



# FIRE Carrier Covenant

FRIENDS IGNITING RECONCILIATION EDUCATION

Est. 2021



## Covenant

We recognise the special place and culture of Aboriginal peoples within Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have been the caretakers of this Land for more than 60,000 years. We respect their spiritual connection to Mother Earth through the Dreaming.

“An apology begins the healing process. Apology means understanding, a willingness to enter into the suffering. It implies a commitment to do more”. The late Sir Ronald Wilson, Chair of the National Inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

We understand that practical measures need to address the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in education, health, employment, and general opportunity.

*“Reconciliation is an active pursuit – it’s about getting on with what’s needed and what we know to get the results we all want, and that’s a mixture of measures that target the body, the mind and the spirit.”*

**Mick Dodson, Australian of the Year, National Press Club address, 17 February 2009**

True Reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships not just for today but for tomorrow. We work for Reconciliation, in partnership with those who believe that there can be an alternative to the present order.

Covenants emphasise the ethos and faith belief of Catholic schools and the Social Justice response they are committed to make as part of their Christian identity. Schools expressed commitment is reflected in practical goals and actions which they strive to achieve in the year ahead.

School Covenants express in ways, specific to each school, recognition of the special contribution Aboriginal peoples and their cultures make to Australian society, their relationship and connection to the land, their present position of disadvantage and social exclusion. They declare the school and school community’s commitment to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples to achieve true reconciliation and acknowledgement, by all Australians, of their rightful position within Australian society.

## Our School

St Augustine’s College, Kyabram is committed to Reconciliation and sees it as the process of bridging the gap that has developed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-indigenous Australians due to the events of history. Reconciliation is a way of developing lines of communication recognising the integrity and dignity of all parties so that both cultures can walk together in friendship. We hope to develop a relationship marked by equality, empathy and an understanding of culture and difference. We want the Reconciliation we are involved in to be a process of healing, a process of putting right.

## Our Covenant

Our school community is involved in the continuing development of our Covenant. This Covenant has been developed by St Augustine's College FIRE Carriers and endorsed by the leadership of the College. The FIRE Carriers Team has members from both the staff and student body.

Our goals are set out for the 2022 – 2023 school years and focus on the key areas of: Spirituality, Cultural Recognition and Awareness, Practical Reconciliation and Justice and Ecological Stewardship.

## Child Safe Standards

### Culturally safe environments

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety is defined as an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience. (Williams 2008)

The school, St Augustine's College, takes account of and makes reasonable efforts to accommodate for the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards relating to following standard.

- 5.1 *Schools establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued*

## Actions

1. In endorsing and documenting the following activities contained within this FIRE Carrier Covenant, St Augustine's College commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all actions through measurable targets outlined by the dates set out in the timeline included.
2. This FIRE Carrier Covenant will be made accessible on the school's website to ensure adherence to the child safe standard referred to in the document.
3. A review at the end of the school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's Aboriginal Liaison Officer.



# Spirituality

**Focus Area:** Learn, teach, share, grow towards understanding Aboriginal spirituality (holistic)

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
<b>Through Prayer and knowledge gain/engage a deeper awareness of justice issues</b>	DP: Catholic Identity and Community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate Aboriginal prayers and symbols in liturgy</li> <li>• Use the message stick during Liturgy of the Word at School Masses</li> <li>• Learn and use the Aboriginal Our Father</li> </ul>
<b>Explore the significance or Spirituality in Aboriginal art</b>	DP: Catholic Identity and Community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flag ritual – proudly fly the Aboriginal Flag in our school grounds</li> <li>• Fly Flags at half-mast in memory of the massacres of Aboriginal people at 68 sites around Victoria</li> <li>• Undertake an Art Project for display in the school (Apply for Phil Billington Art Grant to fund this partnership project 2023)</li> </ul>
		Term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incursion planned with Aboriginal Elders and community to explore art, artefacts and dance for Year 3/4 and possibly Year 8</li> </ul>
<b>Listen to Aboriginal Stories</b>	Aboriginal Liaison Officer	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1/2 People and Place Inquiry – Explore Dreamtime Stories</li> <li>• Year 1/2 Creation Religious Education unit – Explore the Rainbow Serpent</li> <li>• Year 3/4 Australian History Inquiry unit - Indigenous Guest Speaker</li> <li>• Year 5/6 Incorporate Aboriginal Creation stories - Our story, your story</li> <li>• Year 8 Indigenous studies unit – English Sapphires film</li> <li>• Year 7 Indigenous studies unit – English Rabbit Proof Fence and Dreamtime Stories</li> <li>• Year 9 Humanities Biomes/ Environmental Studies – Exploring Indigenous land management practices</li> <li>• Year 9 Humanities History – First Fleet - Indigenous Impacts</li> <li>• Year 9/10 Religious Education Incorporate film that tells the history of Australia from an Aboriginal perspective – movies such as Rabbit Proof Fence and Deadly Unna can play a significant role in developing intercultural understanding for and by our students</li> <li>• Year 10 Humanities History – Civil Rights: American and Australian Civil Rights Movements</li> <li>• Year 10 Health – Reasons behind the inequality in Health status</li> </ul>

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 10 Earth Science – University (Indigenous Star stories)</li> <li>• Year 11 English Film Analysis – Mabo</li> <li>• Unit 3/4 Outdoor Education – Focus on Indigenous relationships (Perceptions, Interactions and Impacts) with the environment both pre/post European settlers. Educational day trip. Meeting with Yorta Yorta women that work for Parks Victoria</li> <li>• Unit 1/2 Health and Human Development Area of Study 1: Cultural perspectives on health, inequalities in health status</li> <li>• Unit 1/2 History Empires – Exploring British Empire’s impact on Australia’s Indigenous Culture</li> <li>• Unit 3/4 Biology – Unit 4 Area of Study 1 - The emergence of new pathogens and re-emergence of known pathogens in a globally connected world, including the impact of European arrival on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Unit 4 Area of Study 2- Ways of using fossil and DNA evidence (mtDNA and whole genomes) to explain the migration of modern human populations around the world, including the migration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and their connection to Country and Place.</li> <li>• Unit 3/4 Australian History – Textbook: From Custodianship to the Anthropocene 60,000bce - 2010</li> <li>• Unit 3/4 HHD-Unit 3 Area of Study 1 and 2 - Health status of Indigenous Australians, closing the gap, Indigenous perspectives of health</li> </ul>
	Aboriginal Liaison DP: Catholic Identity and Community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop relationships with local Aboriginal people and welcome them into our community to tell their stories</li> <li>• Uncle Colin Walker (Yorta Yorta Elder)</li> <li>• Uncle Paul Clarke (KESO)</li> <li>• Uncle Rick Ronnan</li> <li>• Michael Chisholm (CES)</li> <li>• Troy Firebrace (CES)</li> <li>• Wayne Cowley (Kyabram P-12 KESO)</li> <li>• Sonya Briggs (Yorta Yorta Elder)</li> </ul>
		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Awareness Staff Training for all staff – Tuesday June 14 – Staff Spirituality Day ‘Makarrata – Coming Together After a Struggle’</li> </ul>



# Cultural Recognition and Awareness

**Focus Area:** Recognise cultural perspectives, demonstrate awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
<b>Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies /event</b>	Aboriginal Liaison Officer	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge Country at School Assemblies and meetings</li> <li>• Invite Elders to Welcome visitors to Country at significant events</li> <li>• Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum. Conduct an audit into the presence and breadth of Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum F-12</li> </ul>
		2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge Country on School website and school's printed material</li> <li>• Annually induct FIRE Carrier staff and students to the FIRE Carriers Team</li> </ul>
<b>Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people</b>	Aboriginal Liaison Officer	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a FIRE Carrier ceremony at assembly during National Reconciliation Week to induct new FIRE Carriers</li> <li>• Display Aboriginal Art in our school corridors and the Library</li> <li>• Display the Message Stick at the Office in the front of the school</li> </ul>
<b>Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge of the local Aboriginal community</b>	Aboriginal Liaison Officer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit FIRE Carrier Flame at the Office in the front of the school</li> <li>• Educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the land on which the school is situated – When, Where?</li> <li>• Ensure Library has an Aboriginal section available to all students</li> <li>• Engage with local Aboriginal Co-Op, LAECG, LAN or other local groups</li> <li>• Celebrate National Apology Day</li> </ul>
		27th May – 3rd June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate National Reconciliation Week</li> </ul>
		4 <sup>th</sup> – 11th July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate NAIDOC Week</li> </ul>
		4th August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <b>Children's Day</b> and OTDFs Birthday</li> </ul>
		27th May – 3rd June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to artwork activities such as the Kyabram and District Hospital foyer and the Reconciliation Week banner for the Echuca Walk</li> </ul>



# Practical Reconciliation and Justice

Focus Area: Walk the journey together, put learnings into practice.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
<b>Take Practical Measures toward Reconciliation and Justice</b>	Aboriginal Liaison	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display and maintain Aboriginal Acknowledgement plaque</li> </ul>
		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold activities promoting awareness of Aboriginal issues or the journey toward Reconciliation during Reconciliation Week (27 May- 3 June) and or NAIDOC Week (prior if this week falls in term break)</li> </ul>
		27 May – 3 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embrace, connect with and listen to local Aboriginal Elders</li> </ul>
		27 May – 3 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fundraise for the Open the Doors Foundation commit to an ongoing giving commitment</li> </ul>
		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff representative, Aboriginal Liaison Officer to be on Sandhurst Aboriginal Education Network and the local LAN</li> </ul>
		Term 2 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Staff PD around the AITSL Standards, Intercultural Capability Strand, Kalik and The Reconciliation Stones</li> </ul>



# Ecological Stewardship

**Focus Area:** Ecological renewal and sustainability depends upon spiritual awareness and an attitude of responsibility – Caring for the country.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
<b>Register as a Catholic Earthcare School and aim to progress through levels of Accreditation</b>	DP: Catholic Identity and Community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of a staff leadership group to drive this change</li> </ul>
<b>Marks Sandhurst Switches Off (Friday 25th March) and bring attention to energy conservation</b>	DP: Catholic Identity and Community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in SSO and Laudato Si Week</li> </ul>
<b>Staff professional learning around environmental stewardship and Country</b>	DP: Catholic Identity and Community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff PD held as part of Catholic Accreditation program and Staff Spirituality Day</li> </ul>
<b>Caring for country/ Our Common Home</b>	Religious Education Teachers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about Aboriginal Spirituality – Year 8 Religious Education, Year 9/10/11 Religious Education Programs</li> </ul>

The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, the Opening the Doors Foundation and the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office, to promote and assist Reconciliation through Education in our Schools.

**Our School commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all Actions through Measurable Targets outlined above by the dates set out in the timeline above. A review at the end of school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier.**