

F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2021

COVENANT

We recognise the special place and culture of Aboriginal peoples within Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have been the caretakers of this Land for more than 60,000 years. We respect their spiritual connection to Mother Earth through the Dreaming.

'An apology begins the healing process. Apology means understanding, a willingness to enter into the suffering. It implies a commitment to do more'. The late Sir Ronald Wilson, Chair of the National Inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

We understand that practical measures need to address the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in education, health, employment, and general opportunity.

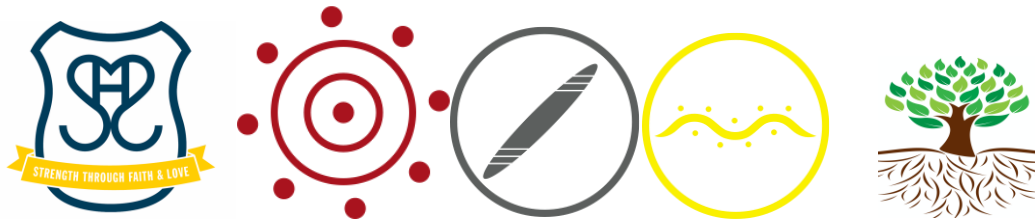
"Reconciliation is an active pursuit – it's about getting on with what's needed and what we know to get the results we all want, and that's a mixture of measures that target the body, the mind and the spirit." Mick Dodson, Australian of the Year, National Press Club address, 17 February 2009.

True Reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships not just for today but for tomorrow. We work for Reconciliation, in partnership with those who believe that there can be an alternative to the present order.

Covenants emphasize the ethos and faith belief of Catholic schools and the Social Justice response they are committed to make as part of their Christian identity. Schools' expressed commitment is reflected in practical goals and actions which they strive to achieve in the year ahead. School covenants express in ways, specific to each school, recognition of the special contribution Aboriginal peoples and their cultures make to Australian society, their relationship and connection to the land, their present position of disadvantage and social exclusion. They declare the school and school community's commitment to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples to achieve true reconciliation and acknowledgement, by all Australians, of their rightful position within Australian society.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL, TATURA

Our vision for reconciliation is to be a place of learning and teaching that respects Aboriginal protocols, history and culture. We will have strong and mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal communities. These relationships will provide for the sharing of knowledge and ideas, and the opportunity to listen and learn from Aboriginal Australians about the past, their current circumstances, and their vision for the future. We will be a place where Aboriginal culture is respected and celebrated.



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SACRED HEART COVENANT

Our school community was presented with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community by the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team, who were and are involved in the continuing development of our Covenant. Our covenant was originally developed by students & staff in consultation with the Aboriginal team from Catholic Education Sandhurst. Our school community will be presented with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community by the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team, who were and are involved in the continuing development and review of our Covenant.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Culturally safe environments

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety is defined as an environment that is safe for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience (Williams 2008).

Sacred Heart School Tatura takes account of and makes reasonable efforts to accommodate for the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards relating to following standard.

- 5.1 Schools and school boarding premises must establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued

Actions

1. In endorsing and documenting the following activities contained within this FIRE Carrier covenant, Sacred Heart School Tatura commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all actions through measurable targets outlined by the dates set out in the timeline included.
2. This FIRE Carrier covenant will be made accessible on the school's website to ensure adherence to the child safe standard referred to in the document.
3. A review at the end of school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier coordinator.

Our Short Term and Long-Term Targets

6 Months

12 Months

2 Years



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Spirituality			
Focus Area: Learn, Teach, Share, Grow towards understanding Aboriginal Spirituality (holistic)			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources
Through Prayer and knowledge gain/engage a deeper awareness of justice issues.	All Staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to incorporate Aboriginal prayers and symbols in liturgy by using the message stick during reading of the Word and at school masses.
Use Aboriginal prayers and songs for class prayer.	Classroom Teachers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn and use the Aboriginal Our Father for the opening of the school year mass, so that it may be used by community at other year level liturgies.
Explore the significance of spirituality in Aboriginal art.	Aboriginal Team Classroom Teachers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduce John Dunn's Stations of the Cross to the Sacred Heart community (found/purchased through the ACM).
		Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purchase and implement the use of the Two-Way Cross for Easter time and other liturgies
Create an Aboriginal identity during time of Advent.	Classroom Teachers	Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Perform 'Turning of the Coolamon Ceremony' using the Coolamon Liturgy in a staff liturgy for Advent. ➤ Use images of an Aboriginal nativity scene, Aboriginal Mary, Joseph and Jesus and create Aboriginal symbols for the Jesses and Christmas trees.
Listen to Aboriginal Stories	All Staff Principal	6 months Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complete the Australian's Together Introduction Workshop with all staff ➤ Reading Dream Time stories appropriate to our Source of Life, Inquiry and Literacy Units.
		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investigate possible resources to purchase for use in the school's Religious Education Program, to break open the Indigenous perspectives.
		Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investigate local Aboriginal sites as possible excursion locations for all students.



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Practical Reconciliation & Justice			
Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learnings into Practice			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
Take Practical Measures toward Reconciliation and Justice	Grade 5/6 Teachers and Students FIRE Carriers	Daily / Yearly Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Raise the Aboriginal flag daily (next to the Australian flag) and display the Torres Strait Islander flag (raise it on special event days, lower on Sorry Day). Completed as part of the Grade 5/6 Leadership Program. ➤ Presenting of the message stick through a Gospel procession at masses. Holding the message stick during the reading of the Gospel at masses.
Acknowledge and teach the 'true' history of Australia	Classroom teachers All staff	Ongoing Yearly review Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teach and learn the truths of history, including the local Yorta Yorta history. Know the Victorian Curriculum and how to integrate Indigenous perspectives into various curriculum areas. Allocate staff time to discuss this and create planning documents to support – as part of the Australian's Together Workshop. Termly reviews of implementation success. ➤ Create and plant bollards. Bollards will be created about specific Yorta Yorta people with assistance from a local artist. They will be planted in the Indigenous learning space and garden.
Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school	Classroom teachers Grade 5/6 Teachers	Yearly Yearly Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FIRE Carrier Ceremony once yearly, to induct all grade 5s and staff as FIRE Carriers. Ceremony to have a sacred focus and be held in the church with Catholic, spiritual and Indigenous rituals included. This ceremony honoured and respected through appropriate preparation of the candidates and regular reference to the FIRE Carriers and the special nature of what it means throughout the year. ➤ Attend significant gatherings such as the Reconciliation Mass, Sorry Day breakfast/events, NAIDOC week celebrations, AsheFest activities with Aboriginal students and FIRE Carrier leaders (as appropriate). ➤ Participate in knowledge sharing/focussed days/sessions with Michael Chisholm, Troy Firebrace and other local Aboriginal people. Both FIRE Carrier teachers and FIRE Carriers to access.



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		Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FIRE Carriers to share their knowledge with other classes through presentations at assemblies and in all classes around the school. Leading Indigenous focussed whole school and class liturgies. ➤ Explicit teaching of Indigenous perspectives through the Victorian curriculum - as above. ➤ Display and maintain Aboriginal artefacts in the front office with intent to access local Yorta Yorta artefacts. Add to this display over time.
		Ongoing	
		Ongoing	

Cultural Recognition & Awareness			
Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies.	Classroom Teachers FIRE Carriers Grade 5/6 Teachers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage with local Aboriginal groups and organisations and make connections with local elders where possible. ➤ <i>Acknowledge Country</i> at school assemblies, gatherings, masses and in daily class prayer. ➤ Presenting of the message stick through a Gospel procession at masses. Holding the message stick during the reading of the Gospel at masses.
Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people.	Principal Newsletter Editor FIRE Carriers Grade 5/6 Teachers Aboriginal Team	Ongoing Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Acknowledge Country</i> on the school website and in the school's printed material. ➤ Include the <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> in the school newsletter. ➤ Commissioning of FIRE Carriers – see above in Practical Reconciliation. ➤ Exhibit FIRE Carrier flame in prominent position – entry to the school office. ➤ Display Aboriginal posters in classrooms and on display boards. Develop, maintain and update a Reconciliation Board. ➤ Celebrate Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week and commemorate the National Apology Day.



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<p>Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge of the local Aboriginal community.</p> <p>Engage in professional development and cross-cultural opportunities to better cater for the needs of Aboriginal students in our schools.</p>	<p>Aboriginal Team</p> <p>Principal Aboriginal Team Classroom Teachers</p>	<p>As needed</p> <p>Yearly Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create and plant bollards. Bollards will be created about specific Yorta Yorta people with assistance from a local artist. They will be planted in the Indigenous learning space and garden. ➤ As needed, seek advice through the Aboriginal Education Officer (Michael Chisholm) and the ACM. ➤ Identify and upskill staff in using Indigenous perspectives resources found both in the staff and student libraries. ➤ Provide professional development for staff – as above in Practical Reconciliation. ➤ Educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the land on which the school is situated through masses, school events and in class. ➤ Maintain Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum through lines – as above in Practical Reconciliation.
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<p>Ecological Stewardship Focus Area: ecological renewal and sustainability depends upon spiritual awareness and an attitude of responsibility – Caring for country</p>			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
<p>Take Practical Measures toward teaching and learning of how Indigenous people cared for and lived off the land.</p>	<p>Principal Aboriginal Team All Staff Classroom teachers</p>	<p>Ongoing ??</p> <p>Yearly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide professional development for staff – as above in Practical Reconciliation. ➤ Engage a local Aboriginal elder/person to teach how local Aboriginal people have lived for tens of thousands of years.



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<p>Develop the knowledge and skills of our sustainability leaders and FIRE Carriers.</p>	<p>Grade 5/6 Teachers Aboriginal Team Classroom Teachers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing opportunities for staff to access the caring for land historical resource – <i>Dark Emu</i> by Bruce Pascoe. Explicitly teach students about caring for the land through the use of <i>Dark Emu for Kids</i> by Bruce Pascoe. ➤ Know the Victorian Curriculum and how to integrate Indigenous perspectives into various curriculum areas. Allocate staff time to discuss this and create planning documents to support – as part of the Australian’s Together Workshop. Termly reviews of implementation success.
<p>Engage in sustainable events and practices around the school.</p>	<p>Grade 5/6 Teachers Sustainability Team FIRE Carriers</p>	<p>Yearly Yearly 2 Years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Weekly lessons for the Grade 5 FIRE Carriers and Grade 6 Sustainability Team. ➤ Whole class lessons focussed on sustainability through the eyes of historical Aboriginal practices. ➤ Creation, implementation of a Native/Bush Tucker Garden within the school grounds. Explicitly teach students about the plants chosen, their background and how Aboriginal people have used them through time. Regular use of the garden for a variety of purposes. ➤ Know the Victorian Curriculum and how to integrate Indigenous perspectives into various curriculum areas.
<p>Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school.</p>	<p>Grade 5/6 Teachers Classroom Teachers FIRE Carriers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Yearly</p> <p>Yearly</p> <p>Yearly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sign up to Earth Care. Engage the whole school in Sandhurst Switches Off. Celebrate Earth Hour. Have a nude food blitz for term three. Complete a waste audit for the whole school in term two and provide feedback to the school at assemblies. ➤ Sustainability leaders share learning and provide opportunities for the whole school to be engaged and immersed in particular ways to help the land and country. ➤ FIRE Carrier Ceremony once yearly, to induct all grade 5s and staff as FIRE Carriers. Ceremony to have a sacred focus and be held in the church with Catholic, spiritual and Indigenous rituals included. This ceremony honoured and respected through appropriate preparation of the candidates and regular reference to the FIRE Carriers and the special nature of what it means throughout the year.



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Share the story of totems, how they are attached to the environment and what that means for us today regarding Ecological Stewardship.	Principal Aboriginal Team Grade 5/6 Teachers	Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend significant gatherings such as the Reconciliation Mass, Sorry Day breakfast/events, NAIDOC week celebrations, AsheFest activities with Aboriginal students and FIRE Carrier leaders (as appropriate). ➤ Participate in knowledge sharing/focussed days/sessions with Michael Chisholm, Troy Firebrace and other local Aboriginal people. Both FIRE Carrier teachers and FIRE Carriers to access. ➤ FIRE Carriers to share their knowledge with other classes through presentations at assemblies and in all classes around the school. Leading Indigenous focussed whole school and class liturgies. ➤ Explicit teaching of Indigenous perspectives through the Victorian curriculum - as above in Practical Reconciliation. ➤ Display and maintain Aboriginal artefacts in the front office with intent to access local Yorta Yorta artefacts. Add to this display over time. ➤ Create an Indigenous space as a learning space to tell this story. Incorporate into this space the Native/Bush Tucker Garden. ➤ Engage the FIRE Carriers and Sustainability Team with the process of planning, fundraising and implementing the garden and space.
		Yearly	
		Ongoing	
		Ongoing	
		2 Years	
		2 Years	

The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the *Aboriginal Catholic Ministry*, the *Opening the Doors Foundation* and the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office, to promote and assist reconciliation through education in our schools.

Sacred Heart School commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all Actions through Measurable Targets outlined by the dates set out in the timeline above. A review at the end of school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier.