



**BALCOMBE**  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN MAY 2023

a connected community



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**RAP WORKING GROUP**

- Ross Patterson, Principal
- Matthew Boundy, Deputy Principal – Primary
- Shain Kurelja, Deputy Head of Primary
- Lyndal Runge, Deputy Principal – Secondary
- Natalie Kurelja, Head of Faith & Wellbeing
- Celia Mara, Head of Teaching & Learning
- Cindy Waters, Chaplain
- Stacie Oakford, Staff (teaching)
- Melissa Jakins, Staff (teaching)



**RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**

Balcombe Grammar School’s vision for reconciliation is to celebrate our community and share responsibility for reconciliation. We are committed to deeply connecting with and learning about the cultures, languages, practices and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

We are committed to becoming a voice for reconciliation in Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples walk in two worlds and their cultures are a gift, connected to Country, and benefitting all members of the community.

Balcombe Grammar School is located on Bunurong Country and, through respectful truth telling processes, we recognise the impact of past histories since colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Furthermore, we celebrate the significant contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have continued to make to our community, alongside their bravery and resilience.

We believe in quality education that supports students to make meaningful transitions to life beyond the school, increasing their chances of realising their full potential, having a voice; and positively influencing their communities. We commit to respectfully incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the curriculum where relevant.

We envision a place of teaching and learning that is culturally inclusive, where aspirations are fostered, diversity is acknowledge and genuine conversations about creating equal and equitable opportunities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are ongoing.

We place importance on the collaboration of non-Indigenous people in the reconciliation process as they adopt inclusive practices that ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a meaningful role to play in decisions that affect them.

We are optimistic of a time when equality and equity is actively fostered between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community and when reconciliation is a lived reality and not simply an idea.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Balcombe Grammar School proudly acknowledges with respect and thanksgiving the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which our School is built. Our community pays our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that these pages contain the images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CLASSROOM

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Classroom	We are committed to welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into our classrooms as guests to work alongside our students and children in learning activities. Having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence in learning environments is vital when teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.
Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and Children	We commit to providing opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to celebrate their cultural identities. These opportunities positively impact the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and children, and create shared pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, contributions, identities and histories in the wider school community.



## RELATIONSHIPS AROUND THE SCHOOL

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Elders and Traditional Owners Share Histories and Cultures	We are committed to forging a meaningful and ongoing relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, and people recognised in their community as Traditional Owners. We hope this relationship can be of mutual benefit, and that our local Elders and Traditional Owners will feel safe, and confident, to share their historical and cultural knowledge with our staff, students and children.
Cultural Competence for Staff	We will reflect on our current level of cultural competence and provide staff with a range of opportunities to build and extend their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We also commit to supporting staff to independently seek out and participate in a variety of cultural awareness experiences that assist them on their own journey of understanding.
Reconciliation Projects	Our school will collaborate on projects that visibly and authentically embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in learning programs and the physical environment. Through this culture of collaboration across the school and with the community, we commit to creating an environment where young people, staff and community members acknowledge, respect and experience connection to the First Australians.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Welcome to Country	Where appropriate, significant events at our school commence with a Welcome to Country. Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. By incorporating these protocols into formal events and important occasions, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Custodians of their Land.
Celebrate National Reconciliation Week	Our school community celebrates National Reconciliation Week (NRW) which is held from 27 May to 3 June each year by talking about reconciliation in the classroom and around the school, and celebrating with the community. NRW is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements and to explore how each of us can join the national reconciliation effort.
Build Relationships with Community	We commit to building relationships with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that are built on mutual respect, trust and inclusiveness. We value these relationships and their role in helping to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff, students, children and community members.



**RESPECT**

**RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM**

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Teach about Reconciliation	Our school community is committed to learning about reconciliation in Australia. Having an understanding of the concept, history and progress of reconciliation is an important part of continuing the reconciliation journey. This understanding also helps to strengthen engagement with our school's RAP by positioning it within the broader story of reconciliation in Australia.
Explore Current Affairs and Issues	We are committed to raising awareness of current affairs and issues in the public domain that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the process of reconciliation. This will be done through curriculum delivery, policies and procedures, and will be integrated into the ethos of our school.

## RESPECT AROUND THE SCHOOL

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Acknowledgement of Country	Our school recognises the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the Country on which we live, work, learn and grow. All staff and students have the opportunity to show respect to Traditional Owners and Custodians by regularly conducting an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings and events throughout the year.
Visibly Demonstrate Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures	We commit to demonstrating our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in the physical environment of our school. We understand that making our respect visible in the learning environment through the incorporation of meaningful, relevant and culturally appropriate art, artefacts and symbolism reinforces our work toward reconciliation. It also makes our intentions and actions clear to our students, parents and the broader community.
Recognise and Respect Rights	We are committed to recognising and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples . We acknowledge that working within the frameworks of both declarations is important to reducing discrimination and promoting equality and equity in the educational and wider community.

## RESPECT WITH THE COMMUNITY

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags	Our school flies or displays the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag as a demonstration of our pride and respect for the histories, cultures and contributions of Australia's First Peoples. Flying or displaying the flags promotes a sense of community partnership and a commitment toward reconciliation.
RAP Launch	Our school is proud to launch our RAP at an event that recognises the efforts of the working group and celebrates our school or service's commitment to reconciliation. We will use our RAP launch event to inform the wider community about our RAP and the many different ways they can get involved and take action toward reconciliation.
Take Action Against Racism	Racism can have serious negative consequences for the people who experience it, for those who witness it, and for wider society. When racism is properly understood it is easier to overcome. We commit to building awareness of what racism is, the impacts of racism and how to respond effectively when it occurs through an anti-racism strategy tailored to the needs of our school.
Physical Acknowledgement of Country	Display a physical, durable Acknowledgement of Country such as an Acknowledgement plaque or mural.





# OPPORTUNITIES

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Curriculum Planning	Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in curriculum planning, development and evaluation processes is a key and ongoing consideration across all year levels and learning areas. Curriculum documents have or will be audited to identify the extent to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions are already embedded, and to identify opportunities for strengthening the representation of this content in the curriculum.

## OPPORTUNITIES AROUND THE SCHOOL

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Inclusive Policies	All staff in our school are aware of policies that refer specifically to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and increasing knowledge of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Australia. We have a plan in place to ensure all staff comply with these policies in their daily practice. Our internal policies have been, or will be, amended to ensure they are also inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and increase knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Australia.
Staff Engagement with RAP	Commitment to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) from all staff is essential for developing a RAP that is implemented in a meaningful and sustainable way. All staff will be involved in the ongoing development and implementation of our RAP through staff development opportunities facilitated by the RAP Working Group.
RAP Budget Allocation	We have set aside dedicated funds from within our budget to procure relevant goods and services that strengthen the sustainability of our RAP Actions. Staff are aware that it is important to consider remuneration for people who have been involved in RAP initiatives out of respect for the time and resources that they have contributed.

## OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE COMMUNITY

RAP ACTIONS	COMMITMENT
Employment Strategy	We commit to the development and implementation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy. This will assist in attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates to vacancies, as well as supporting current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Celebrate RAP Progress	We are committed to reflecting on the progress made in the growth of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions in our school. We will track the progress of our RAP, continually revisit our commitments, and celebrate our achievements, while generating new ideas to develop and sustain our RAP into the future.





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