

# 2019-20 Traditional Report

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

Kai<sup>1</sup>.

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.



[From Windsor Community Child Care Centre, c/o Biik Bundjil, Boonwurrung country ]

## Context

- Well, what a long, strange trip 2020 has been ...
- apart from COVID-19, the biggest development this year was international and national responses to the Black Lives Matter movement
- increased anger at how Aboriginal Australians have been treated led to an increase in our membership – we have doubled attendance at our monthly meetings – and our focus on related matters such as white privilege, structural racism and inequality
- there are strong developments in the Victorian Treaty process, including beginning a truth and justice process, but national developments show little progress in any recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty
- early in 2020 we were saddened at the tragic loss of our valued member Rose Kelly though a car accident. We acknowledged Rose's dedication to the cause of reconciliation, her enthusiasm as a member of Reconciliation Stonnington, her valuable work bringing indigenous culture into the Windsor Community Child Care Centre, and her support and encouragement of other preschool centres to do the same. Several members attended her memorial held at



Windsor Community Child Care Centre (photo below).

## Reconciliation in Stonnington

In business during the year:



[Guests at our 2019 AGM]

- guests at our 2019 AGM included the new Stonnington CEO, Jacqui Weatherill, the Mayor Councillor Steve Stefanopoulos and Councillor Matthew Koce, several Council officers, and a representative of the local Federal MP Katie Allen; our guest speaker Diana David, CEO of Reconciliation Victoria, spoke passionately about the treaty process in Victoria
- Keith and Ro subsequently met with the Stonnington CEO to discuss Council's 2018-2020 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- representing Rec Ston, Keith was invited onto the City's RAP Advisory Committee, and raised issues identified by Rec Ston as needing further work: acknowledgment of Aboriginal heritage at Prahran Square; a Council Aboriginal place naming policy; and a refresh of the local Aboriginal history curriculum
- we discussed and shared our views about white privilege, what it means for us and how we might lead further discussions in the community

<sup>1</sup> Kai is 'hello' in the Woiwurrung language

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- we read, reflected on, and discussed Stan Grant's challenging media articles
- we strengthened our Facebook page (thanks Alex!) and developed a web site to support our communications to Stonnington residents
- we participated in Council's Reconciliation Week activity for which we contributed a group video reciting our Acknowledgement of Country; we were one of several local organisations that Council included in a video published on Stonnington's website and launched in RecWeek



[RecSton members at Council's 2019 NAIDOC week event]

- we successfully moved our monthly meetings to Zoom, recognising that it is not perfect for the sensitive conversations we sometimes need to challenge ourselves on reconciliation issues
- Keith received on behalf of RecSton the Higgins Community Volunteer Award 2019 from Dr. Katie Allen MP, Federal Member for Higgins



- we educated the Stonnington community through: hosting a tour of Bunjilaka (Ro); presentations to PPCfR AGM (Mike) and Menzies retirement home (Ro); MC of PPCfR's Treaty event at St Kilda Town Hall (Keith); and a presentation to Council's early childhood staff (Jenny).



[Participants on Bunjilaka tour]

### State-wide reconciliation initiatives

- RecSton members have been active in reconciliation in the early-childhood sector
- RecSton President Keith Gove has continued on the Reconciliation Victoria Board as Secretary
- we continued to work with RecVic and ANTaR Vic, and members attended state-wide ANTaR/RecVic local group networking meetings where representatives of over 20 groups discussed good practice and policy issues
- we provided monthly articles for the Mungo newsletter of the Port Philip reconciliation group.

### The future

- We look forward to working with the Stonnington CEO to develop Council's new RAP
- the Victorian government initiative on treaty and truth provides a significant opportunity to progress reconciliation. RecSton will work with state and local

organisations to build community support

- we will support RecVic's project on reconciliation in schools, Narragunnawali, which provides resources for schools and early childhood centres – a focus of ours for many years
- we will strengthen our social media presence with our Facebook page, new web site and extensive email list
- community interest in reconciliation is strong - we receive regular requests for contacts or information about Traditional Owners and local history, and we will extend our reach through our social media
- we will support the issues from the Uluru Statement: voice, treaty, truth.

### Acknowledgements

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

RecSton is a small but effective group, and I thank members who have contributed to our achievements: Vice President Mike Scott, Secretary / Public Officer Ro Bailey, Treasurer Liz Kennedy, committee members Maree Sheehan, Michael Sullivan; and supporters Jenny Goldsmith, Kaye Sullivan, Mary Heinemann, Alex McKay, Montana Slavik.

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

Ngoon godgin (thanks).

**Keith Gove**  
President



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November 2020