



St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church
Reconciliation Plan 2020-21



Reconciliation Plan 2020

Acknowledgement of Country

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church acknowledges the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present, and recognize how precious, rich and diverse is the First Nations culture of this country to which we belong.

Our vision for reconciliation

Our RECONCILIATION PLAN reflects our commitment to expressing our respect for First Nations peoples and culture in the various aspects of our church life.

We will do this by:

- Paying attention to First Nations culture and issues in our worship, our education and when we pray;
- Developing relationships with First Nations people both locally and across Australia; and
- Working in partnership with others in local, statewide and national spheres to ensure that all marginalized groups, but especially First Nations Australians, are able to share, on an equitable basis, the resources that provide basic human rights – such as food, shelter, material goods, education, health and wellbeing and access to information.

Our Church

Our Church has been active in the St Kilda Elsternwick area for over 100 years. Throughout that time the Church has tried to bear witness to the life and teachings of Jesus in the local community and beyond. Historically, the Baptists have stood for freedom of religion and civil rights, and in the 1960s the witness of Rev Martin Luther King inspired many Baptists here in Australia as well.

Although our congregation does not presently include many First Nations people, it does include approximately 80 regular attenders, four part-time staff.

Our RECONCILIATION PLAN

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church has a significant history of involvement with, and support for, Aboriginal communities during the 1980s, 90s and beyond. Several families have deliberately moved from their homes in Melbourne in order to offer their skills to Aboriginal communities.

These families include the Parslow, Holmes and Willis families, all of whom lived and worked in remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church also had the privilege of hosting Grant Paulson's family and supporting Grant throughout his theological studies. Grant is one of the few Aboriginal Baptist candidates to undertake studies of this kind, and his father, rev Graham Paulson, was the first Aboriginal person to be ordained as a Minister in the Baptist Church. Graham Paulson was also a pastor among the Walpiri and Gurindji people in the 1970s, and a supporter of Vincent Lingari, a member of his church after the Wave Hill Walk Off. During their time with us, the Paulsons raised our awareness of First Nations cultural issues.

The Church first began to work on its RECONCILIATION PLAN in 2010. In April 2012 RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP was appointed, which met monthly in order to establish our first plan. Initially we worked with Reconciliation Australia following their guidelines for developing RAPS – Reconciliation Action Plans. RAPS are commonly developed by large companies and organizations. To help frame our RECONCILIATION PLAN we used resources from Reconciliation Australia, Tear Australia, as well as Port Phillip City Council.

The first RECONCILIATION PLAN was launched in December 2013 and implemented in 2014. Since then the WG has revised and re-launched our reconciliation commitment annually. We now no longer have a RAP but a 'Reconciliation Plan'. The WG currently includes Digby Hannah, Helen Hoffman, John Willis, Judi Kenneally, Ian Lovell, Rod Wise, Martine, Bill Wall, and Thelma Rogers

Relationships	<p>The development of good relationships and the healing of broken relationships are central to Christian faith. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "God has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation."</p> <p>As we consider the history of our country we are conscious of the shameful way in which First Nations people were dispossessed of their land and treated with arrogance and disrespect. Church leaders and missionaries, whilst often standing against cruelty and violence, were often complicit with this dispossession and disrespect.</p> <p>We are keen to do whatever we can to make amends, to participate in the process of reconciliation and to make our community an open and welcoming one to our First Nations brothers and sisters.</p>
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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable targets
The Reconciliation Working Group (RECONCILIATION WG) continues to monitor RECONCILIATION PLAN development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	Members of the RECONCILIATION WG	Review annually	<p>Maintain a RECONCILIATION WG of 3-6 members</p> <p>Inform the Church about the need for members to join the RECONCILIATION WG (and inspire them to want to).</p> <p>Occasional meetings of the RECONCILIATION WG to review implementation of the RECONCILIATION PLAN to include evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular contact with stakeholders ▪ Information about First Nations events communicated to congregation ▪ Regular Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners ▪ First Nations issues reflected in prayers ▪ Commitment to funding of First Nations project <p>RECONCILIATION WG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RECONCILIATION PLAN.</p>
St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church will build and maintain relationships with First Nations stakeholders in the local area.	Members of the RECONCILIATION WG	Report September annually	Visits by members of the St Kilda/ Elsternwick Baptist Church to the Melbourne Indigenous Fellowship Church
			Six-monthly contact with the City of Port Phillip's Indigenous Policy Officer – in order to offer assistance (e.g. use of premises) and support.
			Contact, support, and where possible, attendance at meetings of the Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation.
			Contact established and maintained with the Winja Ulupna Women's Recovery Centre and Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre.

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Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities for members of the congregation to build relationships with First Nations people.	RECONCILIATION WG	Annually	Participation in events organised by council. Where practicable, organisation of at least one internal event each year.
Raise awareness of St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church RECONCILIATION PLAN and the RECONCILIATION PLAN Program	RECONCILIATION WG	Ongoing	Other faith communities supported and encouraged to develop their own RECONCILIATION PLANS. Participation in any forums which may be held on the development of RECONCILIATION PLANS for faith communities. St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church to make the RECONCILIATION PLAN available to Christian Church communities and other faith communities. St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church's RECONCILIATION PLAN to be made available on the Church's website and Facebook page. Contribute regularly to Mungo Magazine - the newsletter sponsored by Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Maintain awareness across the St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church community about the RECONCILIATION PLAN. Encourage all groups in the Church to identify how they can contribute to the meeting of measurable targets set out in the plan.	Pastors	At least annually	Reflections on Bible perspectives on land, inclusion and other relevant issues through use of Bible readings and questions.
		Annually	Invite First Nations persons to speak at a church service at least once a year.
	Members of the RECONCILIATION WG	Annually	Acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the traditional landowners of the area and their history to be able to bring stories back to the church community.

Respect	We seek to show respect to all people, of whatever colour, race, religion or socio-economic background, as people loved by, and made in the image of, God. In particular, we are mindful of the lack of respect which Christian missionaries and church leaders in the past have shown towards the original Australians, and we seek to rectify this in any way possible. As a first step, we are keen to listen to our First Nations brothers and sisters, to pay our respects to their ancient and precious culture, to hear their stories and to understand their viewpoints.
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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Engage members of congregation in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies. This should include clarification of the difference between 'Acknowledgement' and 'Welcome' to Country. Encourage members of the congregation to take up opportunities to learn about First Nations culture.	Worship leaders RECONCILIATION WG	Ongoing	Inclusion of Acknowledgment of Country regularly in church worship service and important meetings. Acknowledgment of Country to contain, from time to time, stories, elaborations, and historical or current illustrations to enhance understanding and avoid words becoming rote and ritualistic.
Encourage and provide opportunities for the congregation to participate in local First Nations events and initiatives, including the National Sorry Day/National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Encourage members of the church community to participate in Indigenous Heritage walks such as the Yallukit Willam trail and the Indigenous Heritage Walk at the Royal Botanic Gardens.	RECONCILIATION WG	Report regularly	Congregation informed through the Church's weekly newsletter of activities and events (including the National Sorry Day/National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week) and news gathered from Port Phillip Council Citizens for Reconciliation group.
Maintain / update the Church's communication channels (including the Aroma / weekly newsletter and website) to reflect our commitment to Reconciliation.	Administrative officer	Ongoing	Inclusion of Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians / Owners of the land in the Church's print and web material.
Allocate Sunday worship sessions to mark occasions such as Sorry Day/National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week.	Pastoral team	Ongoing	At least two such services per year

Opportunity	We acknowledge that many First Nations communities continue to suffer because of the past and that this suffering is compounded by disadvantage (including lower life expectancy, lower levels of education, higher unemployment levels and poorer health than the broader Australian community). As people of faith who are called to do justice, we desire to support First Nations people who are working for healing and justice within their communities.
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Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Continue to provide financial support for First Nations programs.	Chair of the Deacons	Annual	Maintenance of a dedicated line in the budget for supporting First Nations programs.
	RECONCILIATION WG member	Ongoing	Maintenance of our financial support of the Melbourne Indigenous Church Fellowship in Footscray.
Provide opportunities, where appropriate, for the use of church premises for local First Nations programs.	RECONCILIATION WG member	Ongoing	Possibilities continued to be discussed with Port Phillip Council Indigenous Officer and local First Nations networks.
		October 2020	Annual exhibition of artworks of Galiamble residents. (Invitation to be extended to Winja Ulupna residents also in 2021).

Tracking progress and reporting			
Refresh / update RECONCILIATION PLAN annually in response to deepening understanding and appreciation of new opportunities.	Chair of RECONCILIATION WG	Annually	An annual meeting of the RECONCILIATION WG to review the RECONCILIATION PLAN and update / refresh the actions and targets, as appropriate.
Inform and demonstrate accountability to Deacons.	Chair of RECONCILIATION WG	September at the time of the church annual report	Submission of an annual written report to Deacons on RECONCILIATION PLAN activity within the church.

Design by Tyeli Hannah – Indigenous designer

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