Background Paper on Reconciliation

January 2014

www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Yarra Ranges Council

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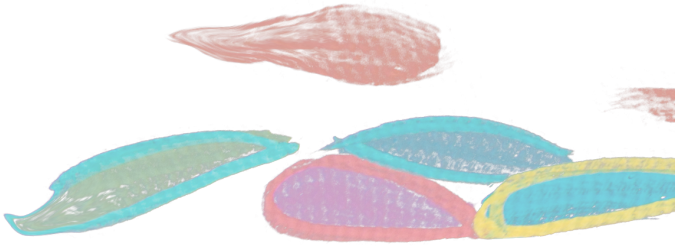


Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People, as the custodians of this land. We also pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

Our Story – The Tree of Life and Knowledge

Our Story describes the Tree of Life and Knowledge. The Yarra Ranges Council Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) developed the story to describe a cultural strengthening approach. It has used the metaphor of the tree to represent the multi-faceted approach that we take, our shared history, and the importance of cultural values and expression in building wellbeing.

"The Tree of Life and Knowledge is a metaphor for the way in which the Council's Indigenous Advisory Committee interprets our Indigenous community's place in Yarra Ranges. It is through the metaphor of our tree that we bring together Western and Indigenous ways of knowing in contemporary urban society. It connects our past, present and future.

The tree represents our whole community. It illustrates how we are all one community, and are all connected to each other, our environment and the land.

In recognition of the Country that our community lives on, our tree is a Manna Gum. The Manna Gum is an important Wurundjeri symbol, and our tree acknowledges and respects the traditional people of this land. The Manna Gum is also a tree which endures. Our tree grows in this land of the Wurundjeri people. The land is the mother of life. The roots of our tree incorporate the core cultural elements of family and kinship, spirituality, language, land and country, art, and cultural practice. These are the elements that support the tree and flow up from the ground as our cultural life-blood - through the tree to its very tips.

Our Indigenous Ways of Knowing form the main part of the tree trunk. The second part of the tree trunk represents Cultural Strengthening and Cultural Heritage. This refers to the role that cultural development has in the continuation of a strong Aboriginal community. Heritage refers to Council's role in the protection and preservation of cultural heritage values, through planning and development processes.

Painted By: Safina Stewart

The Tree of Life and Knowledge

Health, Healing and Spirit refers to our sense of being in this time and space. The physical health of our Indigenous community is less than that of our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters. Healing the wounds of the past enables our community to look forward to a positive future. Healing also needs to happen within our Aboriginal community, as it redefines identity through strong cultural connections in this diverse contemporary urban environment.

Spirit refers to the strong connections to the earth, water, sky and community. Spirit also connects us to the seen and unseen spirits of ancestors; totems and

Safina Stewart

Painter of:
'The Tree of Life and Knowledge'

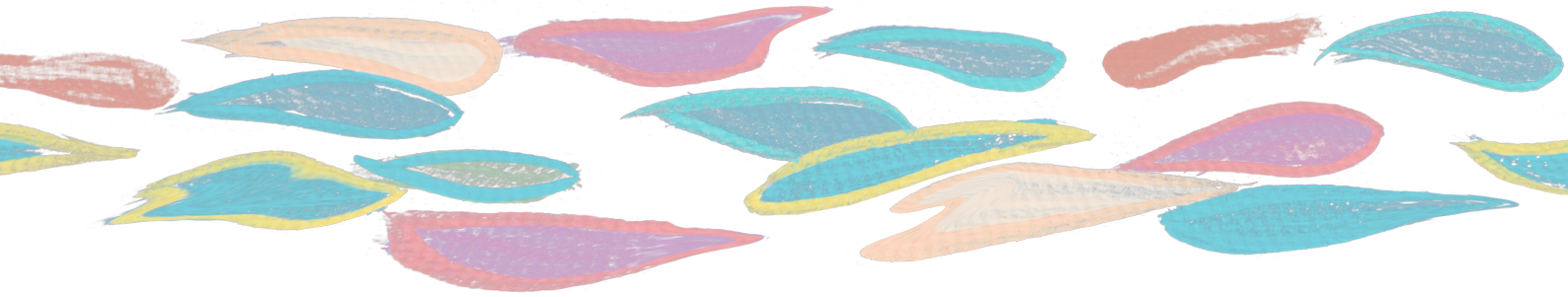
creator spirits; the spirit of the plants and trees; and the animals, water and rocks - to everything that exists.
The smaller branches of Participation and Access are representative of Council's way of knowing. Access and Participation are the entry points through which Council can assist in 'Closing the Gap'.

The leaves are a representation of our community and our people; the different coloured leaves reflect the diversity within our community. As leaves die, they fall to the ground providing nutrients to the tree, and aiding renewal and sustainability. Our tree also provides connection back to more traditional times, to when our ancestors walked the earth. They are now spirits providing guidance to us today. This also represents the cycle of life across the ages.

Our Manna Gum is always in flower, signifying the beauty of nature and harmonious existence that it is part of. The flowers produce seeds which create new trees, and so the ancient lineage of our life cycle continues.

The sun as the giver of life shines on our leaves, on our community. Our community photosynthesises this sunlight into an energy that inspires vibrancy and vitality. This eternal energy source is the same one that shone on our elders across time, and it unites the past and the present as one timeless space.

Our community leaves also take in carbon dioxide, turning it into oxygen. Oxygen, along with sunlight, is the force which sustains all animal life. The metamorphosis of carbon dioxide into oxygen represents our community's strength, resilience, and capacity to change and survive, despite overwhelming challenges. It also reflects the interdependency of community, nature and country. The whole tree is enshrined in a circle of Respect, Caring and Sharing. Respect, Caring and Sharing is our culture."



Introduction

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Yarra Ranges Council's Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) has defined Reconciliation as:

"A pathway to healing the past and moving forward toward a future of respect, caring and sharing, with all cultures living in harmony".

Reconciliation is fundamental to healing past injustices towards Indigenous people, and is vital to community health and wellbeing. This statement is based on the research findings about what makes for healthy people. There is clear evidence that having control over decision making in our own lives is important to improving health and wellbeing.

Yarra Ranges Council supports the rights of Indigenous people as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People which:

- sets out the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples, as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health and education;

- emphasises the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions, and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations; and

- "prohibits discrimination against Indigenous peoples", and "promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them and their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development".

Our vision for Reconciliation, as outlined in Council's Reconciliation Policy, is for a united community that recognises the special place and culture of Indigenous peoples as first Australians; and values their participation in all aspects of community, supporting equal life chances for all.

There are three components to guide Council's commitment to Reconciliation. They are:

- the Reconciliation Policy;
- the Reconciliation Strategic Framework for Action and Annual Action Plan; and
- the Background Paper.

The Background Paper provides information about the process undertaken in developing the Policy and the Strategic Framework, as well as the innovative work undertaken by Council in partnership with its Advisory Committee (the IAC), which underpins Reconciliation in Yarra Ranges.

RECONCILIATION

Practical Indigenous Protocols

Council's Practical Indigenous Protocols document provides support for working in a culturally respectful way. It can be viewed on the website (link below), and is a resource for Council and community working with Indigenous community members and organisations:

(Refer to Appendix one).

Indigenous people of the Yarra Ranges

Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Indigenous people have lived in Victoria for at least 40,000 years. Prior to colonisation there were approximately 38 Indigenous languages spoken throughout Victoria, although many of these have now been lost.

People of the Woiwurrung language group, the Wurundjeri people, first occupied the area that we today call the Shire of Yarra Ranges. The Wurundjeri people are part of what is known as the Kulin Nation, which is made up of five communities:

- Wurundjeri - of the Yarra catchment.
- Boonwurrung - of the bays and south coast.
- Taungurung - of the Goulburn River region.
- Wathaurong - of the western plains.
- Dja Dja Wurrung - of the northwest Loddon River.

The totem for these groups is Bundjil the eagle or Waa the raven (crow). The Wurundjeri boundaries lie within the inner city of Melbourne and extend north to the Great Dividing Ranges, east to Mt Baw Baw, south to Mordialloc and west to the Werribee River.

Yarra Ranges has been home to many Indigenous leaders,

women and men, including William Barak, who became Ngurangaeta, or head person of his people – the Wurundjeri - and others living on Coranderrk. There are a number of Wurundjeri cultural heritage sites within Yarra Ranges. One such place of significance is Coranderrk Mission Station, home to many Indigenous people who were moved to Healesville from their traditional lands, under protection and assimilation policies.

The Yarra River was a central resource for Indigenous communities in the area, and there are still many 'scar trees' to be seen along the river and inland, left behind by skilful canoe makers. The Yarra was a great source of food, as well as a way to travel to the various communities to trade and hold meetings.

Coranderrk

In 1858 and 1859, a Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry recommended that land be set aside for the Aboriginal people. In 1862, a 2,800 acre site was chosen in the Yarra Valley, which became known as the Watts River Reserve. This area includes what today is the main street of Healesville.

In 1863, Watts River Reserve was closed and the Aboriginal Protection Board approved the establishment of what became known as Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, a 2300 acre parcel of land south of the township of Healesville. Later that year, John Green (Manager of Coranderrk from 1862-1873), Simon Wonga and William Barak walked ahead of a long line of Kulin people on a trek from the Acheron to Coranderrk, through what became known as "The Black Spur".

By 1865, the population of Coranderrk numbered 105 people, making it Victoria's largest reserve at the time. The Indigenous residents cleared much of the property over the next four years, developing a thriving farming community. Coranderrk residents also established a bakery, a butcher, numerous houses and a schoolhouse.

In 1866, Coranderrk was allocated another 2,500 acres, making it a total of 4,800 acres. The residents cleared the land for farming and planted hops in 1872. Coranderrk became famous for its hops and won first prize at Melbourne Exhibitions.

Coranderrk became self sufficient, growing all of its own fruit, vegetables and cereals to meet the needs of the Reserve. By 1874, there was a local push to close the Mission. Many Aboriginal people from the mission walked the 40 miles to Melbourne to protest to Parliament. It was eventually closed in 1924, and the residents moved to Lake Tyers.

Over time, Coranderrk was gradually taken away. Portions were sold off and used for farms, the Army School of Health and the Healesville Sanctuary, until all that remained was the half acre cemetery. The Coranderrk community fought for their land and were able to secure control of Coranderrk's cemetery. Indigenous Land Corporation funds were accessed to buy some of the land back, including the manager's house.

(Reference: http://www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/coranderrk/mission_history/default.htm)

Over the years, there have been some areas of land returned or leased to the local Indigenous people, including:

- The Worawa Aboriginal College site (Worawa Aboriginal College)
- The original Coranderrk Homestead site (controlled by Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation).

The Galeena Beek properties of:

- 161 Maroondah Hwy,
- 38 Glen Eadie Ave,
- 20-24 Glen Eadie Ave

The Former Army School of Health site (owned by the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation & Cultural Heritage Council Inc.).

From these beginnings, the local Indigenous community has established a number of services specifically for the Indigenous community of Yarra Ranges. These include:

- Coranderrk Aboriginal Housing Cooperative Ltd
- Aboriginal Health Team (Eastern Health)
- Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association
- Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation.

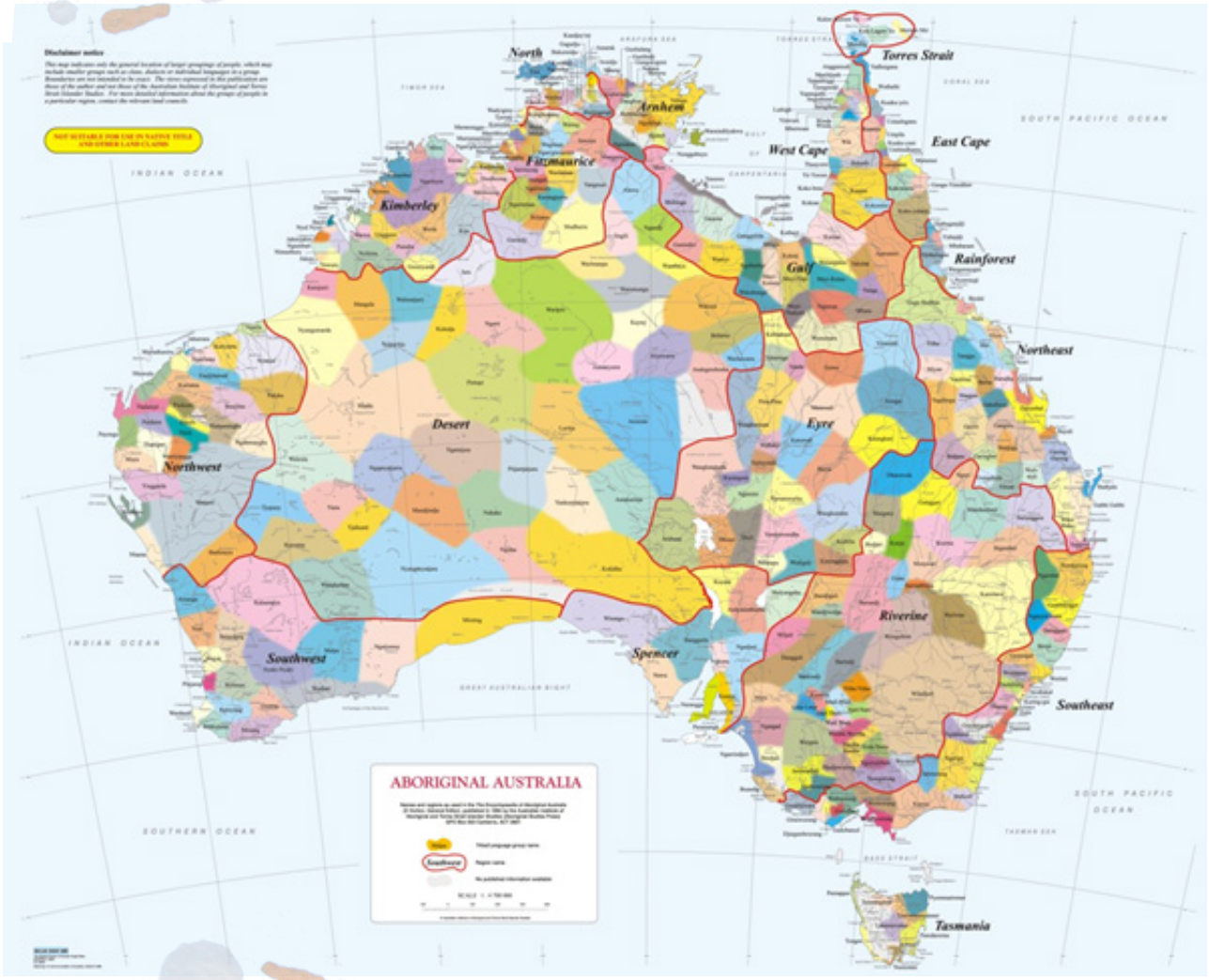
A diverse contemporary community

The Wurundjeri people are the traditional owners of the place Yarra Ranges and have inhabited the lands that lie within the inner city of Melbourne, extending north to the Great Dividing Ranges, east to Mt Baw Baw, and south to Mordialloc Creek and west to the Werribee River for at least 35,000 years.

Today, the Yarra Ranges Indigenous community is diverse, made up of traditional owners and family groups whose traditional lands are elsewhere; and some who, because of past government policies, do not know where their traditional lands are.

Some of the traditional peoples represented in Yarra Ranges are:

- Taungurung, Goulburn River Region, Victoria
- Gunai Kurnai, Gippsland Victoria
- Monero, Far East Gippsland and Southern New South Wales
- Yorta Yorta, Central North Victoria
- Kamilaroi, North Central New South Wales
- Walpiri, Central Australia
- Nunga, South Australia
- Nyoongah, South Western Australia
- Wiradjuri, Central New South Wales
- Wotjabaluk, Wimmera Region, Victoria
- Pallawah, Tasmania
- Dja Dja Wurrung, North West Loddon River, Victoria
- Wuthathi, Eastern Cape York, Queensland
- Mabuiag Island, Torres Straits
- Worimi, Central New South Wales
- Yolgnu, Top End Northern Territory
- Gunditj Mara, South Western Victoria.



Nationally

As can be seen from the map above, Indigenous Australia appears more like a map of Europe with the many different nations working out trade and trade routes, diplomacy, cultural exchanges, and conflict.

Victoria

Prior to European settlement in Victoria, there were around thirty-eight separate language groupings, and there were many clans within each of these large language groups.

Each clan or family group exists by virtue of descent from the creation ancestors, with membership of a particular clan given at birth. People retain clan membership for life, even if they move away and live in other areas or in cities. Across Victoria, the social, cultural and political uniqueness of each group continues to exist. This is particularly so in Yarra Ranges.

The traditional lands of many groups extend into what are now two states. For example, in north-eastern Victoria, the traditional lands of both the Wemba Wemba and the Yorta Yorta peoples lie on both sides of the Murray River.

Tribal boundaries are now recognised, and are the basis of native title claims under the Commonwealth Government's Native Title Act. In a historic move, the Yorta Yorta people lodged the first native title claim in Victoria under the Commonwealth Government's Native Title Act 1993.

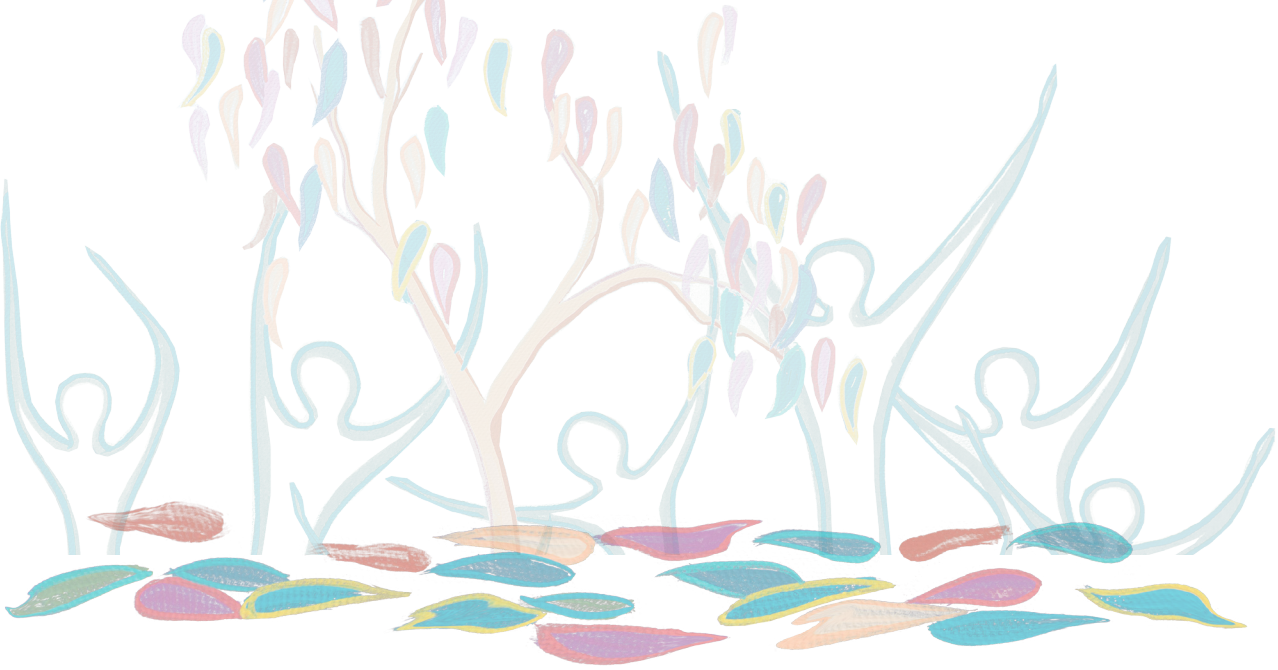
Our Partners in Reconciliation

Indigenous Advisory Committee

The Yarra Ranges Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) was established in 2005 and is central to driving Reconciliation in our municipal area. The IAC advises Council in its role as advocate on agreed issues; and provides a platform for ongoing consultation between the Indigenous community and Yarra Ranges Council across a broad range of issues. The IAC seeks to provide opportunities for self-determination; and to improve access to culturally appropriate services by raising awareness of Indigenous issues, history and culture. The IAC played a key role in the development and implementation of the recent Yarra Ranges Council Reconciliation Policy, Reconciliation Strategic Framework for Action and the previous Reconciliation Action Plan 2008-2010.

The IAC has a strong commitment to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing in Yarra Ranges. It facilitates ongoing engagement and partnering between the Indigenous community and Council. It supports improved access to culturally appropriate services, by raising awareness of Indigenous history, culture, needs and issues.

The IAC acknowledges that healing needs to happen not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, but also within the Indigenous community.



Strategic Partnerships

The capacity to influence Reconciliation will be enhanced through working in partnership with others. This has been demonstrated through Council's work with its partners in the IAC. Partnerships are essential to advancing the goals of Reconciliation, bringing complementary skills, resources and energy to our efforts.

The ways in which Council works with stakeholders and partners include networking, facilitation, improved coordination and collaboration. The ability to leverage resources, skills and past experience with our partners is important. Shared funding applications are another way in which we can work with our partners to achieve our goals.

RECONCILIATION

Our key stakeholders and partners include:

Indigenous Organisations and Forums

Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association

Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place

Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency Eastern Region

Eastern Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

This is by no means an exhaustive or exclusive list;

State Government

Department of Justice

Department of Human Services

Department of Health

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Community Organisations

Yarra Valley Community Health

Inspiro Community Health

Eastern Health

EACH

Arts organisations

and new partnerships will be formed as we go forward.

Policy Context

Local Context - Public Health and Wellbeing Strategy

All Councils have a statutory responsibility to protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of their communities. Planning for health and wellbeing in Yarra Ranges includes an understanding of the determinants of health identified by the World Health Organisation and Canada Health. These include: income and social gradient, health literacy (the ability to understand health information), violence, access to health services, education, transport, social inclusion, employment status, genetics, housing, recreation, the physical environment, gender, the health of urban environments, control over decision making, and climate change.

In the context of Reconciliation, it is important to consider the determinants of health, as they point to areas which need improvement and action in order to see health gains in Indigenous communities.

State, Federal and International Context for the Reconciliation Plan

The Reconciliation Plan includes priorities which align with key international, State, Commonwealth and agency priorities and strategies. These include:

- United Nations; Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
- Commonwealth of Australia: Social Inclusion Agenda.
- Council Of Australian Governments: Close the Health Gap Initiative.
- Victorian Government: Aboriginal Inclusion Framework.
- Victorian Government: Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework.
- Koolin Balit: Victorian Government strategic directions for Aboriginal health.
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights.
- Dardee Boorai: Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People.
- VicHealth: Life is Health is Life, Health Promotion Strategy.

Reconciliation Policy

The Reconciliation Policy guides Council's work and sets out our commitment to Reconciliation.

Reconciliation Framework for Action

The Reconciliation Strategic Framework for Action outlines how Yarra Ranges Council will work with key partners and within its roles, to address the over-representation of disadvantage which is experienced by the Indigenous community, in key areas such as health, employment and education. The Reconciliation Strategic Framework for Action is based on the values of Respect, Caring and Sharing, which were developed in partnership with the IAC.

The Reconciliation Strategic Framework for Action aims to connect contemporary urban Indigenous ways of being with those of western or mainstream society. This approach strives for equal acknowledgement of mainstream and Indigenous ways of knowing.

The Reconciliation Strategic Framework for Action is underpinned by the powerful cultural values which are continually reinforced by local Elders. These cultural values are central to equity and inclusion.

Strengthening Culture

The IAC and Council recognise that strategies for tackling disadvantage in Indigenous communities work better if they are underpinned by a strong cultural framework. A cultural framework simply means respecting and acknowledging the central place of culture for Indigenous people, and recognising the power of culture to support health and wellbeing.

We can see the impacts of disconnection to culture in Australia manifested in social problems such as addiction, unemployment, loss of family connection and other social issues. The IAC and Council recognise the negative impacts, but take a strength-based approach to leading change. This means working with the positives, with the assets within our community.

The IAC has highlighted the importance of understanding the positive effects on Indigenous health and wellbeing of a cultural strengthening approach. It has emphasised the need to recognise both contemporary culture, and also the vast heritage of Indigenous culture which goes back thousands of years.

This view is underpinned by IAC members' experience of cultural practice, research and reflection on the critical role that culture has on both individual and community identity and Aboriginality.

'Culture is fundamental to identity —it is our past, our present and our future...We need our culture to sustain us and to keep us well. But importantly, we need culture because it tells us who we are.'

Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

This approach is also endorsed in the national discourse on Indigenous health and wellbeing.

'Culture and identity is a big part of who we are. It's about place, it's about pride, and it's about connections across the generations. You can put all the money you want into health, but unless you invest in culture and pride, you won't cut through. Culture encircles everything.'

Jason Eades, Former CEO,
Koori Heritage Trust

A review of the academic research, qualitative data and the reflections of key Elders on the importance of culture affirms a cultural strengthening approach.

'Cultural knowledge is now as important as general literacy, numeracy or computer skills ... It is like moving blindly through the world or trying to speak without a vocabulary'.

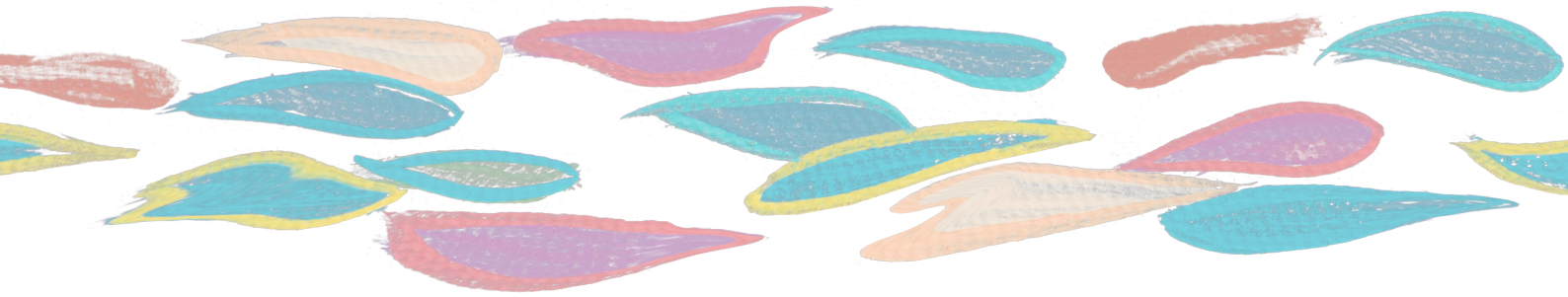
Charles Landry,
Master of International Urban Creativity

Sadly, much Indigenous culture, cultural practice, stories, rituals and song lines were lost in South Eastern Australia during and after European colonisation, although some cultural links certainly remained. Government policy at the time made it illegal to practice Indigenous culture, including speaking traditional languages.

The irrepressible nature and resilience of local Indigenous peoples has provided the connections for their culture to grow and evolve again in contemporary society. This is a strength that will be built upon through Council's annual action planning.

With the complex cultural diversity in the Indigenous community in Yarra Ranges, a challenge for improving Indigenous health and wellbeing has been to understand what culture and cultural practice looks like, within the context of a culturally diverse contemporary urban community.

This led the IAC to consider, "If we are trying to connect youth, in particular, to culture, what is it that we're trying to connect them to, what does this culture look like in the local context, can it be known? And what can culture and cultural practice look like in such a diverse community steeped in complexity with its mix of traditional owners and family groups with their traditional lands elsewhere and some who don't know where 'elsewhere' is? What can meaningful connections to Country can exist for these people?"



These questions have been picked up in VicHealth research that acknowledges the gaps in understanding of the meaning of Indigenous culture in the urban context. In the "Life is Health is Life, Health Promotion Strategy" 2011, VicHealth's Onemda Unit has identified the need for further research to address significant gaps in knowledge in the areas listed below.

Culture

- Further exploration of the meaning of culture for Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional areas is needed.
- Increased knowledge of effective ways of supporting culture as a means of improving health and wellbeing is also needed in urban and regional areas.

Identity

- Increased understanding is needed regarding the influence of cultural identity on health and wellbeing outcomes for Indigenous people living in urban and regional areas.
- Greater knowledge is required about effective interventions which build cultural identity and link identity to health outcomes.

The IAC has noted that it has a role in addressing these gaps in knowledge, and will contribute through the development of contemporary cultural practice in a local setting. This will include actively seeking opportunities to improve access to civil society and positive social participation for Indigenous people. This is one pathway towards healing past pain; and towards moving forward towards a future of Respect, Caring and Sharing with all cultures living in harmony.

Through workshops and research, the IAC identified the elements of traditional Aboriginal culture on which to base possible cultural responses. These elements are:

- Land and Country.
- Language.
- Family and Kinship.
- Spirituality.

If these four points are regarded as the elements of culture, and one then considers that art is an artefact of culture, then we can agree that art has the capacity to capture the elements of Land and Country, Language, Family and Kinship and Spirituality. Art and cultural practice can then also be regarded as a transmission point for this knowledge. The IAC considered the transmission points of culture through artistic expression, and noted that the written or the captured, including painting and carving, the oral, music, and performance are all effective modes of cultural knowledge transmission.

As we embrace art as an artefact of culture and as a mode of knowledge transmission, and consider culture as fluid, shifting and changing shape to reflect the needs of the contemporary community, we can then create the artistic space for new stories to be written and told, and for new cultural practices and possibly rituals to emerge. Examples of this include:

- The Meeting Place Garden at Healesville, where the opportunity for the story of the local community in current space and time to be written and told have been created. Creative metaphors capture the timeless existence of

Aboriginal occupation and acknowledge the current diversity of Indigenous community in celebration.

- The Welcome Baby to Country Ceremonies, where local Elders from diverse Aboriginal language backgrounds including local traditional owners participated in a cultural ceremony that welcomed babies and young children to Country and community. This has created the space for new cultural practice, cultural community connection and contemporary ceremony within community to emerge.

- The Healesville Cultural Strengthening Project and its reconciliation model where non-Indigenous friends of participants are encouraged to participate. This provides an environment for young people and the community to grow together, valuing each other and respecting each other's cultures through new cultural practice and traditional language reclamation.

These activities have increased culturally safe and positive social participation for the Yarra Ranges Indigenous community, through creative contemporary cultural practice.

'Efforts to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage must recognise and build on the strength of Indigenous cultures and identities.'

National Indigenous Reform Agreement

A local Equity and Inclusion Framework

The goals for Reconciliation are underpinned by the IAC's Equity and Inclusion Framework. The key components of the Framework are:

- A Cultural Strengthening Approach – creating opportunities for culture to be experienced, to be practiced and to grow, in order to strengthen identity and to improve health and wellbeing;

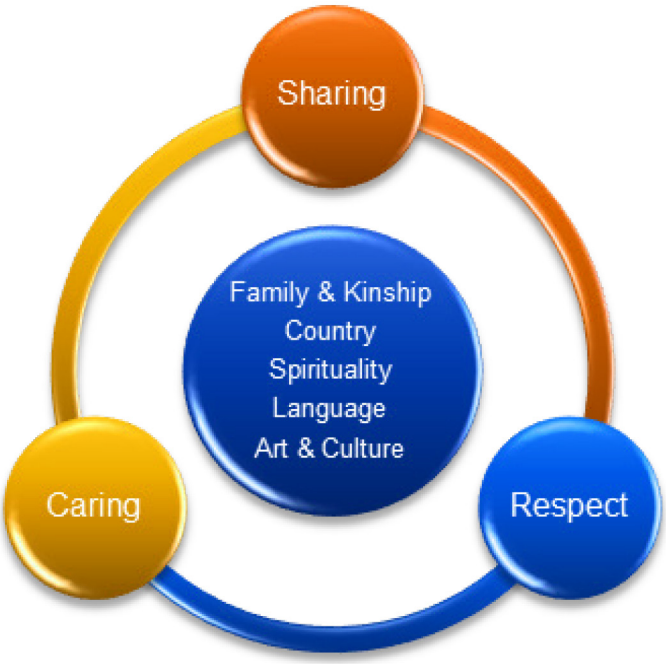
- Values – the three values; Respect, Caring and Sharing identified by Elders and the IAC; and

- Cultural Elements – the contexts in which culture is practiced, and also the pathways for strengthening culture.

The IAC Equity and Inclusion Framework reflect the ways in which Indigenous peoples live and perceive their reality in an urban context. It ensures their place in processes which affect their lives and wellbeing. Such processes can include:

- Strategic and community planning.
- Policy development.
- Project and program development and implementation.
- Decision making.

Equity and Inclusion - Strengthening Culture



The interconnected values of Respect, Caring and Sharing are defined as:

Respect -

An appreciation which leads to positive interactions, even if there is not always agreement. Respect occurs when people feel heard and acknowledged, and are a part of decision making where possible. Respect honours individual and community rights, whilst still requiring personal and community responsibility, in an ongoing and reaffirming cycle. It includes respect for oneself, other individuals and the wider community, as well as upholding cultural protocols.

Caring -

A genuine interest that seeks to achieve positive outcomes, possibly with no expected return. Caring is the result of understanding, compassion and being able to empathise with others without judging them. It includes care for oneself, other individuals and the wider community.

Sharing -

A willingness to gift items of value such as resources, knowledge and time, in order to enable good things to happen to individuals and the wider community. Sharing is maximised in an environment of trust and reciprocity. The project adopts a contemporary cultural definition of sharing, by including non-Indigenous friends as participants to appropriate group activities.

To help us to understand the practical use of these values, we can situate the words in different positions, in order to think through the importance of each one and their relationship to each other. Let's use Respect first.

"Doseena Fergie quoted the following which gives an explanation of this further…"

Respect, Caring and Sharing, If you say that you respect me and my mob, my family, my group, you will show it by ***Caring*** for me/us and ***Sharing*** what is yours with me/us.

Now let's swap ends and put ***Sharing*** first.

Sharing, Caring & Respect, If you share what is yours with me/us, it shows that you care and you will earn my/our respect.

In this instance, you can see that the words ***Sharing*** and ***Respect*** pivot around the word ***Caring***.

With ***Caring*** first it looks like:

Caring, Sharing & Respect, If you care about me, you will Share what is yours with me/us and thereby show me and my mob, my family, my community, ***Respect***.

In doing so, you earn the ***Respect*** of my mob, my family and community...and on the cycle goes.

The three values can therefore be seen as existing in a symbiotic relationship, with each one interdependent on the other in a never ending, reaffirming cycle. However, the catalyst to make the cycle work is Caring. One must actually **Care** about another before the values can be applied.

Respect, Caring and Sharing – Practical Examples

The core cultural values of Respect, Sharing and Caring are evident in recent projects, and have underpinned the development of the cultural strengthening approach. Projects embracing the values of Respect, Caring and Sharing have included:

- The Meeting Place Garden at Healesville.
- The Welcome Baby to Country Ceremony.
- The Healesville Cultural Strengthening Project.
- The Cultural Strengthening Through The Arts Project

For a cultural strengthening approach to be effective in an urban context, the IAC has advised that it must integrate Indigenous ways of knowing with Western approaches.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

A key element, which has been strongly reinforced through the IAC to inform the Reconciliation Framework for Action, is that the Framework acknowledge the ways in which Aboriginal people perceive the world and understand their reality - in other words, through 'Indigenous Ways of Knowing'.

In this time of post-colonisation, the term 'Indigenous Ways of Knowing' refers to and acknowledges the ways that Aboriginal people in a contemporary urban society integrate their culture with an urban way of life. Some local Elders refer to this as living in two worlds.

A poem by local Indigenous leader Doseena Fergie offers insight into Indigenous Ways of Knowing, regarding the fundamental cultural element Country to those with traditional lands elsewhere.

Country

'I am a visitor you know. This Country is not where I was born
Yet she welcomes me as friend, daughter, sista, mum and garma.
Four months I travelled across from land to sea.
And what did I feel, what did I hear, what did I see.....
Country, you have many faces, you have many voices,
Your beauty lies in the soil, waterways, wind, Red Gum, cockatoos and kangaroos
Yet though your voice appears silent, your body is scarred and twisted
For tyranny and pain became yours when the tall ships came
Even now your depths are being ravaged by the economist's greed.
"Devoid of life?" "NO"
For in the stillness of the bush I can feel them. Yes I can see them.....
watching and waiting - yearning to be acknowledged.
For they have known the life of caring, respect and reciprocity.
They are the holders of knowledge - of culture past. There is no need for them to bridge two worlds'.

This poem speaks of the pain of the environment's separation from western society's worldview as it is dominated and conquered. This is looking at nature and the world through Indigenous eyes. It is Country through Indigenous Ways of Knowing.

It talks of the Earth as the mother of life with its beauty and its voice, which can be seen and heard through, earth, wind, water and plants and animals.

It speaks of a time across eons when man and nature were one, and of nature waiting for man to walk on this land as one again with all that exists. It captures the fundamental connection to the land by Indigenous peoples that underpins existence.

We have much to learn from our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Evidence-based research and analysis used in western contexts are often not appropriate or constructive when applied to Indigenous health and wellbeing. A key component of a cultural framework is the representation of information in a way that respects Indigenous Ways of Knowing.

The Tree of Life and Knowledge represents the over-arching cultural values, cultural strengthening approach, themes for action, and cultural element of the Reconciliation Policy and Reconciliation Framework for Action. It acknowledges that we do live in a western society and incorporates western concepts of service access and participation, in a manner that the Indigenous community can recognise.

This integration of both Western and Indigenous Ways of Knowing is a powerful Reconciliation tool. It is accepted by the IAC and Council that this will provide a strong foundation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to continue to grow together, value each other and respect each other's culture, and that we are one community.

Appendices

Yarra Ranges Council

Appendix One:
Practical Indigenous Protocols

A practical guide for working with the
Indigenous Community of the Shire of Yarra Ranges

A Yarra Ranges Council
Indigenous Advisory Committee Project

Manna Gum Leaf

Significant in Wurundjeri history and used in smoking ceremonies to cleanse the area of bad spirits.
The Wurundjeri people call it Wurun

This protocols document draws extensively on:

Respect, Acknowledge, Listen.

Practical protocols for working with the Indigenous Community of Western Sydney.

The Yarra Ranges Council thanks Community Cultural Development New South Wales for its permission to replicate this material.

The Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges and thanks the Indigenous Advisory Committee and the participating members of the Indigenous community within the Shire of Yarra Ranges for their extensive effort in the development of these protocols.

Terminology:

Indigenous – the recognised term in Australia to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people collectively.

Aboriginal - the term used to describe the native people and their descendents from mainland Australia, including Tasmania.

Torres Strait Islander – the term used to describe the native people and their descendents from the Torres Strait region of Australia, the body of water and its islands between Australia and New Guinea.

Why have a protocols document?

The area covered by the Shire of Yarra Ranges, like all parts of Australia, is land that was, for thousands of years, occupied by traditional Indigenous groups including the Wurundjeri. Today, this region is home to approximately 2000 Indigenous people, who are descendents from various peoples across the country. As we conduct our daily lives anywhere in Australia, whether that be going to work, going to school, doing the shopping, playing sport - we are doing so on land that is recognised as traditional Indigenous land.

In the Shire of Yarra Ranges, these activities take place on Wurundjeri land. As such, it is important to acknowledge this very real connection between past and present.

This document has been produced to assist all people to gain an understanding of our Indigenous heritage and history, and to acknowledge and learn how this affects us all today. Acknowledging Indigenous heritage of our land does not mean that we are 'handing over ownership' of the land to Indigenous people. Rather, we are embracing a part of Australia's history, and recognising that this history still lives amongst us all today.

This document therefore provides guidelines for you to follow should you wish to learn, acknowledge and recognise this history and its links to you today.

What are protocols?

Protocols can be classified as a set of rules, regulations, processes, procedures, strategies or guidelines. Protocols are simply the ways in which you work, communicate and collaborate with people in an appropriate manner. Protocols are also standards of behaviour, respect and knowledge that need to be adopted. They can also be considered as a code of manners to observe rather than a set of rules to obey. These protocols are a guide to assist everyone in the way in which they can effectively engage, communicate and work with the Indigenous community in a culturally appropriate fashion.

Who is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Person?

The identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is determined only by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) criteria involve three levels of identification:

- A person must be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- A person must identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- A person must be accepted as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they live.

This criteria is acceptable to most groups living in the Shire of Yarra Ranges

It is highly offensive to Indigenous people to be referred to as half-caste/half blood, part Aboriginal, mixed blood or quarter-cast. Referring to Aboriginal people as a percentage such as 25% Aboriginal or ¼ Aboriginal is also highly offensive. These terms must be avoided at all times.

Know your Indigenous Community

Getting to know your Indigenous community is an essential first step. Establishing trust and credibility is vital. Arrange appointments to meet the local Indigenous organisations such as Indigenous health services, Traditional Owner organisations, Indigenous education units of local TAFEs and other Indigenous community organisations. You can find contacts in the community who can give you guidance and assist you with this process. You may need to organise initial contact or meetings through people that work in the Indigenous sector such as Indigenous liaison workers, council or community workers.

Engagement.

Effective negotiation, relevant to the community, needs to occur for equal relationships to develop. Face to face consultation is a preferred way of engaging and communicating with the Indigenous community but it is essential to get permission to do so first. Formal ways of making contact with the community such as letters, faxes, phone calls and email, where available, are fine for the initial contact to allow face to face meetings to occur. Consultation and negotiation should not only focus on the issues at hand but should include a broad range of other issues that would be advantageous to the Indigenous community. Issues such as community strengthening, healing, self sufficiency, employment, partnerships and the creation of opportunity should be fully explored.

Our Indigenous Community and Diversity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are as diverse as any other community. They are not all one cultural group and are not all the same. Every community will have common ground and similarities, but also very different issues. Often it is assumed that one Indigenous person is the knowledge holder and the sole voice for the whole community in which they live. This is not the case. There are different traditions and customs, different ways of communicating, different understandings, different sensitive issues and different Elders.

Throughout Australia, responsibilities to look after or 'care for country' are held by clan and family groups and individuals. Senior people in the community who are responsible for traditional lands and water are often referred to as 'traditional owners'.

The Indigenous Community within the Shire of Yarra Ranges consists of two main groups of people. These groups are, firstly, the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands within the Shire of Yarra Ranges. The Traditional Owners are the original inhabitants of the area in which we live. They are the clans, nations and groups of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who have traditional connections to the land and waters relating to their area.

The Traditional Owners of the Shire of Yarra Ranges are the Wurundjeri People. The Wurundjeri have inhabited the lands that lie within the inner city of Melbourne, extending north to the Great Dividing Range, east to Mt Baw Baw, south to Mordialloc Creek and west to the Werribee River for at least 35,000 years.

The second group consists of Indigenous people from different cultural backgrounds from all over Australia. The Traditional lands of this group are elsewhere and we have representatives from clans and tribes from across Australia. Some of the people represented here in the Shire of Yarra Ranges are:

- Taungurung –Goulburn River region Victoria;
- Gunai Kurnai – Gippsland Victoria;
- Monero – Far East Gippsland and Southern New South Wales;
- Yorta Yorta – Central North Victoria;
- Nyoongah – South Western Australia;
- Wiradjuri - Central New South Wales;
- Dja Dja Wurrung –North West Loddon River Victoria;
- Torres Strait Islander – Torres Strait;
- Worimi – Central New South Wales
- Yolgnu - Top End Northern Territory; and
- Gunditj Mara – South Western Victoria

There are matters that relate to the whole Indigenous community and matters that relate specifically to the Traditional Owners. For example matters of cultural heritage and land are generally matters for the Traditional Owner group.

It is essential then to make sure you are talking to the right people. Any issue concerning local culture, its preservation, local traditions including 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies must acknowledge the Wurundjeri people.

Other issues such as health, education and employment affect the Indigenous community as a whole. Engagement on these issues should occur with the wider Indigenous community. Once again, if you are not sure who you should be speaking to, contact Indigenous liaison workers, council or community workers. The contact details of these people are readily available. A list of differing Traditional Owner and Community issues are detailed below.

Traditional Owner or Wurundjeri Specific Issues

- Wurundjeri Cultural Heritage;
- Place Naming;
- Municipal gateway signage;
- Surveying – monitoring of significant sites;
- Wurundjeri History;
- Local Aboriginal history;
- Wurundjeri Relics – Artifacts; and
- Consultation and engagement on appropriate issues.

Indigenous Community Issues

- Health;
- Education;
- Housing;
- Local Aboriginal history;
- Consultation and engagement on appropriate issues;
- Employment; and
- Other social and cultural issues.

One aspect of local history that all Victorian Aboriginal communities share is that of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve. By the mid to late 1800s the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve was home to Indigenous people from across Victoria, reflecting government policy at the time. Coranderrk was closed in 1924 and most of the surviving residents were re-located to Lake Tyres Aboriginal Reserve in East Gippsland. Some older people refused to leave and saw out their remaining days at Coranderrk and later joined the other 300 former Coranderrk residents buried at the Coranderrk Cemetery. Many contemporary traditional Aboriginal groups in Victoria still have ancestral connections to Coranderrk. The story of Coranderrk is one of great courage, great achievement and great sadness and the legacy of Coranderrk is still very much apart of the lives of the Aboriginal community within the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

More information on the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve can be found at the Koori Heritage Trust and the State Library of Victoria.

Seeking Permission

Getting permission is essential. It is not appropriate to do research or work on any Indigenous project or program without the consent of the community involved or Indigenous people connected to the issues. Indigenous people perceive their knowledge and history as owned by them. It is their right to pass it on if they wish. There may be specific reasons why information may not be passed on to you or why permission may not be given. For example, it could be sacred or taboo, related to death customs or be specifically women's or men's business. Failure to respect the wishes of the community in this area will cause great offence which will also jeopardise your relationship with community and undermine your project.

When working with the Indigenous community as a whole you need to gain as much permission and support from as many members of the community as possible. This means disseminating information broadly and making it available to the whole community. In some instances permission may not be allowed to be given by just one Indigenous person. It may need the consent of the whole or majority of the community.

Elders

An Elder is usually a respected member of a particular Indigenous clan or family group who has the permission and authority within the tribe or community group to give advice and pass on knowledge. An Elder is the holder of knowledge. Elders have the authority to determine appropriate use of their culture outside of the Indigenous community. The term 'Elder' may not always mean men and women

over fifty or sixty years of age. An Elder may well be a person who is recognised within the clan or community group who has the trust, knowledge and understanding of their culture and permission to speak on such matters. Young people may be given permission to talk on behalf of a clan or community group.

You must also be aware of addressing an Elder in the appropriate way. Some Elders are referred to as Uncle or Aunty but you should only use these tittles when given permission to do so. Simply asking an Elder is the best way to identify their preference for being addressed.

Ownership and Copyright of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

The knowledge of Indigenous culture is owned by its Indigenous peoples. Any access to this information must have cleared permission from relevant individuals and the Indigenous community.

Copyright and moral rights are very important issues to be aware of when working with the Indigenous community.

In the past, Indigenous stories, songs, dance and knowledge have been appropriated. This has had the effect that Indigenous knowledge holders are not recognised as the owners of the information that they have imparted to people who have entered their communities. They have not benefited from the use of their stories and knowledge and further, they no longer control the dissemination of the material.

One example that has occurred in many parts of Australia is where Indigenous people tell researches and writers about their culture, or relate a traditional story. The Non-Indigenous writer is then recognised as the copyright owner of the written version of the story or report.

Traditional knowledge may not be protected adequately under Australian and International laws. Concepts of ownership of traditional knowledge differ to Western Law.

From consultations, negotiations, simple conversations to project development and management, you need to discuss copyright with the Indigenous community. The ideas, stories and knowledge that come from Indigenous people are considered by them to be their intellectual property even though our western legal system may not recognise this ownership.

Rights to use Indigenous material can be held by an individual but predominantly rights to the use Indigenous cultural material belongs to the traditional owners of that knowledge. These rights are referred to as Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights. In many Indigenous communities, there are laws covering the protection of traditionally owned cultural expression and knowledge. This includes visual arts, photographs, stories, dances colour combinations and other expressions on Indigenous culture.

If you have permission to work with an Indigenous person or group, you may still have to gain permission from the community to use, reproduce or copy the traditional owned images and/or ideas.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and privacy are essential when working with the Indigenous community. Indigenous people have traditional customs, stories and sacred information that may or may not be passed on to you. Similarly, when customs, stories and sacred information is given to you, it is given in trust. That trust requires that you respect that confidentiality. To breach community confidentiality by translating, reproducing or passing on any information, practices or cultural product without permission would be damaging to your project and erase any trust developed during consultation and negotiation processes. You should assume that all information is confidential unless you have specifically negotiated permission to use it.

Men's and women's business are very important and sensitive issues within Indigenous culture. This information may only be talked about, negotiated and consulted on by either men or women. It should also be recorded or stored in a way that only men or only women have access as appropriate.

Integrity and Trust

The integrity and trust you develop within the Indigenous community is vital and must be maintained. Continual acknowledgement of clans, Elders, Traditional Owners, information, ideas and research has to be written into any documentation and verbalised in speeches, talks and presentations. Any advertising, media releases, news articles etc concerning Indigenous people should only be made with the prior knowledge and agreement of the community concerned.

Respect

Respect and acknowledgement are common procedures for working within Indigenous communities. When meeting and working with anyone, an understood standard of respect and acknowledgement must exist. An example of the proper way of doing this is engaging an Elder to perform a 'Traditional Welcome' or 'Welcome to Country' ceremony. Giving an 'Acknowledgment of Country' is another method. Both of these protocols show respect to Traditional Owners and Community Elders in any forum or meeting. This demonstration of your respect will make it easier to set up appropriate standards of respect and trust and will make it easier for consultation and negotiation to take place effectively.

Traditional Welcome or Welcome to Country

Welcoming people to Country is a traditional practice of special significance. Today, the same practices are important, and traditional owners and communities take the role and responsibility of welcoming travellers and visitors to their country very seriously.

Recognition of 'Traditional Lands' or 'Welcome to Country' from a traditional owner or their representative is generally included at the start of a major event or gathering. The type of welcome offered will vary depending on the individual or group involved.

A 'Traditional Welcome' and a 'Welcome to Country' is the same thing. This ceremony is done by an Elder or member of the Traditional Owner group of a particular area. It is mostly done at major events and meetings. It welcomes people to visit and meet on the traditional lands of the original owners. A 'Welcome to Country' cannot be given by someone who is not a Traditional Owner of that particular area.

Acknowledgement of Country

An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is something that is done to pay respects to the Traditional Owners and other Indigenous Elders and community groups. Anyone can perform an 'Acknowledgement of Country' and it is appropriate that at any organisational, public or community forum that this is done. An example of an 'Acknowledgement of Country' is:

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People as the Custodians of this land. We also pay respects to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

This Acknowledgement of Country was developed through extensive consultation with local Aboriginal Elders and appears in the Shire of Yarra Ranges Reconciliation Strategy and Action Plan 2008 – 2010 and is an appropriate example for anyone to use.

What to Call People

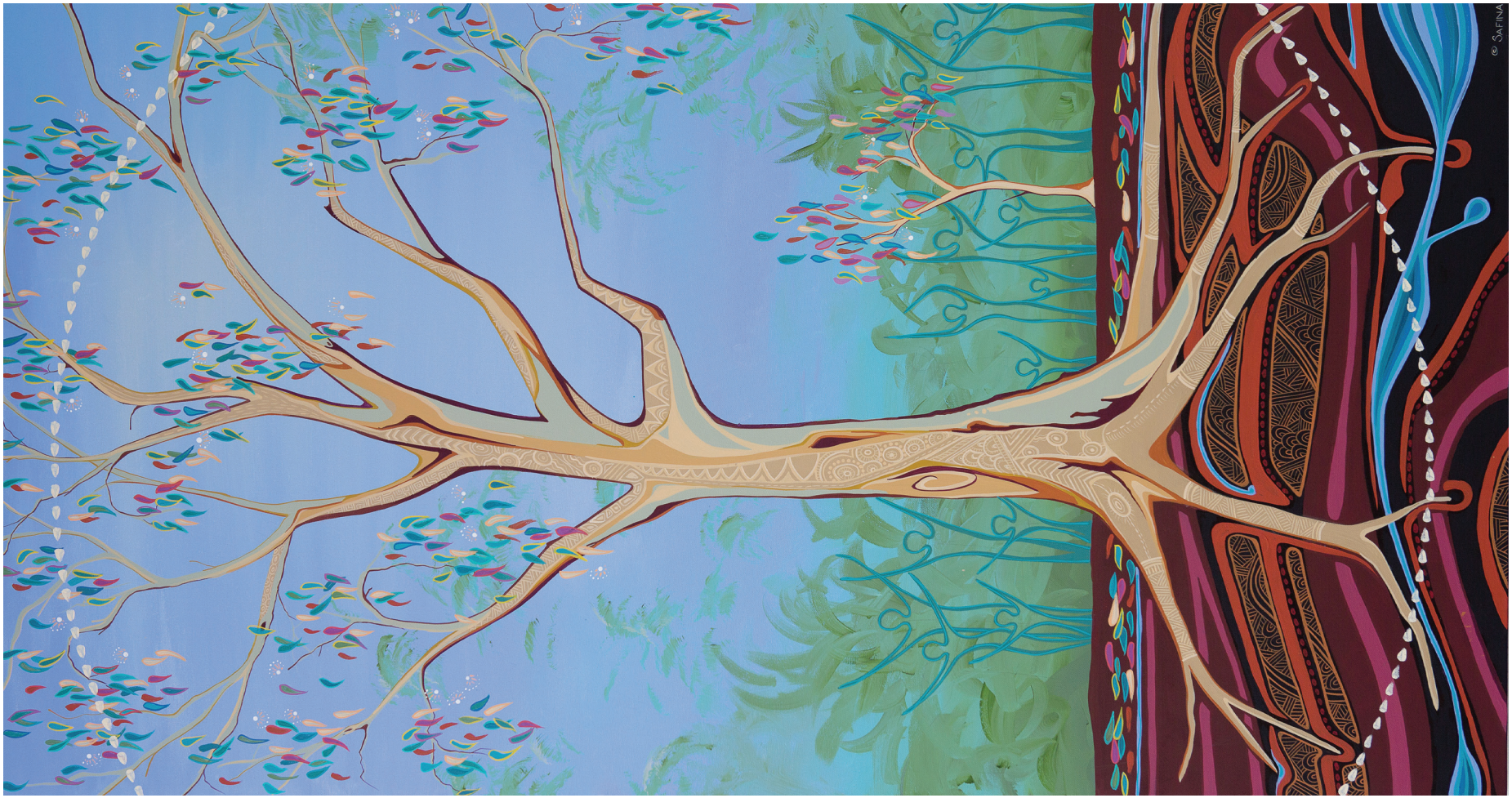
It can be offensive to refer to Indigenous peoples in the wrong manner. Some Indigenous people prefer to be called 'Indigenous' and others prefer 'Aboriginal'. The same way that some people prefer 'Torres Strait Islander' to 'Islander'. Most, but not all, Indigenous people regard 'Aborigine' as offensive but are quite happy with 'Aboriginal'. The often used term 'Koori' refers to Aboriginal people from South Eastern Australia, and therefore does not apply to Aboriginal people with traditional lands elsewhere.

If you are unsure as to how to refer to particular groups asking politely "how would you like to be referred to" is an acceptable approach.

Paying People

It has often been assumed that Indigenous people will participate and work for nothing. Indigenous people are owners and holders of their culture and knowledge. They are the only ones who have the knowledge, expertise and permission to work with and pass on their culture. In western culture, specialised knowledge is not something that is given away for free. If an Indigenous person chooses to work with you in any capacity i.e. giving a dance performance, giving a speech, a talk or a traditional welcome, doing or participating in the artwork or project etc it is appropriate that they be paid for their time, expertise and knowledge, just as it is for any other artist or professional.

RECONCILIATION



The Meeting Place Healesville, Sculptures

by Glenn Romanis, Mandy Nicholson, Rodney Bourke and Graham Patterson

Appendix Two:
Demographic Snapshot

The Indigenous population in Yarra Ranges has grown by 154 people as of the August 2011 Census. This represents a 17.6% increase since the 2006 Census. The total number of Indigenous residents in Yarra Ranges at the 2011 census was 972 residents (0.7% of total residents; however, 3.6% of residents did not indicate their status). Indigenous people reside throughout the municipality, with Healesville being a centre for community.

Healesville's larger, diverse Indigenous community comprises both traditional owners and those whose traditional lands are elsewhere. At the 2006 Census, there were a total of 281 persons living within postal area 3777 who identified as being either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This represented 2.79% of the population within the catchment area. This is higher than the proportion of the Victorian population which is Indigenous (0.6% as of the 2011 Census).

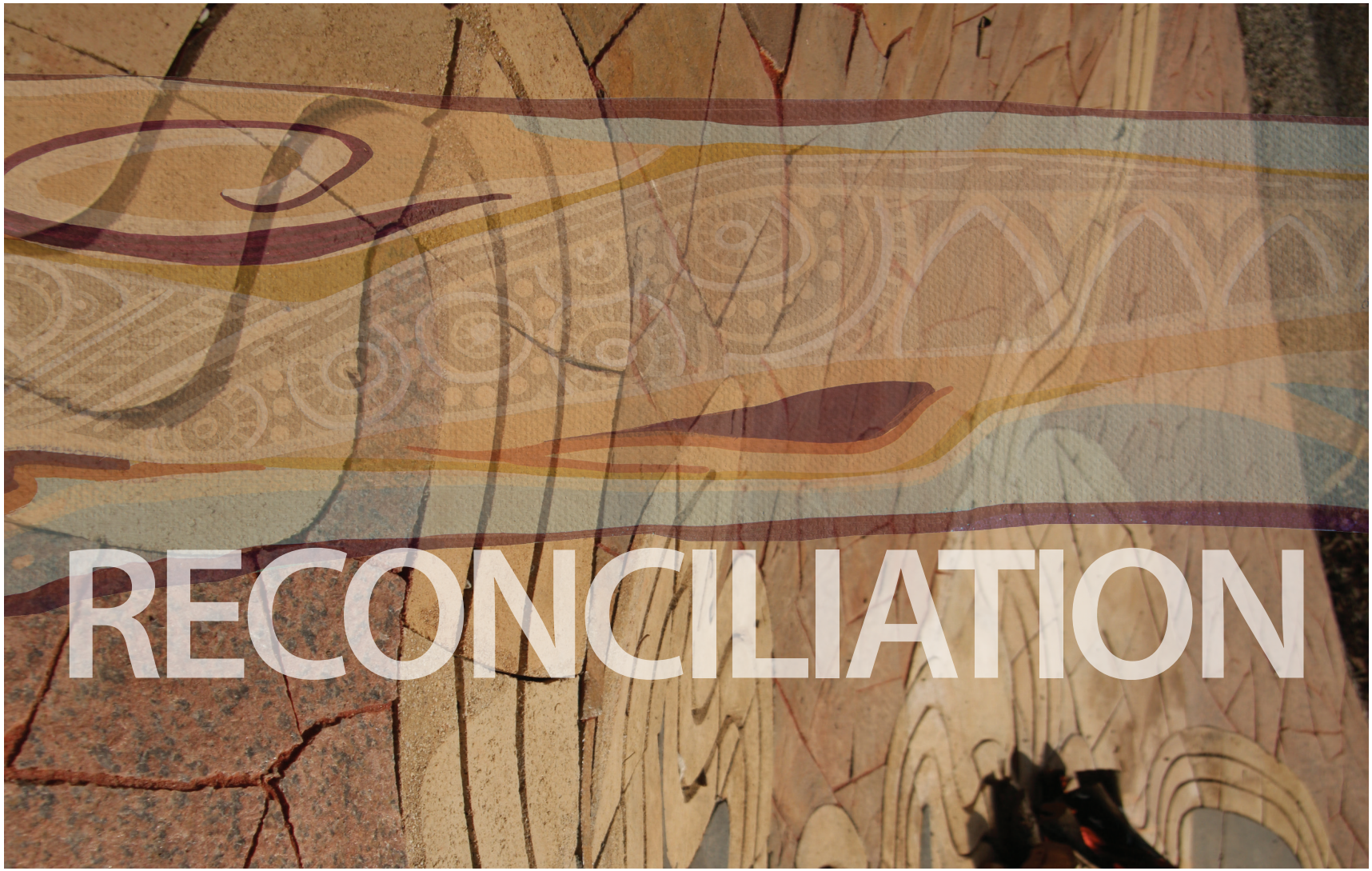
All areas within the Healesville catchment have a higher proportion of Indigenous persons than the Victorian average. The local Community Health Service has 429 Aboriginal clients.

Some key characteristics of the Indigenous population in Yarra Ranges, based on 2011 Census usual residence data, are:

- More than half (53%) of Indigenous residents were under 25 years of age, compared to 33.5% of non-Indigenous residents.
- On average there were 3.1 people per household with Indigenous persons, compared to 2.7 people for other households.
- An Australian Indigenous language was spoken at home by 1.4% of Indigenous residents (13 people).
- 29% of respondents aged 15 years and over stated Year 10 as their highest level of schooling, compared to 19.5% of non-Indigenous respondents; 30.5% stated Year 12 or equivalent as their highest level of schooling, compared to 47% of non-Indigenous respondents.
- 34% of Indigenous households were living in rented dwellings and 63% of households were living in dwellings that were owned with or without a mortgage; in non-Indigenous households, 14% were renting and 83% of households were owned with or without a mortgage.

Data from 2006 (the 2011 labour force data not released until 2013) showed that:

- 57% of Indigenous respondents aged 15 years and over were in the labour force. Of these respondents, unemployed persons accounted for 16%.
- The most common occupations reported were Labourers, Technicians and Trade Workers, and Professionals (15%, 14% and 14% respectively).
- The most common industries of employment reported were Health Care and Social Assistance (15%), Manufacturing (11%), and Retail Trade (9%).


RECONCILIATION

Appendix Three:
Key contacts

Indigenous Organisations

Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council
1st Floor Providence Building,
1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford, Vic 3067
Phone 9416 2905
Email info@wurundjeri.com.au

Coranderrk Aboriginal Housing Cooperative Limited
Healesville, VIC 3777
Phone 5962 3407

Worawa Aboriginal College Ltd
PO Box1250 Healesville, Vic 3777
Phone 5962 4344
Email admin@worawa.vic.edu.au.
Web www.worawa.vic.edu.au

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place
3 Croydon Way, Croydon, Vic 3136
Phone 9725 2166

Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association Inc
1(a) Badger Creek Rd, Healesville,
PO Box 597 Healesville 3777
Phone 5962 2940
Web www.hicsa.org.au

Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service
46 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood, Vic 3134
Phone 9871 2676

Other useful contacts

Healesville Aboriginal Health Team Yarra Valley Community Health Service
305 Maroondah Hwy. Healesville, VIC 3777
Phone 5957 1100
Fax 5962 6507
Web www.easternhealth.org.au

Department of Premier and Cabinet - Indigenous Engagement Broker
Level 9, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000
Phone 9208 3259 or 0427 957 258

Department of Human Services – Aboriginal Policy Officer
833 Whitehorse Rd. Box Hill, Vic 3128
Phone 9843 6551

Centrelink - Indigenous Calls Centre
Phone 13 63 80

Inspiro – Indigenous Liaison Worker
17 Clarke Street, Lilydale, 3140
Phone 9739 4577

Yarra Ranges Council - Indigenous Development Officer
Po Box 105 Lilydale, 3140 Vic
Phone 1300 368 333

Eastern Metropolitan Region - Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee
Department of Justice - Executive Officer
703 Station Street, Box Hill, VIC 3128
Phone 8803 8436

Notes:

Notes:

Safina Stewart

Painter of:
'The Tree of Life and Knowledge'

Yarra Ranges Council

www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au