strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the community.



MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL

Local Acknowledgement of Country for Early Years Services

In consultation with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, Moonee Valley City Council commended a process to develop a local Acknowledgement of Country for use in early years services across the municipality. What resulted was that early years services were provided with several locally endorsed and relevant Acknowledgments that were accessible for children.

Throughout the process, educators, children and their families developed a deeper understanding of the Country on which they live, work and play. The Acknowledgments are used at all child focused services across council, including kindergartens, maternal and child health services and libraries, promoting cultural safety and a deep commitment to reconciliation across council.



MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL

Victory Park – Peace and Reconciliation Play Space

Through a co-design process with local Dja Dja Wurrung Elders and adopted Elder Aunty Julie McHale, this beautiful and innovative play space draws heavily on theme of peace and reconciliation in Castlemaine. Incorporating two important ancestral beings of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow, this play space provides an area for children of all ages to share and learn about the local Indigenous community.

Including a number of items of cultural significance, including a Grinding Stone with native grasses and a yabby sculpture in the creek (because yabby is a traditional language word), this play space will inspire generations of residents to learn about and celebrate their local Aboriginal history and culture.



CITY OF PORT PHILLIP AND BOONWURRUNG LAND AND SEA COUNCIL

We-akon Dilinja 26 January 2020

Together, the City of Port Phillip and the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council made a community aspiration a positive reality by holding a remarkable Dawn Service on January 26th. It was an event that honoured ancestors and community, while also bringing together a vast array of local communities that crossed racial, religious and cultural grounds.

Attended by over 300 people and heavily covered in the media, the City of Port Phillip and the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council demonstrated a clear commitment to bringing all Australians together on what is a difficult day. Driven by local Traditional Owners, and outstandingly supported by council staff, We-akon Dilinja broke new ground in Port Phillip for what reconciliation can look like.



ABOUT US

reconciliation



v i c t o r i a

Reconciliation Victoria was established in 2002, the product of a people's movement for Reconciliation in Victoria. We are a small not for profit organisation governed by a Board of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members, with a Cultural Council of First Peoples newly established to guide and inform our work.

We are the state-wide body promoting reconciliation and act as a focal point for advancing deeper understanding, respect and justice for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We work with a network of 25 local reconciliation groups and with the local government and education sectors to strengthen local relationships between Aboriginal and other Victorians. As part of our work supporting Treaty in Victoria, we also engage and inform non-Aboriginal communities, building the capacity and understanding of local government, local reconciliation supporters and the general public of the various roles they can play to support Treaty in Victoria. Our approach involves facilitating connections and sharing resources to promote truth, justice, equity and self-determination.

Visit our websites for information on our programs and for opportunities to get involved in reconciliation in Victoria.

www.reconciliationvic.org.au
www.maggolee.org.au



The VLGA is an independent organisation that supports councils in good governance to progress the vision that our communities are inclusive, sustainable and dynamic, characterised by strong leadership and effective local governance.

Our role is to support, mentor and develop the knowledge and practice of councillors in good governance. We advocate for sustainable sector reform and deliver projects and develop tools that assist councils to connect to their communities.

The VLGA, through its seat on the Implementation Partnership Group for the Victorian and Aboriginal Local Government Action Plan (VALGAP) – which was launched in 2016 by the state government as a step forward towards reconciliation and self-determination – and through our partnership with organisations such as Reconciliation Victoria, is well placed to work with the local government sector, local communities and others to ensure that information is shared and knowledge is built as Victoria moves through the process of Treaty – or multiple Treaties – following the passing of the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act in 2018.

www.vlga.org.au

MAGGOLEE: Here In This Place

We encourage local governments to access and utilise the Maggolee website which celebrates good practice in Victorian local government Aboriginal engagement and reconciliation and aims to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, local communities and the councils that serve them together.

The Maggolee website has been developed by Reconciliation Victoria, with funding from the Victorian Government, as a resource for local councils to work more closely with Aboriginal communities. The site includes information on policy and programs, protocols and cultural awareness, key contacts, relevant local data, news and events.

It contains information about each of the 79 Victorian local government areas, and about actions councils can take across key function areas to build closer relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to progress reconciliation.

The website is a place where councils can find ideas and resources to enable:

- Stronger partnerships between Aboriginal communities and local government
- More Aboriginal employment in local government
- Wider use of council services by Aboriginal people
- Stronger council and community support for reconciliation
- Greater involvement of Aboriginal people in the development of council policies
- Deeper appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture
- Engagement with the Victorian Government's Aboriginal Local Government Action Plan.



Maggolee also allows councils to showcase their work through their own dedicated space where they can detail services, policies and other initiatives that support Aboriginal communities.

www.maggolee.org.au



"Remember Me: A Tribute to the Stolen Generations and Their Families" – City of Yarra, recipient of Acknowledgment for Continued Leadership in Reconciliation HART Awards 2019

2020 HART Awards

HELPING ACHIEVE RECONCILIATION TOGETHER

The VLGA and Reconciliation Victoria created the HART Awards as a way to promote the impressive reconciliation initiatives happening across Victoria as well as to encourage and inspire community groups and local governments to work in partnership with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We believe the HART Awards strengthen the reconciliation movement in Victoria through recognising and celebrating the work of individuals, schools, early learning centres and organisations committed to truth, justice, healing and equity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria.