

2019 HART Awards

FINALISTS

HELPING ACHIEVE
RECONCILIATION
TOGETHER

HART awards



Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together

VLGA
Victorian
Local Governance
Association

reconciliation

victoria

SUPPORTED BY



THANK YOU

Andrew Jackomos, Diana David and Cr Marg Attley for judging this year's awards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our hosts, the **Korin Gamadji Institute**.

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

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MESSAGE FROM VLGA AND RECONCILIATION VICTORIA

The 6th 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 2019 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.

2019 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 2019 HART Awards – Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together.



Cr Margaret Attley
VLGA President



Belinda Duarte
Reconciliation Victoria Co Chair



Michelle Isles
Reconciliation Victoria Co Chair

ABOUT THE HART Awards

The 6th annual HART Awards (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) are delivered in partnership between Reconciliation Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), and 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 Councils 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 demonstrate a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.

LAST YEAR'S HART AWARD WINNERS AND HIGHLY COMMENDED

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CATEGORY

2018 WINNER

Greater Shepparton City Council
Dana Djirrunjana Dunguludja Yenbena-l
(Proud Strong Aboriginal People)
Aboriginal Street Art Project

2018 HIGHLY COMMENDED

East Gippsland Shire Council
Our Commitment to Reconciliation
and Moonee Valley City Council
Babepal Paen-mirring
- Ceremonial Rock Circle

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CATEGORY

2018 WINNER

Lake Bolac Eel Festival Inc
12th Lake Bolac Eel Festival, Kuyang
Lapakira - Plenty Eels

2018 HIGHLY COMMENDED

The Torch
Confined 9 Exhibition

CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK CATEGORY

2018 WINNER

Inner North West Primary
Care Partnership

Working in Two Worlds
Initiative

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CATEGORY

GLENELG SHIRE COUNCIL DEMYSTIFYING HISTORY DOCUMENTARY & COMBINED CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Glenelg Shire Council, in partnership with three Indigenous organisations, developed a week of reconciliation events and activities designed to support the continuance of education and engagement of the broader community in the culture and beliefs of local Traditional Owners.

Included in this program was the launch of the 'Demystifying History' documentary, collaboratively created by the Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership. The launch event also included a citizenship ceremony in which new Australians were welcomed by a Traditional Owner. This partnership and commitment by council show how supporting reconciliation and respectful relationships between Traditional Owners, local Aboriginal community organisations and local government can achieve greater impact and meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

The documentary demonstrates the connection Aboriginal people have to country and the Shire's commitment to acknowledge this connection and country. This production will continue to have an impact into the future as it is available to all for viewing online.



WESTERN REGION LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECONCILIATION NETWORK NAIDOC 2018 PHOTO EXHIBITION: CELEBRATING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN OF THE WEST

In a strong example of local partnerships, Western Metro Region Local Governments, the Local Aboriginal Network (Wyndham-Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong) and Western Health invited the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to submit photos of inspirational women who work and/or live in the western suburbs to highlight the incredible achievements of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, culminating in a travelling exhibition across five Western region municipalities.

The project highlights the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made (and continue to make) to local communities, families, our rich history and to our nation.

The exhibition was launched at the start of NAIDOC Week 2018 and travelled across the five western region municipalities visiting eight venues. It concluded with a Footscray launch coinciding with International Women's Day 2019.



CITY OF PORT PHILLIP **ST KILDA BEACH 2 ON 2 BASKETBALL COMPETITION**

To help revitalise the community nature of St Kilda Beach following incidents of white supremacist activity over the summer period, the City of Port Phillip and over a dozen local community groups came together to create a six week 2 on 2 basketball competition, bringing together local Aboriginal and Sudanese Australian youth in a culturally safe environment.

Over 15 organisations and community groups pooled their resources to enable local youth to develop their own working relationships. Due to the success of this pilot project, attracting over 200 youth and families, the program has since been held again during recent school holidays.

The opening and closing ceremonies featured a smoking ceremony from the Boon Wurrung Foundation and the project created a positive picture of the local Indigenous community for the broader community in St Kilda who came along and watched the games.



DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL **ONGOING COMMITMENT TO THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY AND RECONCILIATION**

Darebin City Council has over a number of years made a consistent commitment to reconciliation and has endeavoured to build Aboriginal perspectives and culture into the everyday lives of Darebin Council and community members.

In the past year Darebin has implemented a plethora of new and ongoing initiatives, including: brokering stronger relationships with both the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation; introduction of the practice by Mayor Susan Rennie of delivering Acknowledgement of Country in Woi Wurrung language; a successful campaign to rename the electorate of Batman (now Cooper); a commitment to change Council's acknowledgement of January 26 and renaming Council rooms in Woi Wurrung language, to name a few.

These initiatives demonstrate Darebin Council's commitment to strengthening the partnership with local Aboriginal community and continuing the journey towards reconciliation.



CITY OF BALLARAT

BALLARAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S PORTRAIT & STORYTELLING PROJECT

The City of Ballarat, working in strong partnership with the Koorie Engagement Action Group, hosted the Ballarat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Portrait and Story Telling Project, inspired by the 2018 NAIDOC theme "Because of Her, We Can" in celebration of the essential role women play as significant role models in their local community.

Within the Ballarat region, there are countless First Nation Women who are trailblazers and the backbone of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous communities. Their struggle, their voices and their achievements have given people so much strength and have empowered generations to live in a better and fairer society. However as pillars of our community, shouldering multiple roles with distinction and decorum, their contributions are often unrecognised and unsung. This project aimed to unite organisations and people irrespective of their skin colour, to work towards reconciliation, sharing, empowering and to celebrate some of the women and girls who live among us and who continue to contribute to our community in their own quiet and unique ways.



CITY OF YARRA

REMEMBER ME: A TRIBUTE TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS AND THEIR FAMILIES

'Remember Me', created by Kamilaroi artist Reko Rennie, is a major public artwork, landscaped garden and meeting place dedicated to the Stolen Generations and their families. The project was commissioned by Yarra City Council and is located in Atherton Gardens Housing Estate, Fitzroy, a site of deep significance to Stolen Generations and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The creation of the work was an emotional and complex three-year process involving in-depth community consultation, monthly steering group meetings, land-use negotiations with the State Government and two high-profile fundraiser events. 'Remember Me' was launched at a large-scale event held on the 20th anniversary of National Sorry Day in 2018 and attended by over 1000 people. It featured a Wurundjeri welcome, smoking ceremony and traditional dances, as well as heartfelt speeches and musical performances by representatives of the Stolen Generations.

'Remember Me' is and will forever be a place for meeting, commemorating, reflecting, grieving, healing and holding ceremony.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT – SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS

WYNDHAM CITY COUNCIL

WYNDHAM ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CENTRE AND INTEGRATED FAMILY CENTRE

In September 2019, the Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre and Integrated Family Centre (WACC IFC) will open its doors with an Aboriginal name, supported by an Aboriginal-led partnership, governance and operational model. This is the result of a strong partnership between the local Aboriginal community and Wyndham Council.

WACC IFC involves three components to meet diverse community needs: an Integrated Family Centre, Neighbourhood Community Centre, and a dedicated Aboriginal Community Centre. These components come together in one building with the shared vision to 'recognise and celebrate Wyndham Aboriginal culture and history as essential to create a culturally safe space where people of all ages and cultures are welcome to gather, learn and share, and access programs and services'.

The centre, which will become the heart of Wyndham's Aboriginal community and the local Wyndham Vale neighbourhood, is a tangible expression of Council's commitment to reconciliation.



DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

DAREBIN SCHOOLS' NAIDOC YARNING CONFERENCE 2018

Darebin City Council proudly hosted the inaugural Darebin Schools' Yarning Conference. With respectful collaboration at the heart of this event, over 320 Year 5 students from ten Darebin public, Catholic and independent primary schools came together to learn about history and culture with a focus on the 2018 NAIDOC theme 'Because of her, we can'.

27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural educators shared their wisdom and skills with the students throughout the day through nine interactive cultural, sporting and storytelling workshops, spread across the Aborigines Advancement League. Highlights included Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Joy Murphy reading from her award-winning book, *Welcome to Country*; and The Long Walk Ambassador Nova Peris leading everyone on a 'little Long Walk'. The idea originated from the Darebin Education Committee, endorsed by the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and developed by a working group, which included Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators.



WODONGA CITY COUNCIL KORIE CHAMPIONS NETWORK GROUP

Wodonga City Council's vision for reconciliation is 'to be a leading regional city where collectively through community leadership, mutual respect and relationships our people experience and have opportunity to enhanced social, cultural, economic and environmental prosperity.'

To achieve this, Wodonga City Council early years unit, the Local Aboriginal Education Consultant Group (LAECG) and DET's Koorie Engagement Support Unit formed a partnership to develop and implement a local Koorie Champions Network Group.

This initiative has developed and cemented relationships between early years organisations, educators and the Aboriginal community through their commitment to the educational success of children.



MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL WE WALK TOGETHER, WANGANYINU YAN DJERRING

"We walk together, Wanganyinu Yan Djerring" is a joint initiative across Council's Reconciliation, Kindergarten, Conservation and Health Promotions programs to build awareness of Wurundjeri and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history with preschool children, their families and educators. Moonee Valley City Council has demonstrated its commitment to Reconciliation by supporting the continuation of Wurundjeri culture and heritage through storytelling, art and acknowledgement of Wurundjeri's connection to Country and the waterways of Moonee Valley.

The initiative saw young authors and illustrators from Avondale Heights Kindergarten produce a book after learning about Wurundjeri culture from Elder Uncle David Wandin, listening to storytelling and participating in Aboriginal art experiences presented by Annette Sax from Yarn Strong Sista, being Water Bug detectives with Sam Harrison from Labcoat Learning and planting trees with Council's Conservation Officer.



WYNDHAM CITY COUNCIL RECONCILIATION ACTION AT SCALE – EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES

All 23 of Wyndham City's kindergartens have embraced the challenge of reconciliation by developing and implementing Reconciliation Action Plans through Narragunnawali at each location. With the support of Traditional Owners and Elders from the Kulin Nations, 230 educators continue to lean into the complexity of reconciliation with a fierce determination for the First Peoples to be recognised.

With Aboriginal perspectives at the forefront of program and practice, this work has been embraced by over 3,000 children and families in Wyndham each year. By placing Aboriginal perspectives at the centre of curriculum decisions, services are culturally safe. As a result, the notion of reconciliation is embedded and secures the truth in the hearts and minds of children at a critical time of their learning and development.



A pathway of Reconciliation activities

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

'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.

Activities that seek to 'Change the way we work' 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.

COMMUNITY CATEGORY

THE ACADEMY OF SPORT, HEALTH AND EDUCATION (ASHE) ASHEFEST

ASHEfest is an annual 3-day event organised by ASHE students, which showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The program for school aged children in grades Prep through to Year 12 includes Traditional Aboriginal Games, arts/craft, storytelling, health, nutrition, dance and guest speakers.

ASHEfest's cultural immersion allows Indigenous students to share their culture and pride, and allows non-Indigenous students the chance to learn, ask questions, celebrate and participate.

ASHEfest has been operating for 13 years and will continue in the future, growing each year from 50 students to over 1000 participants. The event has expanded to include regional, rural and metropolitan areas and has added a 'Corporate Challenge', inviting big and small businesses in the region to join and compete in a traditional Aboriginal game called 'Buroinjin'.



WEENTHUNGA HEALTH NETWORK INC NYARRN-GAKGO MANGKIE (HEAR WITHIN) PROGRAM

Weenthunga Health Network contributes to health equity for First Australians in Victoria. Weenthunga (hear and understand) is Aboriginal-led, and underpinned by relationships, culture and a 'two way' model of collaboration between First Australians and Australians.

The Nyarrn-Gakgo mangkie (hear within) Program supports young First Australian women into health careers. It brings together a network of mothers, aunts, teachers, health professionals and others to provide holistic ongoing support for the young women from high school through to becoming First Australian health professionals strong in identity and culture.

The young women hear and understand [Weenthunga] the stories and voices of the older women and use that knowledge to hear their own voices within [Nyarrn-Gakgo mangkie]. This supports deep listening and creates a safe environment for the young women to develop their own identity and follow their own path. The Program demonstrates what can be achieved by working "two-ways".



WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG CULTURAL HERITAGE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION/ABBOTSFORD CONVENT FOUNDATION NGULU-NGANJIN' (OUR VOICE)

Led by Artistic Director Mandy Nicholson (Wurundjeri) and Musical Director and Language Activist Dr Lou Bennett AM (Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung), the project encompassed nine new music works that form a sound trail exploring the 6.8 hectare Abbotsford Convent precinct, an important Kulin Nation meeting place.

'Ngulu-nganjin' opened the Convent's flagship community festival, Open Spaces, at the Gulanboon (Place of Many Stars) stage. Programmed by Wurundjeri Council and produced by the ACF, the event attracted 2000+ people and included live music, dance and ceremony performances, alongside a range of activities for all ages, including Ngarrgu Likjebi (traditional games) and Djirra (basket weaving).



BENDIGO RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING ORGANISATIONAL WHITE PRIVILEGE

While it is commonly recognised that white privilege exists for individuals, the issue of white privilege existing for mainstream organisations is not recognised, discussed or explored.

During Reconciliation Week 2018 the Bendigo Reconciliation Committee (BRC) conducted a series of Conversation Circles. In the Conversation Circle 'Exploring Partnerships' between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, the issue of organisational white privilege was extensively discussed and its impact on the relationships between Aboriginal people and mainstream organisations. It was agreed that further work needed to be done to understand organisational white privilege and its impact.

It was within this context that the document 'Identifying and Addressing Organisational White Privilege' was developed by the BRC. The aim of the document is to promote the exploration of organisational white privilege, the circumstances in which it exists and to provide questions that organisations can use to explore their white privilege and its impact. Since the release of the document, some organisations have hosted organisation-wide discussions exploring organisational white privilege.



WHITTLESEA RECONCILIATION GROUP KULIN VILLAGE AT WHITTLESEA COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

The Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG) presented the Kulin Village as part of the Whittlesea Community Festival. The Kulin Village was a spectacular Aboriginal-led outdoor event, designed to celebrate Aboriginal culture, facilitate dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and create a safe space for truth telling in order to build a shared understanding of history and lay the necessary foundation for the community to move forward.

Approximately 10,000 people attended the Whittlesea Community Festival, and the Kulin Village was one of the most popular and important sections of the Festival. Held in the Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor, the WRG organised a series of musicians and dancers, talks and activities including performances from Kutcha Edwards, Mission Song Stores, Monica Weightman, the Djirri Djirri Dances, the Will Shake Spears, and the Indigenous Hip Hop Project.

Hosted by Jason Tamiru, the Village also included Aboriginal catering, Community stalls from VAHS, Bubup Wilam and the WRG, an Indigenous Plant Nursery and cultural activities for children including clap stick making and traditional games.



BALNARRING PRE-SCHOOL: BUNDJIL NEST PROJECT WOMIN DJEKA BALNARRING NGARGEE INCLUDING BOOK LAUNCH

Womin djeka Balnarring Ngargee is a festival designed to promote cross-cultural awareness by celebrating Balnarring's First Peoples' culture and connecting the local community to the culture of the Country.

N'Arweet Carolyn Briggs gave her creation story to Balnarring Preschool, which the children illustrated and compiled into a book. Bundjil Creation Story Book was launched as a part of the festival, which also featured Indigenous music and workshops.

The festival creates an opportunity for the community to learn and grow together as a commitment to reconciliation, with teachers emphasising their belief that it is important for all families in the area to learn about the culture of local Traditional Owners.

The Bundjil Nest Project focuses on genuine engagement with the local Aboriginal community, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at the heart of decision making and ensuring organisers listen to feedback and strengthen the event each year.



ABOUT US



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



Image provided by Lake Bolac Eel Festival Inc for their 12th Lake Bolac Eel Festival (Kuyang Lapakira - Plenty Eels); Winner Community Engagement Category HART Awards 2018

2019 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 and organisations committed to truth, justice, healing and equity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria.

