

Catholic Education Ballarat

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan [month, 20__] – [month, 20__]

Our business

Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) provides educational, business and governance leadership and support for schools who belong to Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Ltd (DOBCEL). DOBCEL schools are operated under the auspices of the Bishop of the Ballarat Diocese. CEB's main office is situated in Ballarat with educational centres located in Warrnambool, Horsham, Swan Hill and Mildura. CEB serves the schools of the Ballarat Diocese which spans the western side of Victoria.

Across these five office locations there are ?? staff, including 2 who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. While CEB's geographic reach is confined to part of Victoria, we collaborate and work with other Victorian diocesan systems as part of the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA).

Our RAP

Catholic Education Ballarat's (CEB) core work is to support the work of Catholic Schools within the Ballarat Catholic Diocese. Our staff work with schools to enhance educational outcomes, but also offer comprehensive support in the management of schools with advice and resourcing for finance, human resources, marketing, property management, information technology and digital resource creation.

As agents of *Catholic Education* we believe our work needs to be focussed on pursuing fullness of life for all connected to schools in the diocese. The communities which CEB serves were initially founded by Anglo-Irish immigrants and their descendants. Ongoing European migration across the twentieth century increased cultural diversity, which has continued in the opening decades of the twenty first century. Today, CEB is somewhat of a microcosm of this wider picture. Our workforce reflects the migration flow over recent centuries and the current cultural and religious diversity of modern Australia.

First Nations students have long been part of the story of education in the Ballarat Diocese, and while the numbers of students acknowledging this heritage have been proportionally low, we also recognise other First Nations students and their families may not have felt safe enough or ready to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Our diocese covers parts of Victoria that have a complex and traumatic history between First Nations and other Australians. CEB sees the implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as an opportunity to be part of a unified future and to welcome the wisdom, beauty and genius of First Nations' cultures into the heart of our organisation. We want to recognise and learn from strengths, talents and resilience that have been and continue to be shown by the First Nations members of our communities.

Over many years CEB has employed Education Officers whose primary function has been to liaise with schools and First Nations families and students in order to bring about improved educational outcomes. Over time this role has broadened to advising schools on cultural relationships with local First Nations bodies and the promotion of First Nations culture for the benefit of all students in schools. We are proud that this role has been filled by First Nations people, and would like to expand the possibilities for First Nations people to seek employment in our office at all levels

and divisions. However, we recognise a risk that the work of Reconciliation is relegated to those members of staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Reconciliation with our First Nations is a shared opportunity for all of the staff employed with the CEB.

At all formative stages of the RAP, we have sought to engage the entirety of our workplace either by direct involvement or by communicating the latest actions and inviting feedback and interaction. Just as we acknowledge that there will be First Nations people on staff who do not yet feel the time is right to begin or continue their cultural journey, we also recognise that a number of our staff from non-First Nations backgrounds can be uncertain about what Reconciliation means for them. We want all our staff to feel safe and included in these processes and dialogue.

Our organisation is deeply connected to the Catholic tradition, strongly influencing our approach to Reconciliation, which is seen as a sacred element in our relationship with other people, our environment and God. Our tradition holds Justice and the Dignity of the Human Person as central to our mission and we see our RAP as a way that these values can be lived authentically. We desire to be in a deeper dialogue with the First Nations within our diocese, with an emphasis on listening and understanding. This will require us to reach out to organisations and individuals in all geographic areas of our work, demonstrating a real and authentic intent to be enriched by relationship with them.

Our partnerships/current activities (if applicable)

CEB has established relationships with national, state, regional and local organisations and communities. These include the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC), Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria (ACMV), Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEI), pertinent Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs), Aboriginal Co-operatives/Services and Traditional Owner Groups. We also have links with local councils, Victorian Department of Education Koorie Education Units, and relevant government departments. Both Education Officers: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education regularly attend Reconciliation Victoria's Sharing Truth and Reconciliation in Victorian Education (STRIVE) Committee meetings.

Over the past two decades, CEB has facilitated activities designed to provide learning opportunities for staff. Some of these include local Elders, community members and the CEB Education Officer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education co-presenting on topics such as Welcome to/Acknowledgement of Country, Stolen Generations, local and national historical events, the history and importance of celebrations (e.g. National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day) as well as cultures and contemporary societies. At whole staff Formation Days, staff were invited to experience on country learning at Gariwerd, Tower Hill, Ballarat and working with Wayapa Wuurrk staff at Mt. Macedon. CEB has also participated in ACMV's Proud Race initiative that was sponsored by Reconciliation Victoria and Reconciliation Australia. This initiative enabled schools to "record and celebrate the stories of Indigenous Australians on life-size bollards which (were) exhibited in venues throughout Australia."

As well as these structured activities, CEB holds intermittent group/individual discussions. Examples of these include leading discussions on topical matters (e.g. 2023 Referendum, racism in sport, debunking myths and disinformation) and education on the background or significance of specific Acknowledgements of Country, prayers and historical events. Staff are regularly invited to, and do attend, online sessions such as Reconciliation Victoria's Reconciliation in Education Seminars. In 2017, CEB collaborated with Ballarat Aboriginal community members to develop cultural protocols (to be reviewed as part of RAP).

As with previous years, CEB plans to host internal and promote external celebrations of significant days/weeks. Invitations are extended to staff during Cultural Diversity Week, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, as well as other dates of significance.

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence. 	<i>[Month, year]</i>	<i>[Job title]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. 		
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. 	May <i>[Year]</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. 	27 May-3 June, <i>[Year]</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May-3 June, <i>[Year]</i>	
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 		
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. 		

Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. 	<i>[Month, year]</i>	<i>[Job title]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. 		
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. 		
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. 	June <i>[Year]</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	First week in July, <i>[Year]</i>	

Opportunities			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation. 	<i>[Month, year]</i>	<i>[Job title]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. 		
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. 		

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation. 	<i>[Month, year]</i>	<i>[Job title]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG. 		
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define resource needs for RAP implementation. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally. 		
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. 	June annually	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. 	1 August annually	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. 	30 September, annually	
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. 	<i>[three months prior to RAP expiry date]</i>	

Contact details: *[Include contact details (job title, phone, and email) for public enquiries about your RAP]*

Name:

Position:

Phone:

Email: