



Artwork excerpt: *I Am Because We Are* 2019, Safina Stewart, Wuthathi Country (QLD) and Mabuia Island (Torres Strait Islands).

RAP UPDATE JULY 2024

LET'S TOOMBARA BY (TALK) RECONCILIATION

NATIONAL SORRY DAY

On Sunday 26 May, nearly 100 people attended the National Sorry Day Community Gathering at the Nobbies Centre, united in support of healing for all Stolen Generations Survivors.

The event saw the participation of Stolen Generations Survivors, their families, descendants, and allies. The gathering began with an emotional healing smoking ceremony overlooking the rugged coastline of Millowl, creating a space for reflection and connection. Following the ceremony, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders shared deeply moving stories about the lasting impact of the forced removal of children on their families and communities.

Speakers recounted personal and generational experiences, shedding light on the profound trauma that has reverberated through generations. Their stories highlighted not only the pain and

loss endured but also the resilience and strength of their communities.

The truth telling by Patrice Mahoney OAM and Bunurong Traditional Owner, Robert Odgen, was a powerful reminder of the importance of acknowledging past wrongs and working towards a future where healing and reconciliation are prioritised.

National Sorry Day, observed annually on May 26, is a significant day in Australia, dedicated to remembering and honouring the Stolen Generations—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children forcibly removed from their families by government policies.

The Community Gathering was hosted by the Bass Coast Reconciliation Network and was one of many events held across the country to mark this solemn occasion, reinforcing the call for continued efforts towards justice and reconciliation.



Robert Ogden, Uncle Anthony, Patrice Mahoney OAM, and Brian Stevens



Dan, Rob and Catherine



Welcome to Country and Smoking

National Reconciliation Week – NOW MORE THAN EVER

Bass Coast Reconciliation Network partners hosted a diverse variety of activities for National Reconciliation Week this year, including book reviews, film screenings, Sea of Hands craft, and community gathering at Powlett River Kugerungmome. The week is all about coming together in support of reconciliation action in Australia and the program of events certainly provided plenty of opportunity for the local community to do just that.

At the Nature Parks, we had a sea of hands activity across our offices where staff were asked to trace and cut out their own hand and make a pledge of what action they would take for reconciliation.

Some of the pledges made were:

- I will support healing and truth-telling
- I will hold myself and others accountable, so we have a workplace free of discrimination and unconscious bias
- I will stand with mob
- I will listen



Les and Bob at Kugerungmome



Sea of Hands

NAIDOC Week 7-14 July

The theme this year is 'Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud'. The annual NAIDOC Week Art Exhibition runs from 2 July to 11 August at Artspace Wonthaggi. The exhibition was opened on Sunday 7 July and 120 people gathered to check out the amazing artwork created by 15 First Nations artists from the Bass Coast and South Gippsland.

The virtual exhibition goes live on 7 July with artworks for sale at the exhibition and online at NAIDOC Week First Nations Art Exhibition 2024 (naidoc-art.com.au).



RAP UPDATE JULY 2024 | LET'S TOOMBARA BY (TALK) RECONCILIATION

It's a RAP

We're very happy to announce that our fourth *Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch) June 2024-2027* is completed and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Thank you to everyone that supported the development of the RAP over the past 16 months, it was a huge effort!



The cover of the RAP features a beautiful artwork by Bunurong artist Kobi Sainy called 'Natures Connection', testimonials from key stakeholders and partners, staff profiles, case studies and most importantly the deliverables under three pillars of respect, relationships and opportunities which will drive the reconciliation actions we take as an organisation over the next three years.

Acknowledging Bunurong Country

The RAP leadership group are looking for opportunities to acknowledge Bunurong Country and share language with staff and visitors and two recent actions include the use of language in external communications such as the Locals Pass newsletter, Threatened Species Report, and Conservation News.

Another great initiative is the Sea Country T-Shirts that were developed by our Senior Buyer, Marlee Durdin, to raise cultural awareness during key reconciliation periods of the year. Our staff are proudly wearing the new t-shirts that have a beautiful design by Aboriginal artist, Kylie Armstrong. Kylie's ancestral connections are in the Central Desert, the land and people of Arrernte yet she has lived on Bunurong/Boon Wurrung Country most of her life.

The story behind the design is below.

Sea Country Story

Phillip Island Nature Parks honour the natural environment as the caretakers of four wildlife and educational experiences and managing 1,805 hectares of land. Our community walk together to care, respect and nurture the beautiful Country we have the privilege to experience every day. Our shared goal is to create a thriving community that is united regardless of our individual journeys.

As we walk on Country, we admire the beautiful blossoms and use our senses to smell the distinct scent of the gum, the food source of the koala. We feel the sand under our feet as we walk in the steps of the little penguin. There is the distinct taste of salt water as we enjoy the cleansing and invigorating waters that surround us, home to our seals and mother whale.



Yannin Nerlingo (come along) on a cultural learning journey

The Nature Parks is working with Bunurong training providers on the cultural awareness and cultural safety training sessions for board, leaders and staff in June – August as part of the learning and development program.

Here are some suggestions for how you can learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history.



WHAT TO READ: **White Fragility** - by Robyn DiAngelo

A practical crystallising guide for how white people can change the way they communicate and fight racism.



WHAT TO WATCH: **Our Stories**

A vibrant series of short documentaries from remote and regional Indigenous film makers across Australia that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.

[Watch Our Stories](#) | [Stream free on SBS On Demand](#)



WHAT TO COOK: **Roogenic**

Are a team of passionate and health-conscious people that believe in the medicinal properties of Australian native plants. They partner with Indigenous communities and small farmers with a mission to help improve the livelihood of people looking for natural health solutions. Check out their recipes and products at [Roogenic: Australian Teas and Powders designed to support wellbeing](#)

Socially Responsible Procurement

Did you know that in 2023-24, the Nature Parks spent \$377,000 on products and services from certified First Nations suppliers?

The Nature Parks is committed to socially responsible procurement and our membership with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce can assist our team to be socially considerate in their purchasing. 'Kinaway' is from the Gannai language and means 'exchange' and they are a peak body that represents certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business in Victoria.

Staff can submit a quote for a job, check out their events, read the newsletter, check out the latest news on Kinaway TV or search for a certified supplier on the Business Directory [Business Directory — Kinaway Chamber of Commerce](#).



Always open to employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

In line with our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employment

Strategy, we've recently created an open [expression of interest webpage](#) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that want to work at the Nature Parks.

Working with the People & Culture and Marketing teams, we created a permanent web page inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to express their interest in working at the Nature Parks, or to simply connect with us to have a yarn. This open-ended portal is easy to use and may make it more accessible to learn about and engage with career pathways at the Nature Parks.

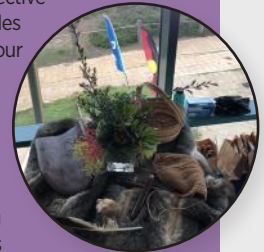
RAP Leadership Group

The RAP Leadership Group includes Kate Adams, Jodi Bellett, Les Briggs, Andrea Cleland, Marlee Durdin, Dianne Lecher, Andrea Love, Ewan Macleod and Dion Tripptree.

The new RAP team will work together to deliver the Reconciliation Action Plan at a leadership level by working with their respective business teams. This includes driving actions to achieve our RAP outcomes, fostering cultural considerations in business planning, and promoting ownership to inform decision making.

We have held two meetings so far and our First Nations Board members, Patrice Mahoney OAM and Bev Munro, joined us at the first meeting in March for a cuppa and a yarn.

If you have any questions or ideas, reach out to one of the RAP leadership team to 'toombara by' (talk) about it.



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and waters of Millowl, the Bunurong. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

CONTACT US:

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