

Kensington Neighbourhood House Reconciliation Action Plan

Kensington Neighbourhood House acknowledges and respects the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and respect all other Kulin Nations in our community and we recognise that we benefit from the rich teaching and learning that has been taking place on this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge that this land was never ceded. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

Purpose

The purpose of this reconciliation plan is to document Kensington Neighbourhood House's (KNH) ongoing work towards reconciliation with our First Nations peoples. It is also designed to create a process for KNH to engage with and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culture and history.

KNH has a long history of working with various communities and supporting them to access relevant programs and develop community networks. Our work towards reconciliation strongly aligns with our values of inclusion, access, equity, inclusiveness, communication, responsiveness and quality.

Working towards reconciliation is an ongoing learning process for KNH. We are endeavouring to:

- Frame our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at a local level.
- Recognise and learn about the historical treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the effects of colonisation, dispossession and forced removal; and
- Educate ourselves around ways to respect their rich cultures and learn about cultural protocols.

Acknowledging the burden and risk for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that comes with truth telling, KNH will be an ally by not speaking for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but using our influence as community leaders to support and advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and issues affecting them.

As stated on Reconciliation Victoria – it is up to us to do the work – ‘the 97% of Victorian population that are not Aboriginal, as it is non-aboriginal people who need to take responsibility for driving reconciliation’. We will aim to work with Aboriginal people but will not assume to engage them without paying for their time and expertise. We acknowledge that many Wurundjeri groups are very busy, and that our work is part of a long-term process of building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Context

Kensington Neighbourhood House has been on a journey of reconciliation since 2018 and has slowly worked towards the development of a plan to encapsulate our reconciliation goals.

While we did not have a formal reconciliation plan in place, our organisation has embedded reconciliation into many facets of KNH operations. This has included reconciliation education for our participants and staff and making KNH a welcoming and culturally safe place through the acknowledgment of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal People.

In 2022 KNH worked with others to establish the Kensington Reconciliation Group. This is currently a small group of local allies and community organisation representatives who meet monthly at the house. KNH convenes this group and takes a role in coordinating initiatives. Focus areas include information sharing among group members and local advocacy. The group is working towards running events for the local community to engage in and discuss Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultural content. Facilitating this local group is a key part of our reconciliation journey.

Our Priorities

Prioritising First Nations voices and being an Ally.

Creating learning opportunities on reconciliation

Acknowledging our Traditional Owners, their culture and history

Our approach

- Build meaningful, collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at a local level
- Listen, learn and be allies.
- Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture and actively seek to commemorate, celebrate and honour it in our house in our programming and events.
- Work to address the division and inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people.
- Align our reconciliation work with our values and purpose, bringing people together despite our differences, and learning from each other within a social justice framework.
- Develop a range of opportunities for reconciliation education to occur from a strength-based approach.
- Create a welcoming place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to feel safe but not burdened with responsibility.
- We will be responsive and respectful to the interests and aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will advocate on issues accordingly.

Priority	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Prioritising First Nations voices and being an Ally	Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations within our local area	April 2023
		Seek out opportunities to work with cultural educators across programming areas.	Ongoing
		Work with the Wurundjeri Land Council through the Green Time not Screen time Program to facilitate cultural education opportunities for local families, facilitating three story-telling sessions with Wurundjeri Elders.	May 2023
	Promote reconciliation through our communication channels	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to staff	Feb 2023
		Use our social media and newsletter to share resources, stories, information, news relating to First Nations people and issues.	Ongoing
	Advocate for and be an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People on current issues	Acknowledging 26 th of January as a day of mourning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we will advocate for changing the date. We will not celebrate this day, communicate this stance and core staff will not take this as a public holiday.	January 2023
		<p>Take action on supporting a Voice to Parliament through programs and communications supporting a respectful and productive dialogue.</p> <p>Lobby State and Federal politicians on supporting the introduction of a Voice to Parliament for an Indigenous constitutional recognition</p>	March – December 2023

		Create education opportunities for staff, participants and the local community to understand the Voice to Parliament and the 2023 referendum.	
Creating learning opportunities on reconciliation	Create learning opportunities to increase knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people cultures and history.	Support English language teachers, play group workers and other teaching staff to explore topics and stories on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and history.	Ongoing
		Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW). 27 May to 3 June through supporting staff to develop programs or events, and via our social media.	June 2023
		Celebrate NAIDOC Week (3-10 July) through supporting staff to develop programs or events, and via our social media.	July 2023
	Work with Neighbourhood House sector leaders on reconciliation	Advocate to NH Vic and Network West to support collective approaches across Neighbourhood Houses in the west in engaging with Wurundjeri peoples and working collectively on reconciliation	
	Host and co-convene the Kensington Reconciliation Group at KNH	Partner with and support advocacy activities coming out of the Kensington Reconciliation Action Group, attending monthly meetings.	Ongoing
		Support Kensington Reconciliation Group to seek funding through grants to undertake activities and engage with First Nations people.	Ongoing

		Take a lead in managing events through the Kensington Reconciliation Group, for example guest presentations and film screenings.	2023
Acknowledging our Traditional Owners, their culture and history	Make KNH a welcoming and culturally safe place through the acknowledgment of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal People	Acknowledge Traditional Owners in email signatures and through an Acknowledgement of Country at events and board meetings.	Ongoing
		Display signage at KNH to show our allyship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people e.g. map of Aboriginal Languages of Victoria and of Traditional Owners across Australia, Clothing the Gap stickers and posters.	Actioned
		Display our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, including specific commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children	Actioned
		Display a sign acknowledging our Traditional Owners in our front window.	Actioned
		Provide age appropriate learning resources (games, books, toys, music) celebrating First Nations culture within our children's programs.	Actioned
		Acknowledge our Traditional Owners on our website	Actioned