

2017-18 Annual Report

Reconciliation Stonnington acknowledges that we meet on the traditional land of the Kulin Nation.

Kai¹.

Reconciliation Stonnington (Inc) was established as SCR in 1998 to:

- ❖ promote a deeper understanding, respect and harmony between indigenous Australians and the wider community
- ❖ develop community awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal history, culture and achievements
- ❖ where possible, consult and seek advice from Aboriginal communities.



[Local Aboriginal artist, Brianna Gyesko, at our stall at Council's Flavours festival]

¹ Kai is 'hello' in the Woiwurrung language

Context

- **RecSton is celebrating its 20th anniversary** – a major achievement! See below for our achievements over 20 years
- a major development this year has been the passing of Victorian legislation to advance the treaty process in Victoria, following far-reaching consultation with Aboriginal Victorians on self-determination
- but we are sad to continue to report the insufficient progress nationally on recognising Aboriginal sovereignty
- we congratulate Council on its 2018-2020 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) – it commits to some powerful actions, including a reference group chaired by the CEO; and to its appointment of an Aboriginal Reconciliation Liaison Officer



[RecSton members with Mayor Steve Stefanopoulos, Council's NRW event, Prahran Market]

- we were pleased to participate in Council's RecWeek function at Prahran market

Twenty years of reconciliation

Rec Ston has achieved much over its 20 years, including:

- influencing Stonnington schools through initiating a curriculum based on Council's indigenous history of Stonnington – it has also been requested by other communities (eg Geelong, Bendigo)

- supporting Stonnington early childhood providers
- supporting and working with Stonnington Aboriginal residents and the Traditional Owners of the area - senior Boon Wurrung elder N'arweet Carolyn Briggs provided a very positive reference
- using our experience to influence state-wide policies and developments, by participating in Reconciliation Victoria statewide networks and forums; the RecSton President has been a member of the RecVic Council for 12 years, 8 of which he was Co-Chair; and the Secretary has provided numerous tours of Bunjilaka Aboriginal cultural centre at Melbourne Museum
- exposing many Stonnington residents to reconciliation information by participating in all VIVA! / Flavours and Council National Reconciliation Week events over 20 years
- encouraging and supporting Council in its development of 3 RAPs since 2005, which expose all Stonnington residents to Aboriginal history and culture and create a culturally-safe environment. Outcomes include: extensive indigenous history of Stonnington, a history curriculum for schools, permanent flying of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, recognition of key events such as Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks, and Welcome to Country at citizenship ceremonies
- providing a reconciliation perspective to Stonnington's history committee

- supporting and working collaboratively with neighbouring reconciliation organisations Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation and Boroondara Reconciliation Network.

In the last year we:

- continued to discuss treaty and self-determination and implications for local communities such as Stonnington
- supported and participated in Reconciliation and NAIDoC Week activities and Council's Flavours event



[Local Aboriginal artist, Brianna Gyesko, at our stall at Council's Flavours festival]

State-wide reconciliation initiatives

- RecSton President Keith Gove continued on the Council of Reconciliation Victoria, and RecSton continued to work with RecVic and ANTaR Vic, and members attended state-wide ANTaR/RecVic local groups networking meetings where representatives of over 20 groups discussed good practice and policy issues
- Keith, Ro and Tom attended a local groups excursion on Wurundjeri country and met with local traditional owners.

The future

- The Victorian government initiative on treaty provides a significant opportunity to progress reconciliation. RecSton will work with state and local organisations to build community support
- we will progress community discussion about the meaning of 26 January events and any alternatives to them
- community interest in reconciliation continues to increase - RecSton receives regular requests for contacts or information about Traditional Owners, local history
- we look forward to working with Council on the implementation of its new RAP
- we will continue to push Council for an Aboriginal name for the Cato Square development
- we hope not to be around in another 20 years, but fear that there is still much to do to achieve justice and recognition for Aboriginal people.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the City of Stonnington Council for continued funding and support; Julie Fry, council officer; and local MP Sam Hibbins for his office's support.

RecSton is a small but effective group, and I would like to thank members who have contributed to our achievements: Vice President Tom Moloney, Secretary and Public Officer Ro Bailey, committee members John Perry, Jenny Goldsmith and Maree Sheehan, and supporter Rose Kelly. I would like to acknowledge long-time contributor Jim Richardson who resigned this year.

Last year our long-time Treasurer Ron Higgins announced that he would stand down from the role. We presented Ron with a life membership of Reconciliation Stonnington in recognition of his work. Ron has continued to be the acting Treasurer until we can find a replacement. Thanks Ron.

Together we form part of a community network that is progressing the cause of reconciliation.

Ngoon godgin (thanks).

Keith Gove
President

