

# 2015 Community **HART** Awards

Helping **A**chieve **R**econciliation **T**ogether

## FINALISTS

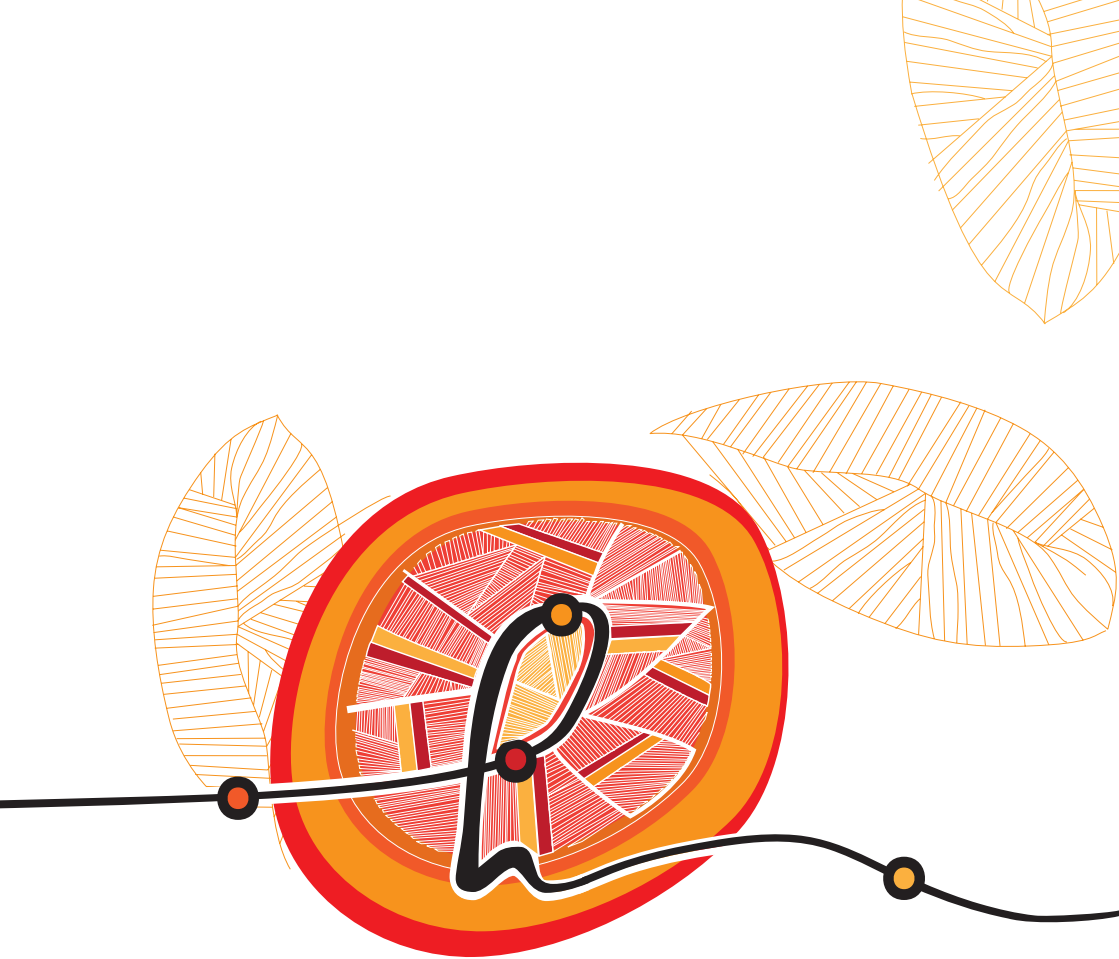


Victorian Local Governance  
Association

reconciliation



victoria



# Local Government Finalists

# DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL: WURUNDJERI WEEK EVENT - INSIGHT INTO THE BATMAN TREATY



Darebin is located in Melbourne's North (including Merri Creek) where Batman and the Wurundjeri Tribe signed the Batman Treaty 1835. The Wurundjeri Week event, held in August 2014, included the unveiling of a Wurundjeri Acknowledgement outside Council's busiest buildings in Preston and focused on a panel discussion between five Wurundjeri Elders interacting with each other and audience on the history, significance and relevance of the Batman Treaty. Held at Council and moderated by Derek Guille, the discussion highlighted the divergent and shared views on the Treaty by the Elders, and signposted ways in which the whole community could move together 'as one' towards the prospect of a new Treaty.

Council also led this initiative jointly through its Aboriginal Affairs and Human Rights portfolios – bringing in expertise from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Council staff and providing a powerful learning opportunity in the spirit of "to know your future, you must first know your past".

This work was acknowledged as a concrete expression of Council's commitment to Reconciliation. Council recognised the opportunity to not only select a name which reflects the indigenous history of Darebin, but also support the name change with a clear explanation as to the legacy of the Batman Treaty for the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens.

*Council acknowledges language is a powerful tool that shapes the reality people live in. How things are named and the recognition awarded to people based on their gender, class, culture, ethnicity and so on makes a difference. Practical implementation of policy will address and overcome any underlying assumptions behind language that can lead to unwitting exclusion of people.*



# WESTERN REGION LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECONCILIATION NETWORK: RIVERS TO RECOGNITION



Rivers to Recognition is a collaboration between the six metropolitan councils in the western suburbs of Melbourne - Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham City. It is a new and ongoing partnership approach to raise awareness about the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians.

Rivers to Recognition launched in December 2014 with a high profile free music concert and community market by the water in Williamstown

and continued through 2015 with forums in Footscray, Moonee Ponds, Altona, Melton, Sunshine and Werribee and an educational package for schools.

The concert served to provide a mainstream and accessible message, showcasing a bill of high profile artists including Archie Roach, Frank Yamma, Radical Son, Skin Choir.

The forums drew together various themes. One took a family context through story telling with an Elder and others included guest speakers from Melbourne Law School, Connecting Home, Cape York Institute, Victoria University, Reconciliation Victoria with an attendance of over 60 people, many of whom were Aboriginal people that travelled to be part of the conversation.

*The Western Region Local Government Reconciliation Network see this collaboration as the beginning of an ongoing journey to bring strength and unity to our western region voice in support of Respect, Recognition and Reconciliation of Indigenous Australians.*



## YARRA CITY COUNCIL: SMITH STREET DREAMING



Smith Street Dreaming is a project of the Smith Street Working Group (SSWG). Yarra City Council is a member of the SSWG and leads the production of Smith Street Dreaming.

Smith Street Dreaming exemplifies the idea that all members of a community can co-exist respectfully and peacefully by acknowledging that Aboriginal culture is at the centre of everything. On one afternoon in mid-winter, a showcase of Aboriginal musical talent, and traditional dance, demonstrates that this aspiration can be a reality.



The ethos underpinning the SSWG is one of mutual respect and is based on recognising the needs of everyone - traders who want to trade, the Aboriginal community who want to be respected as first custodians with the right to gather on Smith Street, and police who don't want to have to keep coming down to arrest people, in order to deal with conflict. This ethos defines and drives Smith Street Dreaming.

The benefits of Smith Street Dreaming include:

- Drop in crime rate by 33% over 18 months
- Drop in call outs for police to attend from 6-10/day to less than 5/month
- Peace in Smith Street
- Businesses moving into Smith Street
- Perception of Smith Street changing from fearful to a peaceful and welcoming place
- People co-existing respectfully and in harmony.



ONE STREET · MANY MOBS · ONE COMMUNITY

*"This area is of great importance to the Aboriginal people, it's part of their culture and putting on the festival showed that people want to give back to them too. Festivals like this are of great benefit, they bring the community together."*

*Julian, Manager, Bank of Melbourne, Smith Street, Collingwood*





## BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL: STITCH IN TIME - A JOURNEY FROM RECONCILIATION TO NAIDOC

Brimbank City Council, through the Delahey Community Centre, delivers a Neighbourhood House program. During Reconciliation Week 2014 the Centre initiated 'Stitch in Time – A Journey from Reconciliation to NAIDOC', a series of knitting and/or crochet workshops leading to the 'Yarn Storming' of the Centre during NAIDOC Week.

Workshops began with presentations by Wurundjeri Elders leading to discussions about what it means to be an Indigenous Australian, what the land was like before settlement and how settlement affected the local Aboriginal community.

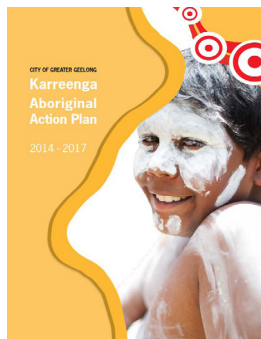
The project resulted in trees, poles and gates being swathed in black, red, white, blue and green. A crocheted Aboriginal flag remains as a permanent fixture on the Community Centre's front gate.

*Following the workshops the participants were asked via feedback forms if their knowledge of Aboriginality and the history of the area and Australia had increased, the response was an overwhelming 'yes!'*



# GREATER GEELONG CITY COUNCIL: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UNIT FOR THE KARREENGA ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN 2014-17

CITY OF GREATER  
**GEELONG**



Leading into Council adopting the Action Plan, Council actively engaged with the Geelong Aboriginal community identifying key issues, aspirations and actions that Council can undertake or for which it can advocate on behalf of the community. The priorities and actions are identified in the Aboriginal Action Plan (Karreenga meaning 'to grow').

The Action Plan has been developed around five key themes including cultural recognition and respect, employment and economic development, family and community support, Aboriginal cultural heritage and arts and social enterprise. Within each area are listed key actions, 50 in total.

Development of the Action Plan has been undertaken in consultation with Wathaurung Aboriginal Co-operative, Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (through the Registered Aboriginal party status under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006), Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Group, Narana Creations, together with the participation of the broader Aboriginal community in the region.



*The production of the final Plan required extensive and direct negotiation with the key stakeholder groups to ensure that the plan was reflective of correct Aboriginal protocols and traditional owners language and understanding. It is the first Action plan prepared and adopted by the City.*

## CITY OF PORT PHILLIP: RECONCILIATION MURAL PROJECT



In August, 2014, the City of Port Phillip launched a mural project designed to mark Peanut Farm Reserve in St Kilda as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering place. The mural depicts Bunjil the eagle, the creator spirit for the local Boon Wurrung people and two local Aboriginal young people from the St Kilda City Saints Football Club.



One of the young players is lifting his Guernsey pointing to his skin, echoing the famous on-field stand against racism made by St Kilda player Nicky Winmar 21 years ago. The project is an outcome of Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan.

The 11.2m x 2.7m mural is a powerful and contemporary embodiment of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in a public space and reinforces Council's commitment to its First Peoples. The mural will be an important backdrop for inter-Aboriginal cultural exchanges and is one of the stops for every Staff Induction bus tour of City of Port Phillip and is one of the stops for periodic CEO and Councillor bike tours of the City.



*The mural is the first stage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and ownership of the space. The mural helps create Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership and representation of the space and reinforces Council's commitment to representing the local Indigenous community in an empowering way.*





# Community Organisation Finalists

## BALUK ARTS: PUBLIC BUSH SCULPTURE WORKSHOPS - SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM



*This project has grown beyond its beginnings by now engaging members for employment, economic benefit to artists and encouraging social cohesion. The workshops have expanded and are now offered throughout Melbourne.*

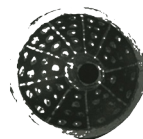
The Indigenous Directors and artists of Baluk Arts identified the need to present the Bush Sculpture workshops based on feedback from the wider community. The general community wanted to participate in something easy, fun and educational that was accessible to all

Baluk artists worked with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the community in promoting and demonstrating for free at festivals to develop the idea of the workshops with how people responded to the activity.

The idea behind the workshops is to use local materials and hay and wool to create animals inspired by local area. Baluk Arts collect feedback from all workshops via email, comments on facebook and a questionnaire.

Baluk Arts is committed to reconciliation by opening up a space to Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people, where people are able to connect, to learn, to develop relationships, have social contact, connect, where people feel respected by sharing stories both ways and learn cultural information. connect.

This shared experience encourages learning about each others' differences, appreciating culture with a deeper respect for people and a developed understanding of Aboriginal people today.



**BALUK  
ARTS**

## DEADLY DANCERS AND CORRINA O'TOOLE: NOMINATED BY THE CITY OF GREATER GEELONG



Corrina O'Toole and The Deadly Dancers were nominated by the City of Greater Geelong in recognition of "the enormous contribution they have made to Cultural Education and Reconciliation in the City...and beyond."



The community group, together with the support and guidance of local Wathaurong woman, Corrina O'Toole, tell indigenous stories of creation, hope and celebration. The boys, mostly siblings, have performed at community events during NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, the raising of the Aboriginal Flag at Geelong City Hall, AFL games, the Bells Beach contest and other public events.

The Deadly Dancers offer the opportunity for community to witness traditional dance and culture, as well as an educational experience and sharing, in the spirit of reconciliation. These performances have created an opportunity to inform, connect and educate through traditional Aboriginal story telling.

The need to increase participation and understanding of indigenous language and culture, into communities, is vital if we are to preserve this culture, the oldest culture in the world. The Deadly Dancers intend to keep Aboriginal Culture alive and strong. The language of the Wadawurrung is spoken and shared at all performances, a poignant and significant element of each performance or workshop.



*Corrina and the Deadly Dancers offer a creative and beautiful expression of culture, which has begun many positive conversations. Performances have resulted in schools and other organisations inviting the group to speak about Aboriginal history and contemporary challenges faced by Aboriginal people.*

## LAKE BOLAC EEL FESTIVAL: 10TH LAKE BOLAC EEL FESTIVAL AND HEALING WALK

The Lake Bolac Eel Festival and associated Healing Walk was born out of desire to connect to country and indigenous heritage.

The festival combines an environmental forum, musical programs, art exhibition, workshops and displays. There is significant engagement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in planning, artistic pursuits and performance.

The Healing Walk provides an opportunity for Indigenous people to access ancestral country that they had hitherto been locked out of since the proliferation of private holdings from the 19th century onwards. A group of mixed ancestry, but like minded people walking together in country over several days enables them to reconnect to the earth and themselves in a restorative way. The group engages respectfully with landholders along the way and the sharing of ideas and views are encouraged.

The Lake Bolac Eel Festival and associated Healing Walk has been held for ten years. The attendance at the festival has remained regular at 800-1000 people which corresponds to historical reports of a similar number gathered for the traditional eel harvest.



*The Festival and Healing Walk has provided an opportunity for the predominately non-Aboriginal Lake Bolac community, and for many visitors to the Festival, to engage with Aboriginal people, and gain a new understanding of their history and culture.*



## **SHEARWATER FESTIVAL WORKING GROUP:** **SHEARWATER FESTIVAL 2014** **NOMINATED BY BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL**

The inaugural Shearwater Festival held in 2012 aimed to raise awareness of the Short Tailed Shearwaters which spend summers in Bass Coast. Each year the festival has changed to meet community need based on feedback. For 2014 the festival moved to Cowes CBD and focused on creating a cultural connection with the Aboriginal community and the historical links of the Boon Wurrung with the Short Tailed Shearwater birds.

The festival itself is overseen by a team of volunteers from the local community. This enhances the feeling of it being a community event.



*The street parade and associated Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony and Aboriginal dancers attracted the attention of locals many of whom were unaware of the deep connection the Boon Wurrung have with Phillip Island.*

The Festival is preceded by a Shearwater Education Program in local schools which involves creative artists, musicians, Indigenous Elders and linguists, community members and school children. Each component of the Shearwater Festival targets a different group or demographic in the local community.





# SHEPPARTON REGION RECONCILIATION GROUP: APOLOGY BREAKFAST



Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group

Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group (SRRG) works to promote, support and demonstrate reconciliation within the Goulburn Valley. The Apology Breakfast, held in the Queen's Gardens, brings together local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, schools and the whole community to acknowledge, in a culturally respectful way, a shared history. The Apology Breakfast is now an accepted event on the local calendar.

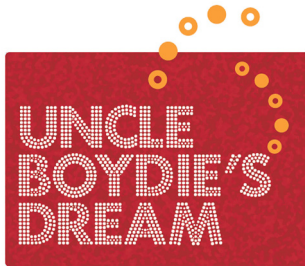
The Apology Breakfast has strengthened the working relationships between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisational partners, encouraged numerous conversations about history, culture and respectful processes and demonstrated that, by working together, we can achieve much more than on our own.

Importantly, young people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were involved. The schools' enthusiasm for the Apology Breakfast and student's willingness to assist on the day, the attendance of family groups, people from a range of local organisations and businesses, the local Aboriginal community and the wider community is a clear indication that this is an important event for the whole community.



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## UNCLE BOYDIE'S DREAM TEAM: UNCLE BOYDIE'S DREAM



In 1934, the nationally-recognised Aboriginal leader, William Cooper, Secretary of Victoria's "Australian Aborigines League" (AAL), started a petition for Indigenous justice - to King George V. But after collecting 1,814 signatures, Australia's Prime Minister stopped it leaving Australia. In the spirit of reconciliation, Uncle Boydie, Cooper's elderly grandson, has worked together with Indigenous, Jewish, Christian and other Communities and Reconciliation groups to finally get the petition to today's Monarch - now King George's granddaughter: Queen Elizabeth II.

Uncle Boydie Turner (an Elder in his eighties) felt that his esteemed Grandfather, Uncle William Cooper had attempted numerous activities of Reconciliation, uplift and betterment of Aboriginal communities – Australia-wide. Yet had some unfinished business, 80 years on. Uncle Boydie consulted local community leaders, reconciliation groups, family members, supporters within the Christian and Jewish communities, and had a special consultation with Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Op and the Gathering Place Health Service.

Everyone consulted by Uncle Boydie agreed that they would support him to deliver the two undelivered documents from 1937-38, the Petition to the King and the Letter to the German Consul-General protesting Nazi atrocities. With the involvement of Reconciliation Australia, the Prime Minister Tony Abbott signed the Petition at the launch of The Journey to Recognition on Sorry Day 2013. In the same year The City of Maribyrnong opened the William Cooper Footbridge at Footscray Station and in 2013 the Victorian Government honoured William Cooper through the naming of the William Cooper Justice Centre.



*It was felt that a groundswell of public support would engulf Uncle Boydie in his efforts, and by doing so true Reconciliation would be furthered across many segments of Australian society.*

**Join us at the 2015 Community HART  
Awards presentation event**

**Thursday 28 May**

1pm to 3pm

**Korin Gamadji Institute**

Level 3, ME Bank Centre

Punt Road Oval

Richmond VIC 3121

**with a special performance by  
Kutcha Edwards**

**RSVP to [events@vlga.org.au](mailto:events@vlga.org.au)**



With thanks to Deadly Design and  
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of the Community HART Awards branding / artwork.

